

**ACS Conifer College 2022 Curriculum
Dayton, Ohio
Friday, June 3, 2022**

Whether your passion is collecting unique conifers or combining them in beds with other woody and perennial plants, the 2022 Dayton Conifer College (CC) “**Conifers and Companion Plantings**” will have something for you. The following is the CC curriculum.

Check-In: 7:30 - 8:00 am at the Marriott University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Welcome and Orientation: 8:00 – 8:15 am: Dennis Groh

PART 1 – FOUR SPEAKER SESSIONS

Class # Speaker Class Title

<u>Class #</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Class Title</u>
▶ Session 1: 8:30 — 9:45		
1A	Bob Fincham	The Three W’s: What, Where, and Why? Exploring Behavior of Conifers

Speaker Bio: Bob was a science teacher for thirty-nine years. His passion for conifers began in 1974 and led to the start of a mail order nursery business named Coenosium Gardens, which sold conifers around the world until 2015. Bob was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the American Conifer Society, and served as its first President for five years

Always the educator, Bob self-published five books on cultivated conifers. He has also written for the American *Nurseryman*, the *NARGS Quarterly*, *Fine Gardening*, and the *American Conifer Society Bulletin*. He has produced three videos on conifers and propagation methods. Bob’s expertise is recognized internationally, and he has presented both at the Fourth International Conifer Convention in England and the Royal Boskoop Horticultural Society in the Netherlands.

Class Description: The Three W’s is a class that focuses upon the behavior of conifers and will attempt to answer questions concerning the following topics by explaining the latest theories:

- Apical dominance
- Pendulous growth habits
- Golden foliage
- Witches’ brooms
- Propagation

The presentation will include descriptions and examples of each topic followed by class discussion to expand upon the presented information. If you have ever wondered why conifers grow the way they do, spend some time in this class to have many of your questions answered.

1B Don Wild The Diversity of Conifers

Speaker Bio: Don Wild is a hobby gardener of 30 years, who first became interested in conifers while searching for some winter interest in his wife’s garden. He discovered and joined the American Conifer Society (ACS). In the ACS, Don was able to network and learn from some amazing mentors. He eventually served as its president. His many years of contributions earned him the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award

of Merit for Dedicated Support of the ACS. Don and his wife Harriet have amassed an amazing collector's garden of plants surrounding their home.

Class Description: Take a journey through the world of conifers. Develop an appreciation of the wondrous diversity found in this relatively small but important portion of the plant kingdom. Conifers are a basic landscape element in garden design because of their color, form and texture. This Apple Keynote presentation features high quality images demonstrating the unique and special features in the genus, species and cultivars.

**1C Dr. Jeffery Iles Too Large to be a Shrub...Too Small to be a Tree...But
Perfect for the Midwestern Landscape**

Speaker Bio: Dr. Iles serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State University (Ames, IA). He teaches, conducts applied research, and provides Extension programming in the areas of landscape plant establishment and maintenance, woody plant evaluation, and nursery and garden center management. He received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in horticulture from Michigan State, Penn State, and Iowa State, respectively. Between degrees, Jeff worked in the retail garden center segment of the green industry, first in suburban Detroit, Michigan, and later in Littleton, Colorado. Jeff is a member of the Rotary Club of Ames and serves on the Board of Directors of the Ames Foundation, Brenton Arboretum, and in his spare time likes to cycle along the many excellent biking trails in central Iowa.

Class Description: Some woody plants seem to have an identity crisis. Neither shrub or tree...too large to use in a traditional foundation planting and too small to stand alone in the middle of the backyard. You know who they are: the witchhazels, Japanese/Korean hybrid maples, viburnums, and yes, even gray dogwood! But these plants *do* have a place in our managed landscapes, and in this session, we'll bring them out of the shadows and give them center stage.

**1D Bob Iames Cohesion vs. Chaos...Creating Design in the Collector's
Garden**

Speaker Bio: Bob Iames is a groundskeeper at the 173-acre Lange Estate in Ludlow Falls, Ohio. He is a member of the American Conifer Society, Ohio Valley North American Rock Garden Society, and is current president of the Miami Valley Hosta Society. He received the ACS Central Region 2018 Distinguished Service Award. He lives in Englewood with his wife Karen. As you might imagine, his favorite pastime is gardening. His passion is dwarf and unusual conifers and currently he has more than 400. The gardens also showcase more than 400 Hostas, 250 daylilies, rock garden plants, and many other rare and unusual perennials. Bob has provided continuing education for Ohio's Miami, Montgomery, and Greene Counties and Hendricks County, Indiana, Master Gardener Volunteers, as well as Miami Valley Green Industry Professionals. He has spoken to numerous garden clubs, plant societies, the Great Lakes Region Hardy Plant Society, the Federation of Garden Clubs, Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, local garden centers, plus he has presented at Hosta College.

