Picea abies 'Virgata'  
Hidden Lake Gardens Harper Collection  
Photo by Don Wild
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The purpose of the American Conifer Society is to promote conifers in the garden and landscape and to educate the public about their care and preservation.
The spelling of “Witch’s Broom” – AGAIN?! And FINAL

The origin of the English phrase “witch’s broom” is the German *Hexenbesen*, which means “the broom of a/the witch”.

Wikipedia defines “*Hexenbesen*” as the “broom of a witch”. Ergo: “Hexenbesen” is the transport vehicle of a witch, in other words, a *witch’s broom*. *Besen* is the German word for “broom”. But more importantly—Far more importantly—DUDEN, the pre-eminent source encyclopedia on the German Language, addresses the use of *Hexen-*.

For example, such German nouns as *Hexe* (witch) add –*en* when combined with another noun to form a compound. *Frau* + *en* is used as a prefix in the noun phrase *Frauenkirche*, the Church of the Blessed Virgin (of [our] Lady). In the compound noun *Hexe + besen*, an –*en* is inserted to show the genitive possessive, of the/a. Thus, *Hexenbesen* results. The use of *Hexen- (of a witch)* as a prefix is referred to in Volume 1 of the DUDEN encyclopedia, p. 466, *Die Deutsche Rechtschreibung*. Translated, “the correct spelling of German”.

Further—in *Reference Grammar of the German Language (Grammatik der deutschen Sprache)*, by Schulz-Griesbach, p. 35, “-(e)n indicates a former genitive ending of masculine or feminine nouns” (*Hexe* is a feminine noun). For example, *Linde +
n + blatt (leaf) = leaf of the linden tree, Woche (week) + n + tag = day of the week, Marie + n + kirche = Church of St. Mary; Hexe + n + besen = broom of the/a witch.

There have been several permutations of the translation of Hexenbesen. I have seen “witches’ broom”, which means the broom of [many] witches; “witches'-broom”, which is the most peculiar, manufactured compound noun in the English language because it combines the genitive plural of witch, witches’, a hyphen and then the word “broom”. Admittedly, “witches’-broom” is listed in Webster’s and witches’ broom (a besom) in The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language and in the Royal Horticulture Society’s Encyclopedia of Conifers. But, it is nonsense, and all three are wrong.

In A Grammar of the English Language by George O. Curme (Vol. II: Syntax), pp. 74–75, Old English (OE) had “several simple genitive forms:… -es, -e, and –an.” In Middle English (ME), only the -s ending remained. It’s called levelling out. That happens when one form of a word or usage predominates. Levelling out occurs because of confusion, eg. the difference between “lie” and “lay”, “sit” and “set”. In our case, “witches” in OE, turned into ME
“witch’s” and was also substituted by “of a/the witch”. “Witch’s” remained into New English (NE).

Thus, “witches’ broom” or “witches’-broom” can NOT be the correct translation of Hexenbesen.

When President Kennedy said in Berlin: “Ich bin ein Berliner.” He actually said: “I am a jelly donut.” Too bad a native German or someone really knowing German had not been asked how to say it accurately. The Berliners cheered. They were kind and polite.

As a German language expert, I set the record straight. Be accurate and spell the dense clump of branches on any tree or shrub as: witch’s broom, plural — witch’s brooms.

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**Editors Note:** In the Fall CQ, one of the CCOY plants was incorrectly attributed to Rare Tree Nursery (p. 18). *Thuja occidentalis* ‘Jantar’ P.P. 22296 was authored by Randy Smith.

For those of you who purchased *Pinus cembra* ‘Herman’ in 2015, please note that its full name is *Pinus cembra* ‘Herman’ *Prairie Statesman*.®

Write for ConiferQuarterly. Submission dates for 2016 are: February 15 for Spring, May 15 for Summer, August 15 for Fall and November 15 for Winter (2017).

Your words are our treasures.
I am in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia, in zone 7, by the skin of my teeth (zone 7b and one zip code away from zone 8a). Furthermore, we all know that “hardy” to zone 7 hardly means “will grow” in zone 7, especially when one’s zone 7 features crushing heat and humidity during the long summers. Nevertheless, my yard is just over 1,000 feet in elevation, and the summer night time temperatures are generally a few degrees cooler than the Atlanta airport’s (the airport is about 30 miles to my south).

So, I made up my mind to have a go at growing all of the ACS Collectors’ Conifers of the Year from 2006 to 2015. Most of them I bought in 2014, so I haven’t accomplished that much, yet. Almost all were planted either in raised beds with rich topsoil or in containers. I wanted to insure that drainage issues in our hard southern clay did not cause problems.
2015

*Pinus cembra* ‘Herman’ **Prairie Statesman** – Alive in the ground. Planted in May 2015.

*Pinus parviflora* ‘Tanima-no-yuki’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in the fall of 2014.

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* ‘Schirrmann’s Nordlicht’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in May 2015. This one arrived in rather poor shape, but it hung in there during our recent hot and dry summer. We’ll see how it leafs out in the spring.

2014

*Pinus × schwerinii* ‘Wiethorst’ – Alive in a pot. Planted fall 2014. It will probably last one more year in its pot, and then I’m going to have to find space in the ground for it.
Abies koreana ‘Kohouts Icebreaker’ – One, on unknown rootstock, died in the ground during its first summer in 2014. Two others (one on Abies firma rootstock and the other on Abies koreana rootstock), both planted in the fall of 2014, have now survived one year.

