INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF
THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL OAK CONFERENCE
by M. Nigel Wright

It brings me the greatest pleasure to present to you the documentation of what one day may be an historic event: The Proceedings of the First International Oak Society Conference at The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois.

Hopefully, from these papers you may be able to grasp the positive energy and the wealth of information this first conference brought together. For many attendants it was the first time of meeting after many years of telephone and letter correspondence. The opportunity to talk face to face and to discuss our favorite trees was almost overwhelming. As with many great events, there never seemed to be enough time to share all the countless thoughts and ideas with everyone.

Attendees of the Inaugural Meeting of the International Oak Society in front of the Thornhill Education Center, The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois, USA.

Front Row, Left to Right: Nigel Wright (Pennsylvania), Aytekta Ertas (Turkey), Michael Melendez (New Mexico), Stelian Radu (Romania), Damian Beardi (New York), Michael Beardi (New York), Mary Ann Dillon (Michigan), Amy Larson (California), Susan Cooper (England), George Ware (Illinois), Lisa Wright (Pennsylvania).

Second Row, Left to Right: Tom Burleson (New Mexico), Ken Aramus (Michigan), Peter van der Linden (Illinois), John Fair (Kansas), Jamie Friend (England), Ron Lance (North Carolina), E.H. Peter Ahrens (New York).

Third Row, Left to Right: David Johnson (Ohio), Rocco Damato (Illinois), Tamara Trites (Ohio), John Gammon (England), William Hess (Illinois), Harry Bailey (Georgia).

Fourth Row, Left to Right: Darell Nelson (Illinois), Greg Morgenson (North Dakota), Mark Coggleshall (Indiana), Mark Pitman (England), Sue Shapiro (Wisconsin), Jim King (Illinois), Lawrence Slavicek (Illinois).


Not Pictured: Matt Strong (Kansas)

5. Start an urban forest and Oregon white oak education program in local schools and organize volunteer urban forestry projects for students.

6. Include local nurseries in the stewardship program to propagate and grow Oregon white oak for community planting projects.

Conclusion

Forest Grove's historic record of tree planting should provide encouragement to communities throughout the world that wish to maintain populations of native trees within areas impacted by urban growth. Forest Grove is also an example of a community that, like many others, is actively seeking methods to protect and perpetuate significant native tree populations. Actions toward maintaining Forest Grove's namesake have been initiated by the City and the Community Forestry Commission. Although it is too soon to measure the success of these actions, the Community Forestry Commission has started a seedling project to provide planting stock and the City is working with a local nursery to grow Oregon white oak.

Quercus garryana. Martha Washington Park, Seattle, Washington, USA. © Guy & Edith Sternberg

Michael Reichenbach is an Urban Forestry Consultant for West Linn, Oregon, USA. He propagates and grows oaks and other tree species in a small ornamental nursery and has successfully used oak seedlings in urban plantings.
This First Conference was not only an opportunity to catch up with old pen-pals, but also a chance to make new acquaintances, particularly those who made the conference possible and made their facilities available to us at The Morton Arboretum. A special thanks goes to Dr. George Ware, Dr. Bill Carvell, Peter van der Linden, Bill Hess, Gerard Donnelly, Mike Spravka and Kris Bachtell. They also arranged for some very spectacular weather for us, with peak fall color coinciding with clear 70°F days.

The greatest thanks goes to Guy Sternberg, whose unrelenting hard work, meticulous attention to detail and organization made every event flow perfectly. For us, he has created the first mold to which future conferences may be cast. After the Conference some of us were lucky enough to travel a few hours South to his home in Petersburg, Illinois, where we were treated to the wonderful hospitality of his wife Edie. We were given a grand tour of Petersburg (Lincoln Land) and saw some spectacular specimens of oak with many natural hybrids that Guy had been observing for a number of years. Our final evening together was tinged with sadness as we said our goodbyes by the campfire and made our summaries of the recent events.

So from this brief past, I entreat you to follow us to the future where the International Oak Society moves quickly as all its legal documentation and nonprofit status are soon to be finalized. Locations for two future conferences (to be held every three years) are now confirmed. Regional Chapters are planned to be formed after incorporation with a European Chapter based in England. Membership is growing quickly with over 300 members worldwide. The future looks bright as we are constantly expanding and diversifying.

To encapsulate this First International Oak Conference has been somewhat difficult for the amount of fond memories have been numerous. I can only urge you to come to our next Conference to be held in California, 1997, and experience the wealth of oaks and the people that nurture and admire them from around the world. For now, let these important papers inspire you until then.

M. Nigel Wright is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the International Oak Society and operates Windrose Nursery in Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania, USA.
Evidence of continued efforts to plant Oregon white oak is lacking. Very few Oregon white oak trees that are younger than 80 years old were found in the more historic sections of the community. The planting of Oregon white oak that occurred in the 1870's and earlier may have decreased as a wider variety of species became available for planting. A wide variety of tree species that are younger than 80 years can be found in the older parts of the community. Another reason for the lack of Oregon white oak may be that conditions for natural development of Oregon white oak groves became unfavorable. As Forest Grove was developed, the density of development increased, thus limiting the regeneration of oak to garden plots and unmowed areas of the yard. Discussions with residents indicated that seedling oaks can be found in their yards; however, they usually are pulled with the weeds.

**Regulatory efforts to protect the grove**

The City of Forest Grove recognized the importance of trees and Oregon white oak as part of their natural heritage. Forest Grove's Significant and Historic Tree Ordinance states, “The trees of Forest Grove, a reminder of the City’s namesake, offer historic, aesthetic, spiritual, social, environmental and monetary values to the community.” This ordinance prohibited the removal of significant and historic trees on public and private property without a permit, and was passed in January of 1992 as the result of public concern over tree removal. In June 1993, however, public perception that the City of Forest Grove could require residents to spend thousands of dollars to prune, spray and treat trees instead of having them removed resulted in a vote by City Council not to adopt a list of historic and significant trees. This list included 429 trees, 340 of which are Oregon white oak. Most of these are located in Forest Grove's historic residential neighborhood. Therefore, the City has no legal means to prevent the removal of potentially significant trees from private property. For a variety of reasons, an estimated 10 to 20 Oregon white oaks are removed every year. One often cited reason for removal is concern about potential tree failure. The ordinance currently is being reviewed for revisions by the planning department.

**Future Actions**

It is the natural course for trees to grow, mature, decline and die. The current condition of the Oregon white oaks in Forest Grove indicates that many of these trees are declining. While some of Forest Grove’s existing trees may survive for another century or more, most will not.

Forest Grove’s Community Forestry Commission, a citizen advisory commission, has set a priority to develop a stewardship program for the protection, care and survival of Ore-