

# OAK NEWS & NOTES

The Newsletter of the International Oak Society  
Summer 2000

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## Seed Exchange for Conference 2000

The seed exchange is a most exciting and important part of our international conferences, and this year will be no exception. As our Society represents 30 nations from six continents, these conferences provide a rare opportunity to collect and distribute a few gems which to some would otherwise be inaccessible. The genus *Quercus* is threatened in many parts of the world and we therefore need to ensure that every acorn presented at the seed exchange has the best opportunity to survive its travels.

At Tregrehan in Cornwall there is a letter, dated 1st. July 1894, written from Dehra Dun, in the North West Provinces of India; this letter advised the owner that a box had been dispatched containing seeds of *Quercus semecarpifolia* packed in charcoal. The letter went on to say that, "they germinate here almost as soon as they fall to the ground but I hope that some of them...will reach you alive". One of the trees from this consignment of seed is now the largest in Britain and continues to grow vigorously.

Charcoal is a messy medium, but I decided to experiment with this method during the Yunnan Oak '99 expedition arranged by The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum and Professor Zhou Zhekun of the Kunming Botanic Institute. The acorns in charcoal

appeared to germinate during the trip but all of the roots remained white; compared with those in moist vermiculite, the rate of germination appeared to be slower and no mould appeared on the acorns. I reported this experience to the Royal Horticulture Society at Wisley Gardens who expressed the view that the charcoal probably adsorbed the gases from the damp vegetable matter, i.e. the seeds, and this reduced the tendency to rot; they thought it worthy of further research.

Recently I received further advice from Professor Rei Rasmussen, whose interest in the matter was awakened by 19th century records of the travels of plant collectors in China. He believes that ethylene from the seeds is adsorbed, slowing down the feedback of this gaseous hormone and retarding germination; it also may reduce the exposure of root hairs to enzymatic oxidation, thereby keeping the roots white. The charcoal does not absorb much moisture, therefore the seeds do not become desiccated. Rei also observes that not all charcoals work well; further work is therefore necessary to establish the precise specification.

In spite of fact that charcoal may be useful, there are other methods of ensuring good acorn quality that are "tried and true" and less messy. For those bringing acorns to the

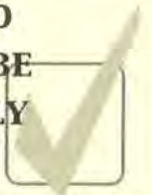
Conference, guidelines for collection, storage and handling are listed below. Other, more general guidelines, are provided in the enclosed publication *How to Grow California Oaks*.

1. Acorns picked directly from the tree (when ripe enough that the nut pulls easily from the cup without tearing) often will be in better condition and more free from fungi and insects than those gathered from the ground. If they are still slightly green, they should be ripened for a few days on absorbent paper in a shaded location indoors prior to storage.

2. Acorns are perishable and should not be allowed to heat, freeze, or dry out during storage and transport. They should be stored in plastic bags under refrigeration (barely above freezing) until the conference, to keep

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## BOARD BALLOT AND PROXY FORMS TO BE MAILED OUT IN JULY



In mid-July, Rudy Light, our Election Manager, will be sending each International Oak Society member a ballot for the Board of Directors, including a statement by each of the candidates. In this same mailing, Rudy is also sending each member a proxy form, authorizing those unable to attend the Society's next business meeting (immediately following the Third International Oak Society Conference in Asheville) to designate current officers as agents to conduct business on their behalf. It is important that these proxies be signed and returned to ensure that we have a legal quorum at the business meeting. So please read the materials from Rudy carefully and return the ballots and proxy forms to him in a timely manner. Thanks.

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## Third International Oak Conference

As you all know, the Third International Oak Conference is scheduled for October 30-31 at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, N.C. The Conference will include formal presentations, optional field trips, a membership meeting, a seed exchange, a plant sale and an exhibitor/poster session. By now you should have received an announcement and registration form. But in case you somehow didn't receive one, or misplaced the one you did get and need another, please contact the Conference Chairperson, Ron Lance, at the address as listed in the 'Points of Contact' in this Newsletter.



# LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

*The International Oak Society is growing and evolving. As we enter this new Century, we face opportunities and challenges associated with new technology, new research, new human influences on climate and habitat, and new directions. You, as a member, are the reason for every plan we make and everything we do, so I want to share with you a few highlights of where we have been and where we are headed.*

*We will elect some new directors to our board this fall, to serve three-year terms beginning after our third triennial general membership meeting. I have seen the slate of nominated candidates, and I personally know each person to be dedicated and qualified. The board will need a quorum for election, so please be sure to complete the ballots and proxies you receive.*

*We have been given substantial donations from several members during the past year. These contributions have allowed us to provide quality publications for you without raising dues; thus, we still have one of the lowest membership fees of any comparable international organization. But we cannot expect the same few donors to continue to fund so much of our operation, so please consider how you might help us raise additional capital in the future, if you are in a position to do so. We want this organization to remain affordable for every prospective member who is sincerely interested in our mission, while providing the most useful member services possible.*

