



International Oaks

The Journal of the International Oak Society

Proceedings
8th International Oak Society Conference
October 18-21, 2015

Issue No. 27/ 2016 / ISSN 1941-2061



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FOREWORD

Twenty-one Years After

Twenty-one years after its First Conference, our Society returned to Illinois and The Morton Arboretum to hold the Eighth International Oak Society Conference. In 1994, fewer than 40 participants attended the Conference. In 2015, 188 attendees from 15 countries gathered in Lisle. Of those, 7 were also present at the First IOS Conference: Mark Coggeshall, Allen Coombes, Bill Hess, Dan Keiser, Ron Lance, Michael Meléndrez and Guy Sternberg – and 3 of them (Allen, Dan, and Guy) have participated in all eight Conferences.

The Conference Committee put together an outstanding program covering systematics, genetics, conservation and environmental studies, horticulture, and even anthropology. In addition to the presentations, we had two keynote addresses. The first, “Saving Trees from Extinction”, was given on the evening the Conference opened by Sara Oldfield, whom many of us had known for years. Sara is the former Secretary General of Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and currently co-chair of the IUCN/SSC Global Tree Specialist Group that met at the Morton just after the Conference. This nearly joint meeting was certainly a factor in drawing a large number of attendees to the Conference. The second keynote presentation, the Gala Dinner Address, was given by Joel Greenberg, author of *A Feathered River Across the Sky*, a book about the passenger pigeon and its extinction in about half a century, also the subject of his address “The Echoes of Their Wings”.

In Bordeaux, in 2012, we inaugurated the field trips. In Lisle, we had satellite meetings on the Sunday prior to the start of the Conference and workshops on the first day. The workshops covered topics such as botanical art, oak propagation and care, oak conservation, herbarium management, and computerized collection inventory management. These workshops were held simultaneously. It was therefore not possible to attend them all. Nevertheless, the informal feedback received from attendees was very positive.

The IOS continues the tradition of bringing together researchers, academics, professionals as well as amateur dendrologists and plants people from many different countries. It has also maintained its legendary seed exchange. Nick Stoyhoff is to be

thanked for the 2015 seed exchange at the Morton, as well of course as the many people who collected and brought or sent acorns to this Conference.

I record here the Society's sincere thanks to the Conference organizers, more specifically Megan Dunning, Andrew Hipp, and Murphy Westwood, as well as Terry Ripoli, Matthew Lobdell, Nicole Cavender and Gerard Donnelly, the CEO of The Morton Arboretum, and his team for hosting this Conference and for making it a memorable, successful event. I also thank Henry Eilers, Alana McKean, Guy Sternberg, and Jim Hitz for organizing the Tours for us.

Indeed, Pre- and Post-Conference Tours were also part of the program. I missed most of the Pre-Conference Tour, but flew in in time to drive down to Petersburg near the end of the Tour and meet a group more than pleased with what they had seen. I also had the opportunity to spend a full day at Starhill Forest Arboretum, now under the umbrella of Illinois College, and a bit of time with Edie Sternberg before the group arrived at the Arboretum. It was my third visit and it is always a pleasure to see a collection over time and see how trees have grown. That day ended with a barbecue and the next day we were off to Lisle. It had been a sunny day with blue skies but the evening was quite chilly.

I did participate in the Post-Conference Tour and I can personally report on it. It was a short tour, skillfully organized by Jim Hitz. Among other places, we visited some "areas of outstanding natural beauty" as one says in the UK, including the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Warren Woods. A highlight of the Tour was the visit to Taltree Arboretum & Gardens to which Jim devoted so many years of his professional life and where he played a key role in developing the oak collection.

We thank all speakers for their contributions and for sharing their knowledge, and participants for attending en masse. Our next Conference, in 2018, will be held at the University of California, Davis. Emily Griswold accepted the responsibility of organizing the Conference. I hope to meet even more participants in California in 2018 than in Illinois this year.

Sponsorship of the Conference is also a key feature of its success. On behalf of the Society, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our four sponsors.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the initiative taken by Ryan Russell who successfully organized our first-ever silent auction at this Conference. The money raised will be used to finance the participation of students in future Conferences.

To close, I have one regret and that is that the afternoon foreseen in the Conference program to visit The Morton Arboretum was really too short, even aboard the Acorn Express. I admit it is a true challenge to visit a 1,700-acre arboretum in a reasonable amount of time. Even one full day would not have been enough. I spent an additional day at The Morton Arboretum after the Post-Conference Tour, mostly in the eastern section, all on foot, and I could not see everything I wanted to see.

I am writing this short text before having seen any of the papers included here. Andrew Hipp signs an introduction providing an insightful overview of the content of these Proceedings. I also take this opportunity to thank Béatrice Chassé, our Editor, for once again taking on the monumental task of preparing this Journal for publication.



Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven
President