2013

Picea abies ‘Gold Drift’ – Alive in the ground. Planted fall of 2014. The plant is in partial sun, and it’s a nice dark green without the slightest hint of gold. Still, my ‘Gold Drift’ is a beautiful conifer.

Pinus mugo ‘Carsten’s’ – Alive in a pot. Planted fall of 2014.

Cunninghamia konishii ‘Little Leo’ – First one died this summer after being transplanted from a pot into the ground. Replaced it with another one planted in the ground in early fall of 2015.

2012


Cedrus brevifolia ‘Kenwith’ – Alive in the ground. Planted spring of 2014.

Picea abies ‘Wichtel’ – Died in a pot during the summer of 2015. Planted in fall of 2014. I would consider replacing it, but Coenosium Gardens, where I obtained the original, has closed shop, and I’ve been unable to locate a nursery which sells it.
Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Chirimen'
2011

*Pinus parviflora* ‘Bergman’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in the fall of 2014.

*Chamaecyparis obtusa* ‘Chirimen’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in the spring of 2014. I really love this plant.

2010

*Ginkgo biloba* ‘Mariken’ – Alive in the ground. Planted fall of 2014.

*Larix decidua* ‘Puli’ – Alive in the ground. I planted this one in the fall of 2014 in a raised bed, on a slope, near the bottom of a swale. It’s in partial shade. I really babied this plant through the summer, and it’s gratifying that it has made it so far. Still, my hopes aren’t real high that it’s going to be a long-term survivor.

*Taxodium distichum* ‘Pevé Minaret’ – Alive in the ground. Planted fall of 2014. It struggled this summer, but it survives. It’s a plant which does well in far more southern locales than mine, and I’m not too worried about its first-year hardship.
2009

*Pinus heldreichii* ‘Smidtii’ – Alive in the ground. Originally planted in a pot in 2014, I moved it to the ground in the spring of 2015.

*Pinus strobus* ‘Niagara Falls’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in fall of 2014. Incidentally, this fall, it is showing very significant yellowing and loss of its internal needles, but, I’m told by people with far more experience than I, that this autumn change is perfectly normal.

2008

*Picea pungens* ‘The Blues’ – Died in the ground. Planted fall of 2014. This cultivar is actually one of the easier CCOY cultivars to find in the retail nursery trade (at least around here), but I don’t think I’m going to replace it.

*Picea abies* ‘Pusch’ – Alive in the ground. Planted fall of 2014.

2007

*Picea omorika* ‘Pendula Bruns’ – Alive in the ground. Planted fall of 2014. Incidentally, I’ve had terrible luck with other *P. omorika*, but this one has done okay so far. It, like the *Larix*, is planted on a slope to ensure good drainage.

*Picea orientalis* ‘Tom Thumb Gold’ – Alive in the ground. Planted in spring of 2012. It lost two major branches in the past several months, transforming a tight bun into something far more asymmetrical. I’m not really sure what the problem is. Fingers remain crossed – it’s a neat little plant.
2006

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* ‘Ogon’ – Alive in the ground. Incidentally, this tree was NOT planted in a raised bed - it was plopped right into the Georgia clay in the fall of 2012. It continues to do great, and probably remains the fastest growing plant in my garden. I’m sad I won’t be around on its 300th birthday to see what it’s become.

Champion Trees

By Dan Spear

I was exploring a new trail for me on my mountain bike ride recently in the Peninsular Range Mountains of San Diego County, California, and came across an enormous *Calocedrus decurrens*, incense cedar, by far the largest I had ever seen.

I did what any chronic conehead would do; had a friend stand in front of the tree and took a picture of it to share with other coneheads. I emailed the picture and mentioned that maybe it was a champion, to which the response was: “What’s a champion?” I was surprised these conifer experts did not know, but, frankly, I didn’t know much more. So, I did a little reading, and I’m going to share with you what I found. With any hope, some of you readers can further educate the rest of us, as I am sure there are experts in our midst.

There is something in human nature which makes us admire and revere champions; the biggest, tallest, longest, and the largest crown spread. In some areas, it is taken to extremes. The company I work for is headquartered near the world’s steepest railway, longest footbridge, and tallest underground waterfall. Our competitive nature pushes us in many different directions. Many people can name the tallest mountain in the world or in the United States, but how about the second tallest? Probably not. Everybody loves a winner, as the saying goes. Well, it is the same for trees. There are National Champion trees, and each state has a State Champion program, and it is not just for conifers, but other types of trees too, totaling more than 780 species.

American Forests is the originator of the National Big Tree Program (www.americanforests.org). American Forests runs the database, The National Register of Big Trees, listing more than 750 National Champions. It all started in 1940 with their magazine article asking people to find and save the largest trees. Decades before the Green Movement, there were tree-huggers concerned about the demise of the record-holding trees. By 1941, there were 77 Champions listed.

A champion tree has the largest total number of the following measurements: circumference in inches + height in feet + ¼ crown spread in feet, per
species. Cultivars and hybrids are not included. American Forests has as a very useful publication called *American Forests Champion Trees Measuring Guidelines*, (www.americanforests.org/bigtrees/big-tree-measuring-guidelines) showing how to measure it when you find that monster pine, spruce, or hemlock. Like so many things, the more you begin to learn about a subject, the more you realize how little you know. The same goes for measuring trees to get accurate measurements when it is leaning, on a slope, asymmetrical, or all of the above. It appears to get rather complicated, so an affinity for math would be helpful. If I had a true contender, I would be calling somebody at American Forests for assistance! Help! An additional fun feature of these champions is the possibility that you may find one. Somewhat like witch’s brooms and seedlings we find which may lead to new cultivars; searching parks, cemeteries, and our forests may lead to the next national or state champion.

