
LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

After finishing our previous First Conference Proceedings issue of the *Journal* (Issue #6), we found it difficult to summon the same breadth of articles as that monumental issue had attained. Indeed, just the task of compiling the information was cause for a mini-vacation. When it was finally finished and back from the printers, it was thrilling to see the issue in its final state. We set Issue #6 on the shelf and stood back in admiration of what was accomplished, not only in this publication, but also as a society of members sharing a common concern and interest in the genus *Quercus*; the dream that a handful of enthusiasts could only imagine, awoke to the early revelations of what we know now as the International Oak Society. From this small number of pen-pals exchanging seed, this Society has published seven professional journals, and will have co-sponsored two conferences by the end of 1997. Our Society has secured a balanced infrastructure of board members, who worked in 1996 to obtain a legal non-profit status and to establish the official mission statement and goals (please see inside front cover of this journal issue). Membership representation has expanded worldwide to over 400 members and individual Chapters are being formed by enthusiastic members in Europe.

These changes and growth may not have been apparent to most of our members who probably feel that communication with the membership through the *Journal* is sporadic and is too long between intervals of publication. People have asked us "what is happening with the Society?"; or, "I haven't heard anything since the last *Journal* ?"; or, "do we still exist?". These rightfully placed questions have made the organizational Board examine the problem of just a few people producing the *Journal* and managing membership records for a worldwide group.

Because our Society has expanded and changed over five years of its existence, we have updated membership services and orientation to coincide with our growth. We now have a part-time person fulfilling membership management duties. The Journal Office has more time to concentrate on the *Journal* and

In order to communicate and distribute current information about our Society to members, beginning in 1997, the *Journal* will be published once a year; however, in addition, we will distribute a more informal newsletter twice a year to update, acknowledge and inform members more appropriately of Society events, business, worldwide activities, field trips, conferences, new members, etc. We feel that the newsletter will fill a gap that has been missing in communication with our members. Expect to see the first newsletter in March, 1997.

As with any society, a lot of the output of the group depends greatly on the input from its members (forgive the cliché, but it is true). Referring to the Authors' Guidelines on the inside back cover of this issue, we have set "rules" not only to make the *Journal* a professional publication, but also protect the Society.

Additionally, we would like to remind our members, as in earlier issues, that we need original material from them in order to print a *Journal*. Please read the Contributor's Guidelines; perhaps already you have material for us!

Articles, stories, photographs, and slides may be sent to the Journal Office for review for a future publication of the *Journal*. Please send material to IOS, Journal Office, P.O. Box 310, Pen Argyl, PA 18072-0310, USA. Your original material will be returned upon request.

Looking ahead, 1997 will be a very important year for the International Oak Society! Many improvements and activities will take place, including the Second Conference in California, that will breed new energy and excitement. Also this year, we will be printing a revised Issue #1 into our current journal format.

Furthermore, we would like to announce that as of January 1, 1997, we are accepting Visa and Mastercard for membership payments and renewals in order to make it easier for international membership.

We thank all of our members for your patience and understanding, and furthermore, impress upon you that our Society is growing at a healthy pace. We are constantly examining our position, membership and the Society as a whole in order to make improvements to benefit all members. ☛

M. Nigel and Lisa A. Wright



Quercus rysophylla from *Les Chênes* by Camus