



# International Oaks

The Journal of the International Oak Society

*...the hybrid oak  
that time forgot, oak-rod baskets,  
pros and cons of grafting...*

Issue No. 25/ 2014 / ISSN 1941-2061



# International Oaks

## The Journal of the International Oak Society

---

*... the hybrid oak  
that time forgot, oak-rod baskets,  
pros and cons of grafting...*

Issue No. 25/ 2014 / ISSN 1941-2061





## International Oak Society Officers and Board of Directors 2012-2015

### Officers

*President* Béatrice Chassé (France)  
*Vice-President* Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven (Belgium)  
*Secretary* Gert Fortgens (The Netherlands)  
*Treasurer* James E. Hitz (USA)

### Board of Directors

*Membership Director*  
Emily Griswold (USA)  
*Tour Director*  
Shaun Haddock (France)  
*International Oaks*  
*Editor* Béatrice Chassé  
*Co-Editor* Allen Coombes (Mexico)  
*Oak News & Notes*  
*Editor* Ryan Russell (USA)  
*International Editor* Roderick Cameron (Uruguay)  
*Website Administrator*  
Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven

### Editorial Committee

*Chairman*  
Béatrice Chassé  
*Members*  
Roderick Cameron  
Allen Coombes  
Shaun Haddock  
Eike Jablonski (Luxemburg)  
Ryan Russell  
Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven

### For contributions to *International Oaks*

contact

Béatrice Chassé  
pouyouleix.arboretum@gmail.com or editor@internationaloaksociety.org  
0033553621353  
Les Pouyouleix  
24800 St.-Jory-de-Chalais  
France

Author's guidelines for submissions can be found at  
<http://www.internationaloaksociety.org/content/author-guidelines-journal-ios>

© 2014 International Oak Society  
Text, figures, and photographs © of individual authors and photographers.

Graphic design: Marie-Paule Thuaud / [www.lecentrecrreatifducoin.com](http://www.lecentrecrreatifducoin.com)

**Photos.** Cover: Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven (*Quercus macrocalyx* Hickel & A. Camus);  
p. 6: Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven (*Q. oxyodon* Miq.); p. 7: Béatrice Chassé (*Q. acerifolia* (E.J. Palmer)  
Stoyanoff & W. J. Hess); p. 9: Eike Jablonski (*Q. ithaburensis* subsp. *macrolepis* (Kotschy) Hedge & Yalt.).

**[www.internationaloaksociety.org](http://www.internationaloaksociety.org)**  
Join the International Oak Society today!

# Table of Contents

—/ 07 /—

Foreword

You Reap What You Sow (But Not Always)

*Allen Coombes*

—/ 09 /—

From the Editor

Sugar and Spice

*Béatrice Chassé*

—/ 11 /—

Update

Thoughts in Purple and Blue

*Shaun Haddock*

—/ 13 /—

Creating Sustainable Income From the Ancient Oak Forest on Kea Island, Greece

*Marcie Mayer Maroulis*

—/ 23 /—

Searching for the Hardy Southern Live Oak

*Anthony S. Aiello and Michael S. Dosmann*

—/ 35 /—

The Hybrid Oak That Time Forgot: *Quercus ×coutinhoi* Samp. Discovered in Australia

*Charlie Buttigieg*

—/ 43 /—

Sudden Oak Death, *Phytophthora ramorum*:  
a Persistent Threat to Oaks and Other Tree Species

*Susan J. Frankel and Katharine M. Palmieri*

—/ 57 /—

Diversity Within Oaks

*Kiran Bargali, Beena Joshi, S.S. Bargali, and S.P. Singh*

—/ 71 /—

The Mirbeck Oak in Iberia: Source of an Inspiration

*Antonio Lambe*

—/ 85 /—

Oak-Rod Baskets in Brown County: Historic Photographs of a Craft Tradition

*Jon Kay*

—/ 93 /—

The Anlaby Commemorative Oaks: an Extraordinary Case of Multiple Ground-Layered Branches  
in *Quercus canariensis* Willd.

Charlie Buttigieg

—/ 103 /—

Oak Open Day, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, United Kingdom, July 29, 2013

Hugh Angus

—/ 111 /—

*Quercus senescens* Hand.-Mazz.?