*It helps us save money and plan for member services if every member renews promptly at the end of the calendar year. Unless you are*

*a life member, or have paid for multiple years, it is easy to remember that your dues should be sent in every December for the following year. We will try to send final notices for those who do not remember to renew on time, but this adds needlessly to the workload of our membership director.*

*Most people cannot envision how much work really is involved with managing an international organization like the Oak Society. For example, we have so many members in so many different countries that it requires more than 20 hours just for me to envelope, label and mail a single issue of our journal! We have been blessed with several directors who work tirelessly to maintain our data base, web site, financial records, and publications. These duties require great amounts of time. Society members have stepped forward voluntarily to manage our elections (Rudy Light) and our inventory of back issues of International Oaks (Ed Holm), and their efforts are much appreciated. But as we continue to grow, we soon will need to hire an executive secretary. This is one of the critical issues we will discuss at our member meeting this fall.*

*As a member of Doug McCreary's Editorial Committee, I have an opportunity to help plan our publications and to see advance review copies of some of the papers that are included. I can tell you now that we have some very exciting papers coming along in future issues of International Oaks! If you maintain a library of back issues, it will continue to increase in value with each new issue. And if you are missing a few issues, they all are still available at this moment. If you have Internet access and have not yet*

*visited the web site set up for us by Dick Jensen, please do so at: <http://www.saintmarys.edu/~rjensen/ios.html>. Dick provides comprehensive information on the organization and its activities, as well as hot links to many related web sites.*

*There will be many additions and revisions coming in the next member directory. In order to save extra printing costs, the board may decide to distribute interim updates this year, and wait until after the fall conference (where we expect to recruit many new members) to publish a new official directory. Your directory can be one of the most valuable benefits you receive as a member, because it can help you open many doors to communication with other people who share your interests.*

*Our Third Triennial International Oak Conference this fall is expected to draw participation from around the world. We hold such a conference only once every three years, partly because it is so much work to organize, and partly because we know that few people could afford to come to an international oak conference every year. Many more people can come once every three years, so everyone who plans to attend will be able to come at the same time. This makes our conferences very special opportunities for international exchange. If you can come, I promise that you will experience an event that you will never forget.*

*I hope to see you there!*

**Guy Sternberg, PRESIDENT**

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New Edition of:  
**Oaks of  
California**

Now Available

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ON BACK PAGE**



## Points of Contact

As we grow and develop as individuals, we outgrow clothes, houses, and old ideas which served us well in our early lives. So it is with the International Oak Society. We are not yet so large that we can afford a central office and professional staff, so we now have several addresses which should be noted for your future reference:

### CLIP AND SAVE THIS LIST!

#### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS OR APPLICATIONS:

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#### BUSINESS ISSUES OR QUESTIONS FROM MEDIA:

Guy Sternberg, President  
Starhill Forest  
Route 1, Box 272  
Petersburg, Illinois 62675  
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#### ANY QUESTIONS FROM EUROPEAN SOURCES:

Allen Coombes, Vice President  
Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum  
Jermyn's Lane  
Ampfield, near Romsey  
Hampshire SO51 0QA  
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#### CONFERENCE 2000:

Ron Lance, Conference Chairperson  
The North Carolina Arboretum  
P.O. Box 6617  
Asheville, North Carolina 28816  
USA

#### BOARD NOMINATIONS

Dr. Rudolph Light  
11535 East Road  
Redwood Valley, CA 95470  
USA

## Proceedings of Regeneration Workshop Available

In September, 1998 the Seventh Workshop on Seedling Physiology and Growth Problems in Oak Plantings was held in South Lake Tahoe, California. These workshops have been held every three years and began 20 years ago as a means of sharing information about the latest approaches for successfully propagating and establishing oak trees. This meeting featured sessions on oak physiology and genetics, seedling propagation and production methods, silviculture and natural regeneration. In addition, there were also several papers on California oak woodland ecology and management, and an all-day field trip through various oak forest types in the foothills and mountains of California.

Earlier this year a General Technical Report was published by the U.S. Forest Service containing the abstracts of all of 15 technical papers, as well as a summary of the field trip and banquet presentation.

**For a free copy of this report, write to: Publications, USDA Forest Service, North Central Distribution Station, 1 Gifford Pinchot Drive, Madison WI, 53705-2398 and request a copy of General Technical Report NC-206.**

## Widespread Mortality of Oaks in Japan



Widespread mortality of native oaks has been reported recently in Japan.

