

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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This exciting journal issue includes the first publication of some new nothospecies names from Spain, an introduction to the oaks of Buckingham Palace, and recent progress regarding the molecular biology of northern red oak. But most of the articles this time focus on some of the majestic giants we hold so dear. Members of the International Oak Society have an especially deep sense of appreciation for large, majestic, heritage oak trees.

While we realize that oak conservation requires more than just focusing on these senior citizens of oak populations, and that we also need to ensure that there is adequate regeneration to sustain oak species, we tend to venerate those trees that have endured for centuries and overcome the many obstacles that have claimed all of the other nearby trees that started life around the same time. We understand that such old trees have many important values including aesthetics, nutrient cycling, providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, and stabilizing soil. Such trees also remind us that how we interact with our environment is key to having a sense of place and belonging in the natural world, and that we need to be careful stewards of what we leave behind for future generations. But these trees represent something even more. For many of us these stately giants connect us with the past and stimulate feelings of reverence that are difficult to put into words. When we face the threat of losing them to the chainsaw or road grader or violent storms, incredibly deep feelings of loss can be triggered.

We present a description of one of the oldest of the old: the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest. This is an English oak estimated to be between 800 and 1000 years old. John Palmer provides us with a fascinating description and history of this magnificent monarch. In California, a tree-sitter sat in an old oak named Old Glory for over 10 weeks to try to force authorities to alter their road-development plans. In the end, he was removed by the police, but the authorities now propose to move the tree to another site. Then Rosi Dagit provides information based on a decade of research on transplanting large trees that provides us with a much better understanding of what we can expect if someone tells us that they can simply move an old tree to another site if it is in the way of a project or a plan.

Jeff Krueger presents the Emancipation Oak, a beloved southern live oak tree in Hampton, Virginia, that witnessed the passing of slavery in the USA and was the site where slaves in that area first heard about the Emancipation Proclamation. Two other magnificent southern live oaks, the First and Second Presidents of the Live Oak Society, are described in an article by Coleen Landry, and we learn how trees that have survived repeated assaults by nature can be inadvertently killed by human activities. There is a story about an enormous southern live oak in Louisiana that was slated for removal by a road project until the Chairwoman of the Live Oak Society, the local Parish President, a professor of landscape architecture at Louisiana State University, the Governor of Louisiana, and others stepped in and voiced their concerns and opposition to removing the tree. Live oak obviously is a prominent species in this issue, so tree photographers



Artist Susan Van Horn is an illustrator from Chicago, Illinois. She contributes artwork for environmental groups to help bring attention, to educate, and to raise funds in an effort to protect and nurture our Mother Earth.

Guy Sternberg and Bill Guion profile the species for us with a photo gallery including some of the most notable southern live oaks found throughout the southern US.

We also learn about the demise of the historically significant Pemberton Oak in Tennessee, which Mike Dahl reported on in the last issue of *International Oaks*. Since that report was written, this mighty white oak has crashed to the ground, felled by high winds accompanying a summer storm. The same fate befell the Wye Oak in Maryland, a white oak that had stood for more than four centuries and was the largest known white oak in the world (our cover story).

The world is not static, and all that is here today will eventually be gone and replaced with something new. But it is still worthwhile to take stock of what we have and determine what is worth saving and fighting to protect. We hope the articles about monumental oak trees in this issue will be of interest to the readers and stimulate reflection about how ancient trees fit into our value systems and our lives.