Béatrice Chassé

—/ 113 /—

Oak Open Day, Pavia Nusery, Belgium, September 22, 2013

The Art of Grafting

Eike Jablonski

—/ 123 /—

Oak Open Days, Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour, USA, November 1-3, 2013

Roderick Cameron

—/ 135 /—

In Search of Vietnam's Elusive Oaks: Chassé-Colin-Snyers Vietnam 2013 (CCSV13)

Béatrice Chassé



Fruiting *Quercus oxyodon* Miq., Nymans Garden (UK, 2013).

#### **ERRATA ISSUE No. 24**

p. 18, photo caption: Hoperski Forest, Russia

p. 37, line 18: 148 rue de l'Abbé Groult

p. 205, Photo 3: Charles Snyers d'Attenhoven

# Oak Open Days

## Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour, USA

### November 1-3, 2013

**Roderick Cameron**

Arq. Américo Ilaria 6615

Montevideo, Uruguay

*roderickcameron66@gmail.com*



# Introduction

On the evening of All Saints’ Day, 2013, we gathered from different points of the world in Aiken, South Carolina, for a Barbeque Dinner that was to kick off the Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour. In many ways, Aiken is the ideal venue for a *Quercus* event. One is even tempted to imagine that the name Aiken owes something to “oak” (it doesn’t, the city was named after William Aiken, responsible for building the railroad that put the new town on the map, and the surname Aiken derives from a diminutive of Adam), but there are several reasons to link the town to our favorite genus. Aiken County may boast the largest number of native oak species of any county in the United States, though the jury is still out on that (Table 1), but in addition the City of Aiken holds one of the most comprehensive oak collections in the United States. While nature is responsible for the first claim, the second is due to the efforts of IOS member Bob McCartney, who has planted many oaks, rare and otherwise, in the city. But Aiken’s horticultural bounty is not limited to oaks: on our tour we were treated to the highlights of its Citywide Arboretum, an area within a 6.4-km/4-mile radius of downtown that includes street plantings, gardens and natural woodland. During the two days of the event we were to go on four separate tours that covered the different areas of botanical interest and also indirectly gave as an overview of the town and its history. Rather than recount them in the order they occurred, I propose to use an account of Aiken’s past as a narrative thread on which to hang the segments of this memorable event.

1. <i>Q. alba</i> L.	9. <i>Q. laurifolia</i> Michx.	17. <i>Q. pagoda</i> Raf.
2. <i>Q. austrina</i> Small	10. <i>Q. lyrata</i> Walter	18. <i>Q. phellos</i> L.
3. <i>Q. coccinea</i> Münchh.	11. <i>Q. margaretta</i> (Ashe) Small	19. <i>Q. rubra</i> L.
4. <i>Q. falcata</i> Michx.	12. <i>Q. marilandica</i> Münchh.	20. <i>Q. shumardii</i> Buckley
5. <i>Q. geminata</i> Small	13. <i>Q. michauxii</i> Nutt.	21. <i>Q. stellata</i> Wangenh.
6. <i>Q. hemisphaerica</i> Bartram ex Willd.	14. <i>Q. montana</i> Willd.	22. <i>Q. velutina</i> Lam.
7. <i>Q. incana</i> Bartram	15. <i>Q. muehlenbergii</i> Engelm.	23. <i>Q. virginiana</i> Mill.
8. <i>Q. laevis</i> Walter	16. <i>Q. nigra</i> L.	

Table 1/ Aiken County’s native oaks. *Quercus geminata* and *Q. virgniana* may be naturalized rather than native. Liberty Co. in Florida allegedly trumps Aiken Co. as regards oak species diversity, and at a state level South Carolina is outnumbered by Alabama and Texas.

# All aboard

Aiken came into being as a station on the Charlotte to Hamburg railroad, built by the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company between 1830 and 1833 and at its time the longest railroad in the world. Named in honor of William Aiken, President of the Railroad Company, the town began as a stopover required by the locomotives, which at that spot had to negotiate an inclined plane, originally with a steam-powered winch and later by means of a locomotive used as counterweight. Given the town’s origins, it was appropriate that we should congregate on the Friday evening at the Visitors Centre and Train Museum located in the rebuilt Aiken Railroad Depot. Dinner was a tasty



barbeque and we were entertained by the talented musicians of Palmetto Blue, whose lively renditions of bluegrass classics had us all tapping our feet and even singing along. I was particularly impressed by a piece where the band imitated a steam train, with the fiddler making his instrument sound like the train's whistle and the banjo and guitar providing the background of valves and pistons. The song "Y'all Come" was the perfect Southern welcome to kick off the event. Next morning the rebuilt Railroad Depot served as our meeting point, and as we waited for our buses we had ample opportunity to admire specimens of *Quercus falcata* Michx. and *Q. hemisphaerica* Bartram ex Willd.—and to start filling our ziplock bags with their acorns.



