Introduction to the Proceedings

by Ron Lance
Conference Chairperson
President, International Oak Society

These Proceedings of the Third International Oak Conference are presented with gratitude and relief. Gratitude for the many contributors that traveled far and expended many hours for the relay of information concerning their own areas of work in oaks, and relief that the labor of these people and of the reviewers and compilers of submitted pages has ended in this completed publication.

The International Oak Society continues to grow from its beginnings as an informal seed exchange, back in 1985. Today it is composed of over 500 members from about 30 nations across the world, and the seed exchanges, journals, newsletters, and triennial meetings, which have become an integral part of the Society, are no longer informal. With the election of a Board of Directors, incorporation of the Society, and nonprofit status registration, the International Oak Society made great progress in expanding its global membership after the First International Oak Conference in 1994, at the Morton Arboretum in Illinois. The success of the Second International Oak Conference in 1999, at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in California, further strengthened the bonds of membership and professional status of the Society. Now, after the completion of the Third International Oak Conference, this Society is poised to see its next International Symposium cross the Atlantic, in the year 2003.

The Third International Oak Conference was held in the USA on October 29-31, 2000 at The North Carolina Arboretum at Asheville, North Carolina. This symposium included sessions on oak forestry and ecology, oak botany, and oak horticulture, with over 20 speakers contributing to the relay of oak information to 112 registered attendees. A focus on oaks and oak management of the Southeastern US was only a segment of the international scope of presentations. The seed exchange, plant sale, pre-conference workshops, and tours were all designed for maximum benefit to members, and indeed several of these events were filled to capacity. The rather unseasonably warm weather that greeted travelers to the Southern Appalachian Mountains at the conference was not a scheduled event, yet proved a welcome amenity.
International Oaks

This Third International Oak Conference saw attendees from 18 countries, representing about 57 percent of the total number of nations that have members in the International Oak Society. About 40 percent of the total registered participants were from outside the US, and another 30 percent were from US locations other than the Southeastern US. Such a gathering of only about 22 percent of the membership was nevertheless a landmark event in the life of the International Oak Society, as well as in my own. As the newly elected President of the International Oak Society, I look forward to servicing the growth of the Society over the next three years, and to assist with the expansion of oak knowledge among an esteemed membership.

The organization and completion of the Third International Oak Conference was made possible by many contributors and helping hands. For these people and institutions that helped in the planning, logistics, and funding of this symposium, I express my personal gratitude, as well as on behalf of the International Oak Society. Their efforts are reflected in these Proceedings, which I hope will be valued reading.

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