It was interesting and surprising to read about these national and state champion trees, how large they are, and where they are located. A good many are at the park which surrounds the California State Capital in Sacramento, and several were in my home town of Orange, including the current National Champion *Pinus pinea*, Italian stone pine, which is listed at 239 inches in diameter, 62 feet high, with a crown spread of 105 feet.

So, was that beautiful, huge incense cedar I found on my ride a potential champion? Not even close. The current National Champion was nominated in 2011 and was found in Josephine, Oregon. It measured 484 inches in circumference, 138 feet tall, and a crown spread of 45 feet, for a total of 633 points, bumping out the previous National Champion from California at 627 points. Now that is a Champion!
2014 Jean Iseli Memorial Grant: Giving the Conifer Collection at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

By Elizabeth Fogel, Senior Horticulturist

Situated on 82 acres of exquisitely landscaped gardens in Richmond, Virginia, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is one of the most comprehensive public gardens on the East Coast.

The Garden was established in 1984 through the generous bequest of local philanthropist Grace Arents, who wished to provide a place of natural beauty, learning, and refreshment to an increasingly urbanized community. An ACS Reference Garden since 2009, the Garden was honored to receive the 2014 ACS Jean Iseli Memorial Grant for the purpose of expanding and improving our existing conifer collection.

The Margaret Johanna Streb Conifer Garden, originally constructed in 1995–96, is a picturesque area of the Garden located on the banks of our Lake Sydnor. The conifer garden houses a collection of dwarf conifers, showcasing the wide range of forms, colors and sizes available to the homeowner.
It is complemented with spring-blooming minor bulbs, flowering shrubs, and large boulders near the water’s edge.

With a newly updated plant collections policy, the Garden has a renewed focus and commitment to thoughtfully curating and increasing this valuable collection. The timing of this award was perfect to fill newly expanded garden beds, created through a donor-funded construction project. These recent renovations to the surrounding area, in the form of a Cherry Tree Walk, have improved walkways and increased traffic flow to the conifer garden. The project had the added benefit of creating additional space to expand our conifer collection. The majority of the $4,000 Iseli Memorial Grant award was used to purchase plants, with a small portion helping to purchase soil amendments and the display labels used to educate our visitors on the plants’ names.

The Renovation

We saw that this donor-funded Cherry Tree Walk project was an excellent opportunity to make needed renovations and improvements throughout the conifer garden. Keeping conifers in mind during the design and installation, we were able to use the pathway project to address the existing limitations of the conifer garden. Pathways were shifted from their original locations in order to protect important existing specimens, expand the size of the garden by approximately 2,500 square feet, and to create a variety of sun exposure microclimates, in which to plant. In addition, numerous broad-leafed plantings were removed to relieve overcrowding, increase sunlight, and make room for more conifers. The ACS grant funding allowed us to purchase a large number of plants to fill this new space.

The Culture

Knowing the importance of good soil, the new planting areas were amended. Some poor soils were removed and replaced with topsoil, compost, PermaTill, and fine pine mulch which were tilled in over the entire area. The soil level was raised in many areas, creating a berm effect, in an effort to ensure good drainage. Plant Saver tablets were incorporated into every planting hole to promote healthy root growth and protect them from vole damage, which is a common problem in Richmond. Each plant was placed in the garden based on its individual sun exposure requirements. At planting, the roots of each specimen were inspected and teased apart, if needed, in order to prevent girdling roots.
The Plants

The first step in expanding our conifer collection was to scrutinize our existing plants. Through our plant records database, I examined not just what was growing in the conifer garden, but all conifers on our entire property. Using books and the websites of the ACS and Iseli Nursery, as well as of some other conifer growers, I created a wish list of conifers to purchase. I back-checked the list against our database to ensure every plant purchased would be adding something new to the Garden. While creating this list, I kept these three goals in mind: maximize the number of taxa in our collection, choose the most appropriate plants for our southeastern climate, and show our visitors the diversity of conifers available which are appropriate for home landscaping. We hope that our collection will inspire our visitors to use successfully more conifers in their own gardens.

In researching plants hardiest for our region, I learned much from *Landscaping with Conifers and Ginkgo for the Southeast* by Tom Cox and John Ruter. I also found helpful information online and communicated with several conifer growers in the region, including Appeldoorn Landscape Nursery, Mountain Meadows Nursery, and Specialty Ornamentals.

Next spring, I might follow the advice in *Landscaping with Conifers and Ginkgo* and prune new cones to conserve energy while the plants become more established.

The majority of new conifers were purchased and planted in fall 2014 and spring 2015. I shared my wish list with Colesville, a large, local nursery,
which was able to source and obtain many of my desired plants. This greatly reduced the amount of money spent on shipping. Plants were also purchased from eight smaller specialty nurseries across the country. In all, 88 conifers were purchased with the grant funds, representing 23 genera and 56 species. One more genus and nine more species are represented by the roughly 35 more conifers purchased by or donated to the Garden during this time.

Five of the genera purchased did not currently exist elsewhere in the Garden: *Abies*, *Araucaria*, *Fitzroya*, *Keteleeria*, and the gymnosperm *Ephedra*. All of the *Abies* purchased were from nurseries in the Southeast and were grafted onto Momi fir rootstock. Those purchased include *Abies concolor* ‘Medlock’, *Abies fraseri* ‘Klein’s Nest’, *Abies koreana* ‘Horstmann’s Silberlocke’, *Abies koreana* ‘Aurea’, *Abies koreana* ‘Zwergform Wüstemeyer’, and *Abies nordmanniana* ‘Prostrata’. I look forward to observing their long term response to our climate.