1/ One mile/1.6 kilometers of oaks along Aiken's railway track.

The town of Aiken was chartered in 1835, after engineers Alfred Dexter and C.O. Pascalis laid out an attractive city plan featuring wide streets and parkways that in time would be filled with trees. Immediately the city attracted visitors, including wealthy Charlestonians who came in the summer to escape the heat and malaria of their hometown. After the Civil War, the city attracted wealthy visitors in the winter as well: in this case Northerners escaping from the cold and attracted by the favorable conditions for sports involving horse riding. These visitors from the North established Aiken's celebrated "Winter Colony" and amongst them was little Louise Eustis, a frail girl brought to the town by her aunt in the hope that her health would be restored by the mild climate and drier air. Louise would spend every winter in Aiken and when she married Thomas Hitchcock, a prominent Long Island sportsman, she brought him too. He discovered that the sandy





**2/ A path through Hitchcock Woods. The sandy soil drains swiftly allowing riders to get back in their saddles soon after rain.**

soil was ideal for training his horses, and together with his friend William C. Whitney they purchased large areas of the longleaf pine forest, which they devoted to the practice of equestrian sports, including fox hunting. Aiken is located on the Carolina Sandhills, a strip of ancient beach dunes that is evidence of a former coastline when the ocean level was higher. It is this sand that proved good training ground for Thomas Hitchcock's horses and the good drainage meant that riding could be resumed on dry ground very soon after rain. In 1939 Thomas and Louise's children established a foundation to protect a large area of the natural forest now named Hitchcock Woods. Comprising 850 ha/2,100 ac, it is one of the largest urban forests in the United States. A guided tour to these Woods was one of our four excursions in the Aiken Tour, and we spent the greater part of two hours walking a loop around diverse types of forest. When our guide showed us where we had been on the map of the reserve, we had barely dipped into a small corner of the vast expanse.

## ***Hitchcock Woods***

We were shown Hitchcock Woods by Woods Superintendent Bennett Tucker and Woods Technician Eric Grande. Botanist and ecologist Julie Moore of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also accompanied us and it was interesting to learn of her work with endangered species. She is also an authority on the longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Mill.) ecosystem and on the Board of the Longleaf Alliance. We heard about the prescribed burn

program, whereby sections of the woods are subjected to controlled fires on a 2- to 7-year rotation, when weather conditions are right, and in such a way that the understory is burnt without harming the established pines. This mimics nature, i.e., the fires that would be caused by lightning, and restores the characteristic habitat conditions that are most suitable for native flora and fauna. In fact, if these fires did not occur, the longleaf pine/wiregrass (*Aristida beyrichiana* Trin. & Rupr.) ecosystem would be taken over by other plants, particularly oaks. In our walk through Hitchcock Woods we were able to see several *Quercus* species, including the predominant blackjack oak (*Q. marilandica* Münchh.) and turkey oak (*Q. laevis* Walter), and also bluejack oak (*Q. incana* W. Bartram), sand post oak (*Q. margaretta* (Ashe) Small), and scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea* Münchh.). In the case of scarlet oak, we found good examples of trees that showed how this species exhibits dimorphism on its bark: on older trees (40 + years) the base up to about 1 m/3.3 ft has dark bark with wart-like texture, while the trunk higher up features the smooth grayish-white ridges with darker bark in between known as “ski trails,” all the way up to where the trunk and branches taper and have smooth grayish bark. This characteristic distinguishes *Q. coccinea* from *Q. rubra* L., which bears ski trails on the entire trunk down to ground level.