The damage is extensive in several regions along the Sea of Japan on two deciduous oak species, *Quercus serrata* and *Q. mongolica* var. *grosseserrata*, and in southern parts of Kyushu Island on some evergreen oaks. The oaks are usually more than 40 years old in natural stands. Decline of other tree species in these stands is not evident. The characteristic of the damage is a close association with the attack of the main stems of the oaks by an ambrosia beetle, *Platypus quercivorus*. In summer, leaves of some branches fade, turn reddish brown, and dieback sometimes begins. Occasionally leaves of the entire tree turn reddish brown, curl and wilt. Dying trees usually have been heavily attacked by the beetles in the growing season for 2-3

years. Water-soaked, brown-stained sapwood originating from the infestation of the beetles is prominent in the trunks of dead trees. Some *Ophiostoma* species have been isolated from stained wood and inner bark tissues, as well as the bodies of the beetles in the experiments using materials from Niigata. Further, the isolation rate of an unidentified hyphomycete was highest in the experiments using samples from several different regions. The hyphomycete is similar to *Acremonium* species in the manner of conidium formation, however it is not typical. It is presumably an anamorph of an ophiostomataceous fungus. A fatal effect of these isolated fungi on oaks has not been proved yet. These fungi, however, cause stains of sapwood, and probably have weak pathogenicity for trees. Further studies will need to be done to clarify whether the oaks are weakened by other unknown factors prior to beetle attack.

- Shigeru Kaneko

#### ADVERTISING POLICY:

The International Oak Society accepts advertisements for oak related enterprises in *Oak News & Notes*. A camera ready card size ad costs \$25.00 per issue.

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**"SEED" continued from front page**

them fresh and retard premature germination (which makes seed much more difficult to handle).

3. All acorns imported into the US for the exchange should be examined in advance, and any that float in water or show holes, knopper galls, discoloration patterns, or other signs of insect infestation should be removed prior to import. This will allow the USDA inspectors to do their job more easily, and will reduce the likelihood that an entire seed lot will be rejected because of the presence of a few infected seed.

4. The USDA requires that NO fungicide or insecticide be applied prior to import, for the safety of the inspectors examining the seed. However, a brief bleach dip (1 part bleach/10 parts water), followed by surface drying prior to packaging, may be used to discourage the growth of fungi, especially if the seed was gathered from the ground.

It would also be helpful if everyone bringing acorns to the Asheville conference used a comprehensive and consistent packaging and

labeling system, with the following information included for every lot:

- Genus, species, plus variety or cultivar if applicable
- Name of collector (& number)
- Date of collection
- Location of collection by latitude and longitude or place name, and habitat
- Wild or garden collected

Perhaps all who have seeds to exchange could divide the acorns they bring into lots of 12 acorns per species and place these lots in sealed plastic bags with labels attached to the outside listing the relevant information written in pencil. Labels written in ink can easily be smudged and become illegible, and some of us lack the expertise to identify the leaves as they appear; a rare oak seedling can therefore be lost because we are unable to identify it. All our acorns really need permanent "passports" and moisture-proof packaging which will survive the enthusiasm of the seed exchange.

A news flash from our President Guy Sternberg advises that, "All seed from sources

outside the U.S. may be sent legally in advance of the conference, without fumigation, under a special permit which your committee have obtained from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Permit instruction and shipping labels will be sent by Ron Lance to all registrants who request them."

As the Conference draws ever nearer, please give the labeling and packaging of the seed for the exchange top priority and we will cover the world with OAKS.

-Dorothy Holley

**In Memorium**

*Member David W. Ford of Fort Wayne, Indiana died this past year. David was an enthusiastic planter of trees. He had been a member of the Walnut Council also, and grew many walnuts, as well as oaks. We offer our condolences to his widow Maxine.*

*We also recently learned of the death of Nathan Shapiro of Brookfield, Wisconsin.*



**Oaks of California**

*Oaks of California*, the definitive book about California's beloved oak trees and shrubs, is now in its fourth printing. The new edition includes descriptive information about *Quercus pacifica*, a shrub oak found on the Channel Islands, which was a stop on the Society's 1997 conference field trip. The new edition also updates contact information for the many wonderful places to view California's oaks.

For a limited time only, International Oak Society members may order copies directly from the California Oak Foundation at 10% off of the new retail price of US \$22.95.

**Shipping information:** Books are shipped UPS. International members should inquire directly with COF regarding UPS (2-5 day) shipping charges. You may also order your copy in advance and pick it up at the 2000 International Oak Conference in October to save overseas shipping charges, which can be as high as twice the cost of the book!

**Return this form and payment to:** California Oak Foundation, 1212 Broadway, Suite 810, Oakland CA 94612.  
**E-mail:** oakstaff@californiaoaks.org, **FAX:** (510) 208-4435, **Phone:** (510) 763-0282.

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