Having spent so much time planning, searching, and agonizing over each plant purchased, I truly love every one. However, there are a number which stand out as my favorites. I’m excited to add two dwarf *Metasequoia*
glyptostroboides ‘Miss Grace’ and ‘Shirrmann’s Nordlicht’ and the dwarf Sequoia sempervirens ‘Glaucad’ to our collection. Picea omorika ‘Pendula Bruns’ has so much character it has long been a favorite of mine; so, I’m pleased to have one now in the Garden. Taxodium distichum ‘Secrest’ was just the plant to fill a space where drainage remains problematic. Juniperus virginiana is such a reliable choice for our climate that I am pleased to display ‘Pendula’ for our visitors to see. My other favorite junipers purchased are the beautifully blue Juniperus deppeana ‘McPhetter’, Juniperus communis ‘Kalebab’, which already looks tremendously happy in the garden, and the indeed splashy Juniperus rigida subsp. conferta ‘Sunsplash’.

Two beautiful cultivars, ‘Aurea’ and ‘Latifolia’, of Thujopsis dolabrata have been added to our collection. The bright spiky form of Cryptomeria japonica ‘Twinkle Toes’ makes me smile every time I pass it and read its name in the garden. The wonderful form and texture of Pinus densiflora ‘Low Glow’ also has this effect on me, and the yellow variegated foliage of Taxus baccata ‘Watnong Gold’ always looks cheerful in the garden. As its name suggests, Pinus strobus ‘Lovable Fuzz Ball’ is indeed lovable and begs to be touched. The shocking ice blue of Picea pungens ‘Thomsen’ demands attention, and I look forward to watching it grow and fill in over the next few years. I know our visitors will be similarly drawn to the stunning variegation on Pinus densiflora ‘Golden Ghost’ as it becomes established.

In the near future, our entire living collections database will be available to the public on our new Garden Explorer website: http://lewisginter.
gardenexplorer.org/. Over this past summer, our old plant records database was replaced with IrisBG, allowing us to make this information publicly available. You can search for plants by scientific name, common name, plant family, or pull up the entire inventory for a particular part of the garden. Work is yet to be done on mapping the garden locations and uploading our newest accession records; so, keep checking the site to watch its progress.

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is committed to providing a world class visitor experience, and our conifer collection is an important part of this experience and our mission. We will continue to cultivate mindfully and to diversify this collection into the future. Thanks to the ACS grant funding, our visitors can enjoy and learn from a very diverse collection of conifers. We sincerely appreciate the support of the ACS and hope to see you in the garden.
Central Region to Host 2016 National Meeting June 23rd–25th

By David Speth

You are invited to attend the American Conifer Society’s 2016 annual National Meeting, which will be held this year at the Cherry Valley Lodge located in Newark, Ohio, from June 23rd through 25th. Because this is a National Meeting, you will be able to meet the national Board of Directors and discuss issues involving our society. In addition, you will be able to participate in Friday morning lecture sessions, tour three nationally recognized gardens, and enjoy the comradery of meeting new and old friends from around the country.

The Cherry Valley Lodge is located within a few miles of the Dawes Arboretum and within 30 miles of our two other conference gardens. The Lodge is offering a special hotel rate of $104 per night for conference attendees and can be reached for reservations at (740) 788-1200.

The conference will begin Thursday evening at 5:00 pm with registration and reception. Following dinner our keynote speaker, Dennis Groh, will speak on “Japanese Gardens: Elements, Influences and Evolution”. On Friday, after breakfast, we will offer a series of lectures and workshops at the Lodge with topics of interest to conifer enthusiasts. The lecture sessions will wrap up with a “Stump the Experts” session, during which you will be able to ask those perplexing questions which have been bugging you for a while. After lunch, we will take the 8-mile drive and tour Dawes Arboretum. After Friday evening’s meal, Jack Wikle will present “Bonsai, What It Is and What It Isn’t”.

The Saturday agenda will consist of tours of Schnormeier and Mission Oaks Gardens. Lunch will be served at the Ariel Foundation Park, a very unusual new green space located in Mount Vernon. We’ll again return from the gardens for dinner which will be followed by our traditional plant auctions.

As an introduction to their garden and the Ariel Foundation Park, Ted and Ann Schnormeier will generously donate a copy of their award winning garden book and a new book on the Ariel Foundation Park to conference attendees.

A list of pre- and post-conference gardens open to conference goers will be available to all registrants prior to the conference.
Conference registration documents will be available in the winter edition of *Conifer Quarterly* and on the society’s website www.conifersociety.org. Don’t forget that your hotel registration must be made separately.

We look forward to seeing you there.

**The following is a summary of major conference activities:**

**Evening Speakers**

**Thursday Evening:** This year’s conference Keynote Speaker, Dennis Groh, will present “Conifers and the Japanese Influence in Ohio”. Dennis has visited Japan three times and has read over a dozen books on the subject. He will share some of the history and culture, which influenced the development of Japanese gardens. Dennis will identify some of the key design concepts, which could also be applied to home gardens. He will then take you on a virtual tour of some of Japan’s greatest gardens. Dennis has been a garden enthusiast and avid plant collector for 40 years. Working with his wife, Carole, they have built a world-class plant collection in their 1-acre garden. From 2003 to 2008, Dennis was an instructor with the Michigan School of Gardening. He has lectured on conifers, fall color, rhododendrons, azaleas, woody plants, and Japanese gardens.