Class Description: Are you a plant nut like me? Do you love to buy conifers, Japanese maples and well, plants in general and have to have one of each one you see? Do you get home, walk around the garden, wondering where to plant them so they don't look like soldiers in a row? Join me for a look at some gardens and gardeners that have solved the collector's garden dilemma. See how they turn chaos into order through the use of color, texture, shape and form to create a cohesive look in their gardens. We will talk about how to put it all together so you CAN have one of everything and still have a garden that is beautiful and harmonious.

Speaker Bio: Jason Reeves grew up on a farm in western Tennessee, where he fell in love with the plant world. He received his Master's degree in Ornamental Horticulture and Landscape Design from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In 2002, he became a research horticulturist and curator of the University of Tennessee Gardens located at the West Tennessee Research and Education Center in Jackson, Tennessee. Jason's colorful plant combinations and unique garden art, made by recycling everyday objects, draws several thousand people each year to the Center's annual lawn and garden show, Summer Celebration.

His past experiences include work at the Opryland Conservatories in Nashville, Missouri Botanical Garden, Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, and in private gardens in New Zealand.

When he's not bringing the grounds to life with his imaginative garden displays, he's evaluating hundreds of new and unique plants for the state's green industry; speaking at gardening symposiums or traveling the world leading gardening tours, and serving as a contributing editor to *Fine Gardening* magazine. He is also a landscape designer and consultant whose influence may be seen in landscapes across Tennessee in the form of distinct plant combinations and his signature garden art. You can follow him on Facebook at Jason Reeves – in the garden.

Class Description: Whether your garden is in a zero-lot line neighborhood, or a sprawling country estate, the odds are you have a space where a straight and narrow plant is desirable. Your options are to either choose plants that are correct for the space, or force ones that are not into submission. Living walls have become popular options for these spaces in recent years, they can be costly and high-maintenance; there is a better option for long-term success. Many new cultivars of favorite species have come on the market in recent years that can fill that void in the garden. By using slender trees and shrubs, as well as vines, you can add excitement to an otherwise challenging space.

Speaker Bio: Julia Hofley has been a green industry professional since 1998—from garden center manager/buyer to sales representative and garden writer/lecturer as well as the current Program Planner and President of the Hardy Plant Society ~ Great Lakes Region.

She writes new plant articles for *Michigan Gardener* magazine each spring and lectures on her plant experiences to gardening audiences. The garden is Julia's laboratory for what's new and a place for her and husband Eric's plant collections with a "Grow It to Know It" philosophy.

She considers hunting for new perennials a sport, with the credo, "No Plant Left Behind!" Her plant collections include favorites: Taxus, Ferns, Primula, Hellebores, Phlox, Hydrangeas, and glorious groundcovers. She cherishes the drama of the autumn garden, her favorite season. This finale shows waves of Chrysanthemums, Asters, Sedums, and other seasonal gems.

Class Description: Mulch is surely fine as a blanket around the base of conifers for many reasons, but have you considered alternatives such as the amazing array of groundcovers available today? Julia will share her A-list of garden-worthy groundcovers for sun and shade that contribute more drama to the conifer collector's garden. Get inspired to create your own handsome tapestry to contrast with and enhance the ground beneath and around your handsome conifer collection.

2C **Dr. Martin Stone** **Natural History, Evolution, and Biogeography of Cultivated Asian Acer Species**

Speaker Bio: Dr. Martin Stone obtained a B.S. in Horticulture and an M.S. in Botany at Oklahoma State University. He earned a Ph.D. at Texas A&M in Soil and Crop Science. He has been at Western Kentucky University (WKU) for the past fifteen years teaching ornamental horticulture and plant propagation. In 2008, he was named the Leichhardt Endowed Professor of Horticulture. Martin Stone is the Director of the Baker Arboretum and teaches courses in Landscape Horticulture, Plant Propagation, and Plant Physiology. He has traveled throughout the world with students studying Horticulture and currently teaches each January in Costa Rica.

Class Description: Maples, *Acer* spp. (Sapindaceae) are a cosmopolitan group of plants that are very frequently associated in gardens with conifers. Conifers and maples are complimentary in texture, color, and growth habit. The small Asian maples are especially popular as conifer companions. This talk will focus on maple evolution, biogeography, global migration, and status as a genus today. However, our understanding of maple evolution is far from complete. We will also talk about some important differences between the most common and popular species in our gardens and other plants in their genus.