The walk through Hitchcock Woods was also a good opportunity to admire the elegant longleaf pine with its characteristic long needles extending to 45 cm/18 in. The species is pyrophytic (resistant to fire). New seedlings take on the form of a dark fountain of needles and can remain ankle-high for several years, in what is known as the grass stage. At this time it is resistant to grass fires, which only singe the ends of the needles. After about 5-12 years it makes a growth spurt, especially



3/ *Carya pallida* (Ashe) Engl. & Graebn. provides striking fall coloring in Hitchcock Woods.



if there is no tree canopy above it, and soon is tall enough to be unaffected by duff fires. If fires are suppressed, however, longleaf is no longer selected by natural wildfires, so it loses its dominance and the ecosystem is compromised. Furthermore, the understory builds up and when fires do occur they are destructive and burn the tall pines as well. Hence the importance of the prescribed burning program. The specific epithet *palustris* (of marshland) is misleading and derives from a misunderstanding when Philip Miller, who described and named the species, erroneously concluded it grew in swamps. It is likely that Miller was an “armchair botanist” and based his description on hearsay or misinformation from colleagues. In Hitchcock Woods we saw it growing together with scrub pine (*P. virginiana* Mill.) and loblolly pine (*P. taeda* L.). Fall color was the other attractive feature of the walk through the Woods, scarlet oak in particular was putting on a show, and turkey oak was beginning to turn. Other species, in particular *Carya pallida* (Ashe) Engl. & Graebn., offered spectacular washes of yellow.

## **Hopelands Gardens**

Along with the Hitchcocks, other Northerners that made up Aiken’s original Winter Colony included Hope Goodard, who would winter in Aiken with her parents in the late 1800s. She married Charles Oliver Iselin, a sportsman son of a wealthy New York family, who in 1897 bought a farm where the couple built their winter home. Hope Iselin, who was known as “the great lady of racing” for her lifetime interest in thoroughbred horses, also devoted time and energy to beautifying her Aiken residence. Following her death in 1970, Hopelands, as her home was called, was bequeathed to the City of Aiken and has become a haven of beauty and a garden noted for the diversity of its plants, including a remarkable collection of camellias, and its old trees, such as deodar cedars (*Cedrus deodara* (Roxb. ex Lamb.) G. Don) and live oaks (*Q. virginiana* Mill.). Next to Hopelands Gardens stands The Rye Patch, a sizeable estate that was also a winter home for wealthy Northerners, and was likewise bequeathed to the city and joined to Hopelands Gardens.

For our guided tour of Hopelands Gardens and The Rye Patch we were accompanied by keen plantsman Dean Jolly and Dr. Harry Shealy, retired Professor of Botany at USC Aiken. They complemented botanical information with many amusing anecdotes, such as the fact that the huge Winter Colony houses we saw were referred to by their owners as “cottages,” simply because their mansions up North were so much bigger. Apparently, in order for an Aiken cottage to be considered as such, it had to consist of at least 22 rooms! A serpentine brick wall that lines one side of the Gardens was explained by Dean as a ruse to extract more money from Northerners with too much cash to spare: the local contractor could double the cost of the wall by making it follow a sine wave rather than a straight line. According to local lore, a Northerner was worth two bales of cotton—and was a lot easier to pick! One of the most peaceful spots in the Gardens is a fountain installed on the foundations of the original house, a creative solution to the space left when the building was demolished. In the middle stands an attractive bust of Hope Iselin, the work of sculptor Maria Kirby Smith. There was much amusement when Dean recounted how this artist was known for including in her statues a small insect. In one instance, her statue of a Governor of South Carolina was found to include a cockroach under the coat tails of the distinguished gentleman, and when the story reached the press, a construction worker was sent with a blowtorch to remove the bug. Several minutes were spent looking for a bug amongst the lifelike pearls around Hope Iselin’s graceful bronze likeness, but none

was to be found. Perhaps the blowtorch had already visited!

Between The Rye Patch and Hopelands Gardens is a natural filtration system for rainwater run-off known as the Wetlands. Around this marshland we found pond cypress (*Taxodium distichum* (L.) Rich. var. *imbricarium* (Nutt.) Croom) and *Nyssa aquatica* L., which John Palmer taught us to identify by looking for three bundled traces or groupings of vascular tissue in the severed petiole. There were many botanical rarities that caught our attention, but on a personal note I was particularly taken with a specimen of *Ilex vomitoria* Sol. ex Aiton. This holly is native to Southeastern North America and was used by Native Americans to brew a tea called “black drink” that was imbibed in large quantities during rituals. The ceremonies involved vomiting and Europeans believed, incorrectly it seems, that it was the tea that caused the puking and thus chose the somewhat off-putting name. I was unaware that North Americans brewed tea from *Ilex*, as was common practice in southern South America, and continues to be, though fortunately our brew of yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis* A. St. Hil.) tends to stay in our stomachs.