*Pinus parviflora* ‘Miyajima’ at The National Arboretum Bonsai and Penjing dates from 1600 CE and survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Photo by Dennis Groh.
Friday Evening: Jack Wikle will present “Bonsai, What It Is and What It Isn’t”. Jack is a bonsai artist, teacher and consultant to organizations such as Michigan State University’s Hidden Lake Gardens and The University of Michigan’s Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Jack is a past editor of BONSAI: The Journal of the American Bonsai Society. His bonsai have appeared in regional and national level invitational exhibits and as foreign bonsai in the 10th International Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition held in Osaka, Japan, in 1989. As a visiting bonsai artist, Jack has traveled the country giving presentations to bonsai societies.

Saturday Evening Plant Auction
A special event in the conference is our annual Saturday night conifer auction. The auctions always include a variety of dwarf and miniature cultivars, offering a variety of colors and shapes which are generously donated by our own members. It’s a fun way to see plants you would not see at a local nursery or garden center, get information about a plant of interest, and add to your own collection. Whether you prefer the anonymity of a silent auction, or the action of a verbal auction, there is something for everyone. The auction also includes a favorite Can-Auction, for which tickets can be bought for a chance at the conifer(s) of your choice. The proceeds from the auction help advance the mission of the American Conifer Society.

Friday Morning Lecture and Workshop Sessions
The following is a summary of speakers who will participate in our Friday morning lecture and workshop session:

Session 1: Brent Markus, Conifer Kingdom & Rare Tree Nursery, will speak on “Utilizing Conifers and Maples to Create a Four-Season Landscape”. Brent has been collecting and design with conifers since he won Best Collector’s Garden by the Chicago Tribune for the redesign of his family’s half-acre
property—at age fifteen! He started his own design business in 2004 and founded Markus Farms LLC in Silverton, OR, launching Rare Tree Nursery, a wholesale Japanese maple and conifer nursery. He completed a Masters degree in Ornamental Horticulture and founded ConiferKingdom.com, the retail mail order extension of Rare Tree Nursery. Through landscape design and supplying to garden centers and collectors throughout the U.S., Brent has experienced all levels of customers in many different climate types and situations. He is consistently expanding what his nurseries grow and the plants he utilizes in landscapes.

**Session 2:** Gary Whittenbaugh will speak on “Conifer Companions”. He will talk about new and exciting ideas on smaller trees, shrubs and other plants which complement our dwarf conifers, particularly for those smaller properties and gardens so many of us have. Gary has been gardening for over 40 years with emphasis on dwarf, slow-growing and unusual conifers. He is past president of ACS Central Region and recipient of the prestigious Marvin and Emelie Snyder Merit Award for Service. He is an Iowa Master Gardener and has received the Lifetime Master Gardener award. He has lectured extensively on conifers, conifer companions, hypertufa troughs, and rock gardens, not only in Iowa, but throughout the US.

**Session 3:** Lisa Harris Hollister, Esq. will speak on recent developments in genetic modification of plants to address horticultural problems and improve hybrid vigor. Lisa has practiced law for almost 30-years and is currently Managing Member of Reliance Botanics, LLC, an Ohio company focused on genetic modification of plants. She is married to Dewey Hollister, renowned horticulturalist and founder of Ohio Heritage Garden located at the Ohio Governor’s Residence. Lisa will talk about her experience in founding Reliance Botanics and the progress it has made, with Dr. Yi Li of University of Connecticut, in creating and testing transgenic plants which are termite-, rot- and deer-resistant.

**Session 4:** David Dannaher will present a workshop entitled “Propagating Conifers and Other Ornamental Plants”. His presentation will discuss the steps he has found which work for both conifers and other rare and unusual plants. He will conduct a demonstration of these steps and will bring examples of plants he has grafted to show how they develop with time. Dave and his wife Leslie own Dannaher Landscaping, which specializes in rare and unusual plants, and is located in Galena, Ohio. Dave estimates that he makes between 5,000–8,000 grafts per year of unique conifer and other ornamental
With over 32 years of landscape experience and 23 years of propagating their own plants, Dave has seen it all. More information can be found at: www.danna-herlandscaping.com

Session 5: “Stump The Experts” – Bring your conifer questions. Our group of experts is bound to have an answer for you.

Conférence Garden Tours

Dawes Arboretum. Located in Newark, Ohio, the Dawes Arboretum is one of Ohio’s premier public arboretums/gardens. The arboretum consists of over 2,000 acres, including for our interest: the Conifer Glen, recently renovated Japanese Garden, and renovated Daweswood area display gardens. Since the Society’s last visit in 2004, the Conifer Glen has undergone big changes within this roughly 14-acre collection. Jeff Bowman, Senior Horticulturist and Curator of the Conifer Collection, reports that the original collection has been thinned to relieve some overcrowding and to remove underachieving and diseased plants. A variety of new plantings has taken their place. The cold, sunny and windy
Japanese Garden at Dawes Arboretum.
Photo by Beckie Fisher.
winters of the past two years have taken their toll on some wonderful, established plants. These same conditions, however, have also left many surprising tough survivors which have flourished despite these winter extremes. Jeff will be able to share the wonderful plant successes and disappointing failures.