2D **Ted Hildebrant** **Grafting-The Why and How with an Educational Demonstration**

Speaker Bio: Ted is a third-generation nurseryman and propagator who, with his life partner Elly Keyel, own and operate Coldwater Pond Nursery, a specialty woody plant propagation nursery in Phelps, NY, USA. Ted enjoys plant propagation of all types and can be found periodically teaching woody plant propagation to both professionals and hobby gardeners as well as consulting for new and established nurseries.

When not working in his nursery, Ted enjoys reading, woodworking, and vegetable gardening. He occasionally even finds time to tend his own landscape and loves to go shopping in his nursery for just the right plant to place in his yard. Ted and Elly reside on their nursery and farm with their two cats and far too many deer, groundhogs, voles and rabbits.

Class Description: Join Nurseryman and Grafter Ted Hildebrant for an in-depth look at grafting with a specific focus on its application in conifer propagation. You will learn the science behind the grafting process and why a propagator would choose grafting over other methods of propagation. Different techniques will be discussed with an emphasis on how to successfully graft plants from your own garden. The session will include a live demonstration of some of the methods covered in this fun and informative class.

▶ Session 3: 12:30 — 1:45

3A **Ron Amos** **Conifer Propagation from Seed at Evergreen Nursery. Principles and Practices for Large or Small Nurseries and Hobbyists**

Speaker Bio: Ron Amos received his B. S. and M. S. in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin Madison. He owns Evergreen Nursery Co., Inc., in Sturgeon Bay, WI, and has been propagating plants for more than 35 years. Ron is a member and Past President of the International Plant Propagators' Society and has taught plant propagation at the NEW Technical College for 10 years. Currently Evergreen Nursery grows over four million liners per year, of which over one million are evergreen seedling plugs.

Class Description: The presentation will cover conifer seed collection, extraction, storage and propagation at Evergreen Nursery. The principles of seed treatment, germination and successful growing will be discussed. The practices and methods used on a large scale at Evergreen Nursery will be examined, and Ron will review how these can be applied to a small nursery or hobbyist.

3B Jay Park Conifer Cognition (knowing in the broadest sense)

Speaker Bio: Jay and Tess Park are retired hobby gardeners, who live in Zone 5 north of Indianapolis. They started work on Parkwood Garden in 1978, when they reclaimed an overgrown 3.3 acres rural lot that included 1905 cottage-style farmhouse, which they restored, and 1-acre woods. Interest in woody plants has evolved in not just planting higher quality trees but collecting conifers and landscape gardening. Tess has written several articles for the *Conifer Quarterly* and *The Coniferite*.

Both joined the American Conifer Society and American Hosta Society in 1997. They volunteer as the Indiana Representative to the ACS, and organized ACS garden tours in the Indianapolis area (ACS Circle City Tours 2006, 2009, 2015, and 2021) as well as many other plant society tours.

Parkwood Garden, has been featured in 4 national and local magazines and one gardening book. In 2007 the National Hosta Convention voted Garden Award for Best Companion Plants.

Class Description: A fast paced, PowerPoint, rollercoaster ride through the world of conifers. This presentation is designed to answer basic questions such as: what's so great about conifers; planting tips; conifer texture, color, growth, and cones; and propagation methods of conifers for the garden. He'll conclude with bonsai and topiary uses.

3C Dennis Groh Asian Maple Musings - Sho Chiku Bai (松竹梅)

Speaker Bio: Dennis Groh has been a garden enthusiast since childhood, and an avid plant collector for more than 40 years. He has learned from his many failures. He is a voracious reader and has an extensive library of books on plants. He has been blessed to be able to network over the years with some generous and knowledgeable plant mentors. He has traveled the world to study those plants and talk with those most knowledgeable about growing them. Thus, his contacts in the horticultural world have grown right along with the plants. Dennis does all he can to advance knowledge in the horticultural field. A scientist by profession, he brings an incisive perspective to his gardening, asking "why" and demanding explanations for "how", supported by fact.

Dennis and his wife, Carole, have developed an amazing and stunning plant collection in their 1-acre garden. Photographs of their garden have been featured in the Detroit Free Press, the American Conifer Society magazine, and in Adrian Bloom's publication "Gardening with Conifers". In 2005, Rebecca's Garden (HGTV) filmed a segment on the Japanese Maples grown in their garden.

Dennis has lectured on conifers, fall color, rhododendrons & azaleas, woody plants, and Japanese gardens in an attempt to pass on his mentors' legacy of plant knowledge and to help others avoid his mistakes.