For quercophiles, however, the highlight of Hopelands Gardens was undoubtedly the large number of majestic 100-year-old live oaks, their trunks covered in resurrection fern (*Pleopeltis polypodioides* (L.) E.G. Andrews & Windham). Live oak is not native to Aiken, as it grows nearer to the coast, but in Hopelands, where apparently they were planted by Hope Iselin herself, they have thrived and dominate parts of the park, particularly in the eponymous Oak Alley. The amount of acorns these trees had dropped was remarkable; in some spots they completely carpeted the ground. Mrs. Iselin is also believed to have planted the century-old Himalayan cedars we admired. One had recently lost a prominent limb in a storm, but the wood had been ingeniously recouped and made into attractive benches consisting of trunks split down the middle, so we were still able to count the many rings. On our way back downtown from the Gardens, we were treated to the typical Southern feature of a long tunnel-like allée of live oaks lining Boundary Avenue.

## ***The Aiken Citywide Arboretum***

In terms of its horticultural history, surely a milestone in Aiken’s development was the arrival of Bob McCartney in the summer of 1980. In fact, many of the botanical treasures that grace Hopelands Gardens were donated by Woodlanders Inc., the nursery where Bob has been a partner since he first came to Aiken. Woodlanders also began donating trees to the city and Bob planted them in public spaces. The City of Aiken’s Citywide Arboretum was launched in 1995 when a tree trail of labeled trees was established along Colleton Avenue and at two parks. A young student from the University of Georgia worked as an intern during the first summer to label the trees and to write the brochure that went with it. The student’s name was Todd Lasseigne and he is currently director of the Tulsa Botanical Gardens and a member of the IOS, and was in fact a participant in the Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour.

Today the Citywide Arboretum constitutes one of the most diverse collections of trees found in any municipal landscape. Aiken has been designated a Tree City USA for the last 28 years by the Arbor Day Foundation, an award requiring four core standards of urban tree management, including a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita. The jewel in Aiken’s arboreal crown is the Arboretum Trail on Colleton Avenue, a double avenue or parkway running through a residential district and parallel to Richland Avenue, the town’s main thoroughfare. The collection includes over

100 trees of diverse genera planted mainly in the open area between the two avenues of the parkway, and also in the gardens of the residences that line the parkway. Clear and well-maintained signs identify each tree in the collection, giving common name and scientific name, and the numbers required to access the Arboretum Trail's most remarkable feature: an interactive audio guide that can be accessed by calling a local number on your mobile phone. When you call in you hear an introduction to the Arboretum and you are invited to punch in the number of the tree you are observing, allowing you to hear interesting facts about the species of the tree in question. One even has the opportunity to leave recorded feedback. It is a remarkable resource: as I write this in Montevideo and review my photographs, I am able to zoom in on the signs, call the mobile tour and hear a description of the tree in my photo! Many of the trees in the Arboretum Trail had been planted prior to Bob's arrival, but Woodlanders donated many of the younger trees and Bob was instrumental in breathing new life into the collection and installing the mobile tour. Should you call the mobile tour number, it will be his mellifluous drawl you will hear introducing the Arboretum Trail. The City of Aiken has consistently supported Bob's efforts and recently honored him by proclaiming Sunday, July 14, 2013 as "Bob McCartney Day."

When we walked down Colleton Avenue we did not need to make great use of the mobile tour, as we had the privilege of having Bob as our personal guide. He even took us on a brief detour into a friend's garden that contained many treasures, including *Hydrangea quercifolia* W. Bartram, *Salvia microphylla* Kunth 'Hot Lips' and *Magnolia ashei* Weath. Personal highlights of the Arboretum Trail were the rounded lobes of a *Liquidambar styraciflua* f. *rotundiloba* Rehder, a vigorous and verdant young *Q. corrugata* Hook. grown from acorns collected at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Oak Society Conference in Puebla, Mexico, in



4/ *Quercus corrugata* thriving on Colleton Avenue.