More information about the arboretum can be found at: www.dawesarb.org

**Schnormeier Gardens.** Located in Gambier, Ohio, the Schnormeier Gardens are a 40-minute bus ride from the conference center. Ted and Ann Schnormeier started the gardens in 1996. Since then, the gardens have grown to include fifty acres of manicured lawns, ten lakes, and a variety of discreet garden areas and several waterfalls. The gardens have a distinct Asian flavor and feature a variety of plantings rich in color and texture. Rare conifers are plentiful. An ever-growing collection of unique sculptures is located on the grounds. The Schnormeier Gardens were included on the ACS National Meeting garden tour in 2004. Ted reports that the gardens have been substantially expanded since then so that even previous visitors will enjoy another visit. More information can be found at: www.schnormeiergardens.org

**Mission Oaks Garden.** Mission Oaks Garden is a beautiful urban garden located in Zanesville, Ohio. What makes this garden unique is its unassuming nature. It exists quietly and virtually undetected from the street in a residential neighborhood. The more than five acres showcase hundreds of both common and unusual plants. It features two waterfalls, a bog garden, a large
pond, walking paths, a creek, and one of the most renowned conifer gardens in the state. The one and one-quarter acre conifer garden contains 300 trees, many of which are not native to North America. The garden also includes a collection of hybrid magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons. Perennials and annuals fill the garden almost year round. More information can be found at: www.missionoaksgardens.org

**Ariel-Foundation Park.** The Ariel-Foundation will be our lunch site on Saturday. The park is a new public green space in Mount Vernon, Ohio, located on the site of the former Pittsburgh Plate Glass manufacturing plant. Although not a conifer garden, the park will be of interest as a place to stretch our legs and enjoy lakes, woods and historic facilities. More information can be found at: www.arielfoundationpark.org.

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Pinus torreyana with a large witch's broom, Southern California
Photo by Jack Christiansen
SAVE THE DATE:
ACS Northeast Regional Meeting
August 12–14 2016 • Keene, New Hampshire
The Courtyard by Marriott Downtown Keene Hotel

The ACS will venture to Southwest New Hampshire to take in 4 private gardens around the Keene area in August 2016. NH boasts natural beauty—mountains, farming, granite, forests and water, and this natural scenery is the backdrop for these four gardens. We will explore a garden in cultivation for 45 years, two in cultivation for 25 years and a new 10-year-old garden. In addition to conifers, beech and perennials, we will view a sugaring house, a natural cranberry fen (floating bog), a farmstead built in the 1790’s, and a newly built medieval style manor house, complete with stonework by renowned mason, Dan Snow. Stay a few days and take in Brattleboro Vermont, the White Mountains of NH or hike Mt. Monadnock.

Marc Hudson – The Inspired Gardener:
We will be visiting Marc’s private 1.5 acre garden. The newer areas of the garden were started in 1990, and there are older trees and some lovely conifer specimens. In addition, Marc has 9 Fagus cultivars and many Japanese maples.

Michael Nerrie – Distant Hills Garden:
The mission of Distant Hills Garden is to foster an intimate connection between people and primarily native plants, pollinators and the environment. With 58 acres of gardens, forest, fields and wetlands, plus a fen cranberry
bog, Michael opens the garden to the public monthly and offers nature workshops. The first ornamentals were planted in 1990, and Distant Hills Garden also has an active sugar house and a monarch butterfly refueling field.

**Susan and Rick Richter – Woodland Farms:**

Susan Richter’s gardens-in-progress at Woodland Farms have been evolving for ten years around an oak-and-stone dwelling, built to suggest a medieval Anglo-Norman house on 300 acres in Vermont. The “ruins” of ancient Celtic structures (created by renowned mason Dan Snow) and substantial terraces, steps, and pathways (built by Scott Bolotin) provide the bones for a richly varied landscape. Distinct garden areas include forgotten shrubs and perennials, dwarf conifers, and uncommon trees. Exquisitely detailed gardens, buildings and stone complete the design of this small manor farm.

**Kris Fenderson & Alston Barrett – Grout Hill Farm:**

The three-hundred-acre Grout Hill Farm is one of New Hampshire’s hidden gems. Located on a winding dirt road, the farm has been Barrett’s and Fenderson’s home with gardens in cultivation for forty-five years. The house, built in the 1790s, is one of the oldest in town and belonged to one of Fenderson’s distant ancestors in the 1830s. The farm boasts amazing conifers, perennials, annuals, and probably the tallest golden weeping beech you will ever see. Kris is a master plantsman, garden designer, and has been in the garden business since 1968, as well as being a published expert on primroses and part of the Carey Award Plant Selection Committee.
As one who has started an arboretum, I’ve had the occasion to acquire thousands of plants—more than 60% are non-conifers.

I believe one of the allures of conifers is that they seem to acquire a personality; we tend to form relationships with them. These become our babies; we watch them, cuddle them and proudly boast about their attributes. In some instances, we claim bragging rights. I have been around plantspeople for most of my life, and the coneheads seem to be a different sort. We discuss conifers with others in a unique code, e.g. I just lost my ‘Tom Thumb Gold’, or come over this weekend and I’ll show you my ‘Kotobuki’. One wonders what non-coneheads must think we’re talking about.

With the possible exception of Japanese maples, most other plants tend to be seasonal in their appeal, and we do not attach the same affection. Woody plants such as dogwoods, camellias, and magnolias have their devotees, but their principle interest is brief. The same is true for herbaceous plants such as iris, daylilies and dahlias. Conifers are with us all year and they offer color, form and texture which makes you want to touch them. When is the...
last time you heard someone say, “I just can’t wait to get home and touch my hydrangea.”