Class Description: In Japanese, Sho Chiku Bai (松竹梅) can be literally translated into pine (松), bamboo (竹), and plum (梅) and has special significance in Japan as New Year symbols of good fortune. However, it has also evolved into a common quality rating system where Bai is good, Chiku is better, and Sho is best.

Over the last 40 years, Dennis has planted, grown, and observed over a hundred different cultivars of Asian maples in his garden. Some have survived all 40 years; a few only lasted a year or two before requiring removal. A couple of untypically cold winters have also helped to “thin the herd” of survivors. The latter were expensive lessons. In this presentation, he will share his successes and failures and offer some insights and suggestions. His comments will also include input from other knowledgeable Asian maple growers in the Midwest. The information presented would probably be classified as anecdotal evidence by agricultural extension organizations. However, you can decide for yourself, based on the information and rationale, if what he shares might help you avoid some expensive disappointments.

3D Dr Todd West Unraveling the Mysteries of Winter Injury

Speaker Bio: Dr. Todd P. West is a Professor of Horticulture at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and director of the NDSU Woody Plant Improvement Program. This program focuses on the development of new woody cultivars suited for USDA hardiness zone 3 and 4. The purpose of this project is to increase the breeding efforts and germplasm collections for ornamental woody plants suited for cold continental climates. This program has developed the largest woody plant germplasm collection in the Northern Great Plains comprising of over 60 acres (~24 hectares) located at the NDSU Horticulture Research Farm/Dale E. Herman Research Arboretum near Absaraka, ND. This program has released 59 ornamental woody plants to the nursery industry, many of which have been shown to be the hardiest selections of their type in the commercial nursery industry.

Class Description: Winter injury is a common problem for landscape plants, especially for conifers. There are multiple ways in which the winter environment can adversely affect conifers and cause injury including: direct low temperature, frost, desiccation, sunscald, etc. In this program, Dr. Todd West, Professor of Horticulture at North Dakota State University will describe the how’s and why’s of winter injury and what can be done to protect conifers in the landscape from injury.

▶ Session 4: 2:00 — 3:15

4A Dr. Tony Reznicek Filling the Gaps: Integrating Rock Garden Plants With Conifers

Speaker Bio: Professionally, Dr. Reznicek is a botanist, working on sedges, especially in the New World, including Latin America. As well, he works with the flora and biogeography of the Great Lakes region and the northeastern North American flora generally, with a strong interest in rare plant conservation. He also is an avid gardener with varied interests, including rock gardening, native plants and ecologically sustainable gardening, woodland plants, both native and from other areas of temperate forest, especially temperate Asia, and more generally, any evolutionary or ecologically remarkable plant groups. He has been active in both the North American Rock Garden Society and its regional chapter.

Class Description: There is an incredible diversity of plant forms, foliage texture and color, and even cone form and color available with conifers, especially dwarfs. But even so, their woody plant life form is limiting, and focus on conifers and the need to avoid large, competing plants near them to prevent marring their symmetry can result in even dwarf conifer plantings looking like a miniature arboretum more than a garden. Carefully selected companion plants, however, can not only help integrate conifer plantings area into a garden whole, but also broaden the palette of color, form, and texture. And, with deciduous conifers, the advantages may be even greater if companion plants are evergreen. Companions of course, also function to diversity the attractiveness of an area to birds and to beneficial insects like bees and butterflies. Because of their cushion, mat, or mounding form, and often evergreen habit, rock garden plants can be ideal companions for even the smallest conifers. Unfortunately, many plants beloved of rock gardeners have a sometimes-deserved reputation for difficulty – some do indeed have quite specific soil and culture requirements. Opening reference works on rock garden plants also typically presents one with hundreds or

thousands of species, with little guidance as to suitability or availability for particular areas or conditions, or breadth of tolerance for varied environments. We will try to narrow the array of suitable choices to species well suited to a broad region of the U.S. that are both available and coexist well with conifers, as well as offering some possibilities for their use.

**4B Tess Park Winter Garden-Interesting Conifers, Woodies,
Perennials and Hardscape Visible in Nov to March**

Speaker Bio: Jay and Tess Park are retired hobby gardeners, who live in Zone 5 north of Indianapolis. They started work on Parkwood Garden in 1978, when they reclaimed an overgrown 3.3 acres rural lot that included 1905 cottage-style farmhouse, which they restored, and 1-acre woods. Interest in woody plants has evolved in not just planting higher quality trees but collecting conifers and landscape gardening. Tess has written several articles for the *Conifer Quarterly* and *The Coniferite*.

Both joined the American Conifer Society and American Hosta Society in 1997. They volunteer as the Indiana Representative to the ACS, and organized ACS garden tours in the Indianapolis area (ACS Circle City Tours 2006, 2009, 2015, and 2021) as well as many other plant society tours.

