

Note from the President

Dear Members of the International Oak Society,

In autumn 2005, the Bremen Botanic Garden in Northern Germany, well known for one of the largest *Rhododendron* collections worldwide, celebrated its 100th anniversary. The jubilee meeting had the motto “biodiversity” on its programme, with speakers from all around the world. On behalf of the International Oak Society, I gave a presentation about the biodiversity of oaks, and provided thirty different oaks from all over the world, as a birthday gift. These oaks were raised from acorns that I received directly from members and from the seed exchange of the International Oak Society, and from collecting trips organised by our society. Thanks to your contribution and your help, an oak collection in Northern Germany has been started! Meanwhile, the interest in oaks and all subjects related to our favorite genus grows constantly. In recent years, at least five major oak collections have been founded or are planned in Europe, most of them with the help of the IOS, in form of plants or ideas.

As I wrote last year, our concern must go not only to collections, but also to the natural stands of oaks and oak forests. Whilst the planting of an oak collection is *ex situ* conservation, more important is the *in situ* conservation of oaks in their natural habitat. Only if we can save the ecosystems where oaks are living can we save the tree inventory included in it, for the long term. The newest report on forests in Europe, just released in January 2006, reported that oaks are amongst the most seriously infected trees of central European forests. In Germany, 51 % of all adult oak trees are more or less in decline. Some of our members are involved in saving or replanting oak woods and forests, and many of our members do research with oaks and oak ecosystems. I hope that we, as Oak Society members, can continuously bundle knowledge and enthusiasm on this level, and perhaps increase these efforts in the future.

Another aspect of oaks is their horticultural or ornamental value. It is fascinating to see more and more American oak cultivars, with sometimes outstanding aspects, appearing in the trade in North America and in Europe, and in parts of Asia, as well. We can expect more in the near future. The International Oak Society serves as registrar for oak cultivars, and spreads the word of the new entries via their publications. This is an important task for us.

The upcoming Fifth Triennial International Oak Conference in Texas will summarize much of the activities done by members of the International Oak Society. I hope you all have the chance to attend at this major event in our society’s life, and that you have time to take part, not only at the presentations but also on one or two tours that will be organised in the surroundings of our Conference location. Do not miss the chance, and do try to come. You will find more information on the Conference in our newsletter, and on the website of the International Oak Society; check it frequently for updated news.

At this Conference, there will be also the election of the Board of Directors. The three-year term of current Directors expires with the end of our Triennial meeting. Within the coming weeks you will get information about the ballot, and I hope that you will participate in the election of the new Board of Directors. Your vote is important!

This issue of *International Oaks* contains another compilation of articles dealing with oaks, written by our members. Our journal stays alive only if members continuously contribute articles, making “*International Oaks*” a diverse publication. In this issue, you will read about several oak species, such as *Q. garryana*, *Q. alba*, *Q. xwarburgii*, and *Q. robur*, and the attempts to preserve a single oak tree. You will learn about oaks serving as trail markers in history, about systematic problems in the *Fagaceae* family, and about new oak cultivars. And you will find a portrait of Aimée Camus, a lady who devoted much of her life to the study of oaks. The result is this fine volume, effectively produced with the time-consuming work of Ron Lance and Guy Sternberg. Thanks to all contributors, and to the entire Editorial Committee for this new journal!

See you in Texas,
and best wishes,

Eike Jablonski
President
International Oak Society