It has been observed that when one collects something, all satisfaction is temporal. We are satiated for a brief period and then we are in search of the next plant we don’t have. I frequently ask audiences at my lectures, how many of you purchased a plant in the last year which you had no idea where it was going to be planted—almost all raise their hands. Having given this serious thought, I do believe that there is a form of addiction in collecting the next great conifer which occurs in some people. Spouses sneak them in, hide them from others and hope they don’t get caught. Recently Evelyn and I were on a trip, and I acquired a rather large conifer—so large in fact that she had to ride all the way home from Raleigh, NC, in the backseat. She kept joking that another had taken her place, which was not entirely incorrect.

A final observation is that in the human realm we tend to shun those who are different from us, and, the more bizarre they look, the less likely we are to form an association. In the plant world, it is just the opposite. It is as if plants have figured out that the more deformed or unusual they are, the more they get free trips around the world and are highly sought after.
Jennifer Frazer, in an article entitled “Dying Trees Can Send Food to Neighbors of Different Species via ‘Wood-Wide Web’” (Scientific American, May 9, 2015), reports on the research done by Professor Suzanne Simard at the University of British Columbia. That research reveals that, through a symbiotic relationship with mycorrhizae, plants and trees can communicate with each other, feed each other, even fend off insect, herbivore and pathogen attacks.

This networking occurs through the filaments of fungi which “grow in and around plant roots and produce many of the forest mushrooms.” (1) There results a biochemical back and forth, a synapse. Simard concentrated on two trees in particular, Douglas-fir and Ponderosa pine, the territory of which stretches across the American west.

*Rhizopogon rubescens*, a main partnering fungi, “makes a ‘false truffle’ — an underground spore-making body.” (3) Mammals are attracted to it and eat it. Through the mammals’ digestive systems, fungi are then spread.
“Mycorrhizal fungi partner with plant roots because each gets something out of it. The fungus infiltrates the plants’ roots. But it does not attack the [plant]. The plant makes and delivers food to the fungus; the fungus, in turn, dramatically increases the plant’s water and mineral absorptive powers via its vast network of filaments.” (4)

These filaments create a large absorption network so that the short root hairs of trees actually have a feeder system. The mycorrhizal fungal networks act as conduits between trees. Professor Simard shows a sample network in the interior of a British Columbian Douglas-fir forest. The schemata in the article only shows the firs, but there are other species of trees with hundreds more of ectomycorrhizal fungi, thus creating a “wood-wide web”. Sometimes a single tree can be connected to many fungi and many other trees, all at the same time.

Water and sugar move from older trees into the mycelial network to feed younger trees so that the younger trees are then propped up nutrient-wise. It’s as if the older trees were acting as true nurturing mothers and fathers, so-to-speak. It has also been discovered that felling older trees in the forest
diminishes the connectedness and the resilience of the network, thus deleteriously affecting younger ones.

Trees of different species can also communicate with each other and support each other through their mycorrhizae. As Frazer points out, “It’s long been known that plants can communicate through the air; plants getting chomped by herbivores release volatile chemicals [which] are sensed by neighboring plants, [which] up their defenses proactively just in case.” (5)

This defense mechanism is also set in motion when plants are being attacked by insects and pathogens. Plants are known to send essential nutrients through their root systems to other plants through mycorrhizae which then transmit phosphorous and nitrogen. This phenomenon even occurs between dying trees and their neighbors. In some cases, the mass death of one species, such as Douglas-fir, under adverse climatic changes, can make room for ponderosa pines which are better equipped to tolerate the new climate because of the inoculation of the messages and nutrients from the dying trees.

In an experiment reported in February in the journal *Scientific Reports*, Douglas-fir and Ponderosa pine seedlings were only allowed to link up via mycorrhizal fungi. The trees’ roots had been inhibited from linking up. All
the Douglas-firs then had their needles pulled. The battered trees and their root fungi transferred food and stress signals to the ponderosas. The stress signals synthesized defensive enzymes in the ponderosa pines so that they could prepare for a similar onslaught.

The food transferred from the Douglas-firs to the ponderosas was a large amount and was measured by radioactive carbon labelling. When insects were introduced, and the firs defoliated, the same response was noted. The Douglas-fir response was to transfer nutrients to the ponderosa pines. (7)

Frazer leans toward some mystical connection as if the trees, which were stressed, were reaching out to neighbors to prop them up, but misses the fact that biochemical transfers might just be the balancing of chemicals and thereby nutrients caused by the demise of one tree and the neighboring absorption of another. What the research amazingly demonstrates is that plants of all kinds are interconnected via their root systems and the mycorrhizal networking linking those root systems, regardless of species. A

In the Energy and Environment section of The Washington Post (September 2, 2015), Chris Mooney wrote that “scientists discover that the world contains dramatically more trees than previously thought.” (Nature)

A team of 38 scientists “finds that the planet is home to 3.04 trillion trees, blowing away the previously estimate of 400 billion. That means … that there are 422 trees for every person on earth.” Despite that, today’s 3.04 trillion trees represents 46% fewer trees than when humans began deforestation for farming, population sprawl, construction and industrial uses. Mooney cites Thomas Crowther (Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies) who states that we humans have reduced the number of trees by nearly 50%, “which is an astronomical thing”.

Humans and other causes, such as wildfires and pest outbreaks, are the cause of the loss of 15.3 billion trees each year. It is estimated that 5 billion trees grow back annually so that there is a net loss of 10 billion yearly.