2009 (this caused me to envy Aiken's mild winter, as I have just lost mine to frost), a remarkably healthy *Araucaria angustifolia* (Bertol.) Kuntze originating from seed collected at Peter Laharrague's arboretum in Argentina, and a *Q. stellata* Wangerh. that straddled the parkway with a crown spread I estimated at 32 m/105 ft.

Bob's interest in oaks dates back to his childhood on a Virginia plantation where he grew up in the company of many oaks, and it became more pronounced following his association with the IOS, which began at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Oak Society Conference in Asheville, North Carolina, in 2000. This fascination with the genus led him to create two remarkable 1 mi/1.6 km plantings in Aiken: the first along the rail track and a newer one along Beaufort Street (pronunciation alert: it is Bew-rhymes-with-"dew"-fort, not to be confused with a town in North Carolina that is spelt the same yet is pronounced in the more traditional



manner, Bow-rhymes-with-“know”-fort). It was the tour of Aiken’s oak collection that for quercophiles constituted the pièce de résistance of the two-day event, and we were not disappointed. Planted about 17.4 m/57 feet apart (19 of Bob’s paces), many of them rare and originating from the acorn-hunting expeditions of fellow IOS members, these young oaks, about 90 in each of the 1 mi-/1.6 km-long plantings, bear witness to a man’s vision and civic-mindedness and are a unique asset in Aiken’s Citywide Arboretum. When we toured the first planting, again with Bob as guide, we began at the Aiken County Agricultural Services Center, whose grounds contain many notable plants also planted by our host: the rare *Fortunearia sinensis* Rehder & E.H. Wilson, a Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis* Bunge) and a chalk maple (*Acer leucoderme* Small), both turning russet and vermillion, and three *Lithocarpus* (*L. edulis* (Makino) Nakai, *L. glaber* (Thunb.) Nakai and *L. chinensis* (Abel) A. Camus—this last is in fact a synonym for *Castanopsis sclerophylla* (Lindl. & Paxton) Schottky). By the Center’s car park we saw several attractive oaks including *Q. salicina* Blume with its pale-grey-undersided leaves and a hybrid collected in the Sierra Madre Oriental by Yucca Do Nursery, believed to be *Q. canbyi* Trel. × *Q. rysophylla* Weath., and named ‘La Espinosa’ after the valley where it was found.

The mile of oaks along the rail track was begun shortly after the turn of the millennium and many of the oaks there have already exceeded 8 m/26 ft. They are evidently well cared for and their roots enjoy a wide covering of woodchip mulch. On younger trees we had seen a rubber disk made from recycled tires that has apparently yielded mixed results, but the 90 oaks along the rail track are in good condition, in spite some having suffered being run over by drunk drivers and other



5/ *Quercus stellata* in the Aiken Arboretum Trail on Colleton Avenue.





6/ *Quercus salicina* at the Aiken County Agricultural Services Center.

hazards of urban tree life. Some in fact were lost as a consequence of these calamities and have been replaced. This planting features many Mexican oaks, including *Q. affinis* Scheidw. grown from seed collected by Guy Sternberg and Allen Coombes in Central Mexico in 1995. The fact that we were viewing the oak in the presence of the acorn hunters themselves made the experience all the more significant. Other rare oaks along the rail track include *Q. sideroxyla* Bonpl. and *Q. germana* Schltdl. & Cham. and the Critically Endangered *Q. boyntonii* Beadle from Alabama and Eastern Texas. The Tour agenda stated that the guided tour of the 1 mi-/1.6-km long planting of oaks “promises to be an excellent opportunity for those who wish to collect acorns” and that promise was amply fulfilled.