Parkwood Garden, has been featured in 4 national and local magazines and one gardening book. In 2007 the National Hosta Convention voted Garden Award for Best Companion Plants.

Class Description: A fast-paced presentation of plants you can enjoy during the five months from November to March in Zone 5. It features primarily conifers, but also includes deciduous trees, broad-leaved evergreens, heuchera, hellebores, evergreen fern, and early spring bulbs. Emphasizing those plants, tough enough to be interesting in the winter, and also serving as a backbone in your summer garden. Examples of hard-scaping and statuary are included as substantial features in the winter landscape.

4C John Amdall Prune, Don't Dig: Creating the Perfect-Sized Conifer

Speaker Bio: John Amdall acquired ACS (Addicted Conifer Syndrome) at the Rich's Foxwillow Pine exhibit at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show in the early 1990's. Sharon and John built a new home in 1997 and dwarf conifers became the foundation of the landscaping. By 2011, John realized that conifers do not read their labels because the conifers had far exceeded their allocated space. Before digging out and replacing the conifers, John decided to learn how to prune them, including classes at the 2012 ACS Conifer College. Today, there are several dozen conifers in John's Garden that will never become any larger and will be part of the garden indefinitely. John will share what he has learned, provide a few basic principles for conifer pruning, and provide a handout to attendees that includes many examples of conifer pruning.

Class Description: Yes, conifers can be pruned. Candling a conifer will slow the growth rate, but only pruning will control the size and shape of a conifer. John Amdall will share what he has learned about pruning conifers and how he has created a 23-year-old garden with the perfect-sized conifers. WARNING: you may never look at a conifer in the same way after this class!

4D Jerry Kral Conifers: What the Well-Dressed Garden is Wearing

Speaker Bio: Jerry attended Cornell University from 1958 to 1962 majoring in Agricultural Science. Two years of dairy farming in Western New York ensued. This did not do much for Jerry's social life. Jerry slowly phased out of farming while attending Geneseo State University and obtained his Permanent Secondary Science Teaching Certificate. He taught High School Science at Hilton, NY until he retired in 1993.

Jerry and his wife, Karen, purchased 900 N Winton Road in 1993 and began “Jerry & Karen’s Gardens”. Within 3 years Jerry was giving regular garden tours. He became a Master Gardener in 1996. He was on the originating committee of the very successful Gathering of Gardeners (GOG) Symposia and is still an active committee member. GOG has featured such illuminaries as Dan Hinkley, Tony Avent and Michael Dirr. All have toured Jerry & Karen’s Gardens.

Jerry is an active member of the American Conifer Society(ACS) and served as a member of their Board of Directors for 6 years. He organized several ACS -NER auctions. He, along with Elmer Dustman, co-organized an ACS National and several ACS-NER Meetings. He established the ACS Scholarship in 2005 and continued as its Chair until 2019.

Jerry was awarded the Marvin & Emily Snyder Merit Award For Dedicated Support in 2020 by The American Conifer Society.

Jerry has given many slide presentations to local and regional garden clubs including 2 presentations for the North American Rock Garden Society(NARGS) Adirondack Chapter at Cornell University.

Jerry was the NARGS Western speaker for 3 weeks in October 2015 giving rock garden presentations from Denver to Alaska including Calgary, Canada. In 2017 Jerry gave rock garden presentations to the NARGS Toronto and Ottawa Chapters..

Given all of this, Jerry’s main passion is still at 900 N Winton Rd. in Rochester, NY where he continues to play with rocks, conifers, and companion plants and pushing the limits of what can be done.

Class Description: Conifers can add an aesthetic to an ornamental garden impossible to achieve with other plants. This sometimes-cutting-edge slide show is for folks wanting to create a garden that uses conifers for effect and structure rather than a display of specimens. Exciting ways to use conifers, some still experimental, will be explored. How to choose the best conifer for such a purpose considering size, growth habit and form is covered. Adding bling to your conifer vignettes using selected companion plants is explored. Using conifers in landscape rockeries, container rockeries, and table rockeries is addressed. A garden is also more than just the plants. Garden rooms, pathways, lighting, and sculpture can enhance and complete the vision of a “Well Dressed Garden”.

PART 2 - CLOSING SESSION: 3:30 – 4:30 –An Expert Panel Discussion with Q & A

The panel will be comprised of several CC speakers and other ACS experts. Each panel member will take a few minutes to mention their biggest challenges and then take written questions gathered from attendees during the day. The Closing Session will be moderated by **Byron Baxter**.

END OF PROGRAM