“The negative relationships between tree density and anthropogenic land use exemplify how humans contend directly with natural forest ecosystems for space.” The scientists reached their estimates using two kinds of
observations: satellite and ground-based. Both are necessary because satellite photography only shows where the forests exist. The other goes underneath the canopy to determine how many trees exist.

What the study tells us is that there needs to be massively more trees planted to make up for deforestation. Trees are most prevalent in the tropics and subtropics, home to 1.39 trillion trees. The boreal forests contain .74 trillion trees; temperate forests .61 trillion. “[B]oreal and tundra forests often have a greater tree density than tropical ones.”

A table in the study reveals the number of trees per person. For example, the US has 716 trees per person; Canada 8,953 trees per person; China 102 trees per person; India 28 trees per person. One must also remember that India and China are the most populous countries on the planet. Brazil has slowed its deforestation while Cambodia, Sierra Leone, The Malagasy Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay have increased their deforestation programs.

“Trees pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere as they grow, and cutting or burning them down releases that carbon too. So, that means that deforestation is making global warming worse – and it also means that if we were living on an Earth with close to 6 trillion trees, rather than 3 trillion, climate change would be less severe.”

In the end, forest restoration must take precedence over deforestation. Further study on the impact on human land use will have to be ongoing. 🌳

Special thanks to Dennis Groh for the article on the number of the world’s trees.
Arsenal Rooftop Garden Cleanup

Two Parks Staff and the Parks Commissioner work on one bed at the Arsenal Rooftop Garden. Left to right: Daisy Gutierrez, Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, and Arasely Caraballo. Photo by Eileen Remor

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The New Tanger Conifer Reference Garden Spreads its Roots

By Bob Davis

Stone slab stairways and gravel paths meander through the mulched planting beds, giving visitors an intimate view of the specimens’ shapes, textures, and colors.

In several cases, a dwarf version of one of the arboretums standard-sized conifers will allow visitors to compare the two. Temporary labels adorn each of the 60 dwarf and miniature conifers until permanent ones are added soon to match the arboretums other trees. In spring, roughly 40 more conifers and one more smaller bed will be added to complete the plan.
It is with deep appreciation that we thank the American Conifer Society for making this possible. We are seeing lots of interest generated by the Dwarf Conifer Reference Garden, motivating visitors to planning and planting some of these less common cultivars which can be incorporated into everyone’s garden in our zone 6b climate.

Undulating, landscaped slopes and a 3-foot-high wall make a nice canvas to display many miniatures to be viewed up close and personal including “high grafts” which give another dimension to the plantings.

The ten-acre Campus of History includes the historic grounds and gardens of President James Buchanan’s home, “Wheatland”, the Louise Arnold Tanger Arboretum, and the headquarters of LancasterHistory.org. The Arboretum, on the grounds of LancasterHistory.org, was designed by Gustaf Malmborg of Manheim, Pennsylvania. Malmborg also designed the beautiful grounds of the Masonic Homes in Elizabethtown, home of *Pseudosuga menziesii* ‘Graceful Grace’—but that’s another story. When the Wilson Memorial Building (now part of LancasterHistory.org) was constructed in 1956, its neighbor and naturalist Louise Arnold Tanger approached the board of trustees with a request to be allowed to plant trees on the barren grounds surrounding the building. They agreed and invited Mrs. Tanger to join the
board, where she took charge of the grounds until her death in 1959. At that time, her son Charles took her place and served the historical society as its naturalist until his death in 1991. Following Charles Tanger’s death, the trustees of the historical society established the “Friends of the Tanger Arboretum” for the purpose of creating public interest and support for the maintenance and development of this community asset. This new Conifer Reference Garden perfectly meets the criteria for “interest and development” as well as the American Conifer Society’s goal for expanding the knowledge of and interest in these beautiful dwarf and miniature conifers.

Sporting over 100 varieties of mature trees and, now, over 90 varieties of conifers, the Tanger Arboretum is open to the public as a place of rest and relaxation. Its constantly changing form and texture make for an inviting spot to spend time enjoying the everlasting beauty of nature.

LancasterHistory.org, housed in a beautiful, new, award-winning building, focuses on the historical nature of the region by collecting and interpreting the history of the Lancaster area and its place in the state and nation. From Civil War enactments to costumed guides, History.org seeks to bring the past alive for all visitors. To see pictures and to learn more about this great location go to www.LancasterHistory.org and click “visit” and then click “Tanger Arboretum”.

Tanger is the fifth ACS Conifer Reference Garden in the Northeast Region, following Wellesley, Graver, the US National Arboretum, and the Arsenal.
Royal Horticultural Society Encyclopedia of Conifers is a complete reference book covering all recognised conifer cultivars and species, both hardy and tropical.

The two hardcover volumes (10 x 13”) of this 1500-page work feature:

- Names, synonyms, brief descriptions, including information about height and spread after 10 years for over 8000 cultivars
- Over 5000 color photographs in many cases detailing special features
- The most recent botanical classification (Farjon 2010), including as yet unpublished data
- Authors have been working on these books for 7 years

Chris Reynolds, curator of Bedgebury National Pinetum: “…The wealth of detail and information is truly astonishing. The authors are to be commended on their efforts and I would advise all serious gardeners and landscapers to get a copy–it will be well worth it…”

Available from Elardo Enterprises. For more information please contact Dr. Ronald J. Elardo: ConQuartEditor@gmail.com or 517.902.7230.

www.coniferworld.com
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Abies koreana ‘Horstmann’s Silberlocke’
Hidden Lake Gardens Harper Collection
Photo by Don Wild
Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Filifera aurea'
Hidden Lake Gardens Harper Collection
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