

Why offer a conifer college?

Perhaps you have just discovered the impact of conifers in your landscapes and gardens, and you need specific knowledge, want to learn accurate plant names or need to know how to replicate a certain effect in your own garden. You may simply have an ongoing interest in plants, or a curiosity about conifers and you wish to learn in a hands-on way about the plants, but the information you have been getting is a bit scattered and contradictory. Conifer College is designed to offer our members a series of classes that concentrate on answering all your questions about the subject. This year, the college has been designed to answer questions from “newbies” as well as the veteran gardeners in attendance. Hopefully, the scope of the subjects included, based on our survey of attendees of past ‘colleges’, will appeal to all levels of interest. Here’s what the 2017 Conifer College will feature:

TERMINOLOGY

A good way to start is to learn the terminology, so that you know what you are talking about when you order on line or go to a nursery. **Dave Olzsyk**, our ConiferBase editor, will teach you what those Latin words are about so that you get the plant you want, the size you want, or the plant that will thrive in the conditions you have. Selecting the right species and cultivar (the name) of the plant is so important- and that exact plant is best described in Latin! Because common names vary from region to region, knowing the Latin name (and binomial nomenclature) puts everyone on the same page when selecting plant material. His class is: **“I’m Not Called Pygmaea Aurescens for Nothing!”**

LANDSCAPING: GOOD PRINCIPALS AND GREAT CONIFERS

Get beyond the “plunk-it-here” tendency and push yourself to develop a cone-hesive landscape plan that uses your beloved plants to their best potential and beauty. **Christie Dustman**, a nationally certified and award winning landscape designer in the Boston area will talk about design principals and strategies

that underpin dynamic planting design in her morning class and in the afternoon session, she will critique planting design in the field. Her class is: **“Site Me”**

Brent Markus, a landscaper and Oregon nursery grower, will show you the best and newest plants that fulfill the requirements and needs of your landscape plan. You may have met Brent at the 2016 Western Region meeting or during his volunteer auctioneer stints. His detailed knowledge of plants, from growth habits, foliage, texture and color variations to expected mature plant size, will provide you with so many plant options, you will be tempted to never stop installing gardens and beds. His class is: **“The Right Conifer for the Right Place”**

PLANT MAINTENANCE & DISEASES

Janet Macunovich and **Steven Nikkila**, authors of several gardening books, hosts of a radio gardening program for 10+ years and contributing authors to a popular Detroit newspaper Q&A gardening column have a lifetime of gardening experience.. They are each teaching classes. Steve’s class is:

“Columbo on Conifers...Why’d it Die?”

Maintenance methods are also essential issue for all conifer collectors; this includes pruning and grooming, keeping plants healthy utilizing best horticultural practices and dealing with common disease control. Janet’s’ class is: **“Giving Your Conifers a Haircut”**. Janet will also demonstrate ‘hands on’ in the garden during the afternoon field trip.

THE PLANTS

Frank Goodhart, past ACS president (1996-1997) and recipient of the Award of Merit for Development in The Field of Conifers (2008), will be presenting a class on **“Great American Trees”** He will demonstrate their importance in the landscape and their influence on conifer selections currently available. The talk begins with the giant redwoods of the West and ends with the pygmy pine forests of the East. Frank will include information about some selected dwarf conifers that intrigue us all. There are a couple of photos in the Photo Gallery just to give an idea of what you can expect to see during his

presentation. The photos are of *Pinus flexilis*, above 9000 feet, south of Breckenridge, CO.

No matter how full your garden, no matter how small—even a front step, mini patio or balcony; there is a container waiting for a “forest” full of conifers. **Jerry Kral** will show you a whole new world of how to present conifers. To quote Jerry, “The use of containers in our landscapes is much under used and much misunderstood. Growing a conifer under a maple tree is impossible due to root competition. Put it in a large container and, presto, you have a beautiful, dwarf white pine or hemlock plus a work of art.” Hands on demos in the afternoon are also included! His class is: **“Conifers Going to Pot”**.

Bob Fincham, national meeting keynote speaker, a past ACS president, author of “Small Conifers for Small Spaces” and “Gone But Not Forgotten”, is one of our ACS ‘stars’. Bob, a founding ACS member, past Western Region president and principal of Coenosium Gardens in Eatonville WA., will present a program on plant performance and size expectations over time. Bob, is obviously one of ‘the guys that wrote the

book(s)', so he is not to be missed! His class is: **"Small conifers for Small Spaces"**.

AFTERNOON DEMONSTRATIONS

But wait, there's more to do after the morning classroom presentations! We will enjoy a gourmet lunch at the hotel, before heading to the Hanford garden (Sycamore Hill) for afternoon workshops and practical demonstrations. Many of the morning presenters will be on hand for these demonstrations.

Elmer Dustman will present principles of aesthetic pruning during his hands-on demonstration of selected specimen conifers in Sycamore Hill gardens. Aesthetic pruning is a visual art form based upon Japanese garden pruning, bonsai and arboriculture that reveals a plant's unique beauty. **Jerry Kral** will instruct how to make glazed, ceramic containers frost proof and turn them into miniature rockeries to uniquely display your most precious conifers. Also in the garden, **Christie Dustman** will focus on effective complimentary plant placement using examples from the wonderful conifer vignettes sited

throughout Sycamore Hill, and **Janet Macunovich** will demonstrate the best ways to clip, shape and maintain several different types of conifer foliage- by doing it!

THE PARTY BOAT

Certainly after absorbing all that information from the classes and demonstrations, you will be ready to relax on a wonderful dinner cruise on Skaneateles Lake. The entire boat is re-served for our group for a three hour cruise! This sure makes signing on for all those classes even more rewarding. Having just experienced one of these cruises on the Bateaux Mouches, in Paris, this spring I don't know about you, but I am ready to sit back and do it again in 2017! For everyone's comfort and enjoyment, the individual classes have limited seating, and the Sunday, one day college will only be offered to the first 80 registrants, so don't be left out by waiting to sign up at the last minute.....there may not be any seats left if you do!

FYI when Registering: The complete morning session runs from 8:30 to 12 noon, with two 15 minute breaks. There will be 3 one hour sessions of 4 classes each. Class choices will be made on a first come, first served basis. You will be assigned both your class and session to allow the most people possible to get their top 3 choices. You will receive your assignments at the meeting.