The planting along Beaufort Street is a work in progress and some of the oaks there were planted as recently as 2012. This planting displays a wide geographical spectrum and makes evident Bob’s perseverance in testing the cultivation potential of rarer *Quercus* species. Amongst the Asian oaks, worthy of mention is a hybrid of *Q. fabri* Hance and *Q. dentata* subsp. *yunnanensis* (Franch.) Menitsky, which has grown remarkably well, and a vigorous *Q. dolicholepis* A. Camus. European oaks are well represented here, including the slow-growing *Q. alnifolia* Poech (the golden oak of Cyprus, see *International Oaks*, No. 24, pp 27-34) and a *Q. libani* G. Olivier that sported a branch with variegated leaves (an opportunity for a new cultivar?). Bob is particularly proud of his specimen of the only endemic African oak, *Q. afares* Pomel, which is found only in the mountains of Algeria and Tunisia. It is the Mexican oaks, however, that steal the show on Beaufort Street, including *Q. acherdophylla* Trel., *Q. acutifolia* Née, *Q. laurina* Bonpl., *Q. crassipes* Bonpl., *Q. saltillensis* C.H. Mull., *Q. obtusata* Bonpl., and *Q. crassifolia* Bonpl., amongst



7/ *Quercus germana* in the railway-track planting that had one acorn. A complex exchange of courtesies took place before it was decided who would keep it!

others. Particularly striking was a *Q. candicans* Née, which though only knee high caught our attention displaying its large, glossy dark green leaves with attractive undersides covered with white hairs.

Bob had yarns to spin about how he obtained his oaks, many from his IOS friends, some from travels far afield and others closer to home. His most recent escapade was to Florida and Georgia with Dean, our guide in Hopelands Gardens, in search of *Q. minima* Small. The dwarf live oak proved elusive till on their way home, in Brantley County, GA, they passed through a large area that had been burned in a wildfire a few years before. They were delighted to find that although there were no trees left there was no end of *Q. minima* in the diverse flora—and full of acorns. What they had not anticipated was how hard on their waists it would be to harvest acorns from knee-high shrubs!

### ***Naturally, not without acorns***

I have recounted the highlights of the Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour using the chronology of Aiken's past as a guide, but the weekend culminated with a view to the future. As often happens at IOS events that take place in autumn, participants were able to supplement the wide variety of Aiken acorns that was available during the tour by trading oaks-to-be with participants who had brought acorns from their home districts. The seed exchange took place late Sunday afternoon at Hopelands Gardens and involved enough bags of acorns to cover two long folding tables—including Bob's waist-wrecking *Q. minima*. And this time there was a grander finale to trump the acorn smorgasbord:

a giveaway of seedlings of oak species grown and donated by Woodlanders, including specimens representing Southeastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Mexico.

At the welcome dinner the mandolin player of Palmetto Blue had sung: “Kin folks a-comin’/They’re comin’ by the dozen.” We had indeed come by the dozen, well over two in fact, and it was encouraging to see IOS members and others enjoying an Oak Open Day in the United States. The excellent and efficient organization coordinated by Bob McCartney and the City of Aiken, which set up four different tours that could have run simultaneously, would have easily coped with a few dozen more participants. This two-day event punched as powerful a punch as a Pre- or Post-Tour associated with an IOS Conference—without the long bus rides, because all venues were within spitting distance of downtown Aiken—and it would have been nice to have seen it fully attended. It was an intense weekend of horticulture in general and oak study in particular, combining opportunities to view and discuss unusual and beautiful plants in company that blended bonhomie with knowledge and passion. As the band singer would have put it: “Y’all shoulda come.” If you ever have the chance to visit Aiken, do not miss the opportunity, you shall not be disappointed.

These Oak Open Days are one of the core activities of our Society and, after the success of the Aiken event, one hopes that in the future an increasing number of members will participate in them. Thanks are due to the City of Aiken for hosting the event and providing transport and infrastructure, to the IOS Tour Committee, and to Bob McCartney for organizing and running the Tour and for sharing with us his vision of an “oaken Aiken.” Surely in the future many will be forgiven for assuming that the town owes its name to its oaks.

## ***Participants***

Allen Coombes (Mexico); Brie Arthur, Don Creamer, Sara Creamer, Rebecca Dellinger-Johnston, Will Forster, Lucas Johnston, Ronald Lance, Todd Lasseigne, Dave Leonard, Bob McCartney, Julie Moore, John Palmer, David Parks, Ryan Russell, Tamara Russell, Philip Schetter, Guy Sternberg, Jeff Stevens, Michael Styers, Michele Styers (United States); Roderick Cameron (Uruguay).

***Photographers.*** Photos 1-4, 6, 7: Roderick Cameron. Photo 5: Guy Sternberg.

For an additional account of the Aiken Oak and Horticultural Tour, see:  
<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20131104/AIK0101/131109808>