

## New Plant Forum

Compiled and moderated by Jack Alexander.

### PRESENTERS:

**Jack Alexander**, Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

*Clethra alnifolia* 'Anne Bidwell'

**Vern Black**, Bailey Nurseries, St. Paul, Minnesota

*Berberis* 'Tara' Emerald Carousel™

**Bruce Briggs** and **Steve McCulloch**, Briggs Nurseries, Inc., Olympia, Washington

*Magnolia* 'Butterflies'

*Pieris japonica* 'Cavatine'

*Rhododendron* "P.J.M. compact form"

**Ruth Dix**, U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

*Viburnum* × *burkwoodii* 'Conoy'

**Gary Koller**, Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

*Xanthoceras sorbifolium*

**Rob Nicholson**, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

*Prunus pumila* var. *depressa* 'Gus Mehlquist'

**David Schmidt**, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario

*Forsythia ovata* 'Dresdner Vorfrühling'

**Sidney Waxman**, Storrs, Connecticut

*Acer* 'Cinnamon Flake'

*Pinus strobus* 'Shaggy Dog'

*Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Foxtail'

***Acer* 'Cinnamon Flake'** originated as a chance seedling among hundreds obtained from the Rochester Parks 30 years ago. It appears to be an *A. griseum* hybrid and is more vigorous than the species having attained a height and width of approximately 33 ft. It was named 'Cinnamon Flake' because of its unusual cinnamon colored bark which is finely and vertically fissured with thin paper-like flakes.

Its summer foliage is a rich green and its fall coloration is a spectacular red. In winter its cinnamon-colored bark is quite attractive. 'Cinnamon Flake' can be grafted onto *A. saccharum*, the sugar maple. Our oldest grafts, now 8 years old, are vigorous and show no signs of incompatibility. They have grown to a height of 14 ft with a 12-ft spread and have a trunk diameter of about 5 in. All of these selections can be seen at the Horticulture Research Farm at The University of Connecticut.

### ***Berberis* 'Tara' Emerald Carousel™**

There has always been a need for a good hardy barberry that doesn't sucker. Korean barberry is certainly hardy enough and has a nice floral and fruit display along with gorgeous fall color, but suckers badly and can only be utilized in a limited situation. Japanese barberry has a good compact form and again nice floral and fruit display, but is not consistently hardy enough for this area. Emerald Carousel™ barberry is a happy marriage between the two types and seems to have gained the good qualities of both parents without the drawbacks.

Beginning in the spring, pendulous butter-yellow lily-of-the-valley blooms hang suspended along the arching branches. The medium to dark green foliage sets off the color without hiding the flowers. During the summer the same emerald foliage on a 4 to 5 ft round plant serves as a beautiful backdrop for bright colored perennials. Autumn changes the leaves to an outstanding red to reddish-purple which color early and remain well into the fall before dropping. The cardinal red fruit is persistent into spring making this plant a true carousel of color for all seasons.

The original plant, selected in 1985, has shown no winter dieback, no signs of suckering, and no disease or insect problems. It should be adaptable to almost all soil types. It has proven to be hardy in USDA Zone 4, and is currently being tested in harsher environments. The USDA Cereal Rust Laboratory has tested Emerald Carouse™ and found that it does not act as a host for blackstem rust and is on their approved list. It therefore can be sold throughout the United States, and should be a great alternative to Japanese green barberry for all landscape uses.

The name Emerald Carousel™ is trademarked (royalty is 30¢). We will license others. On approved barberry list as *B. thunbergi* × *B. koreana* 'Tara'.

### ***Clethra alnifolia* 'Anne Bidwell'**

It is as if *C. alnifolia*, the summer-sweet or sweet pepperbush, has just been discovered by gardeners. Ten years ago, most gardeners and nurserymen thought of it simply as a good plant for wet places, available in white and pink. Now, there are at least eight obviously unique cultivars.

In 1983, Mrs. John Bidwell of Cotuit, Massachusetts invited me to see a *C. alnifolia* that she had grown from seed purchased from F.W. Schumacher, Seedsmen, Sandwich, Mass. One of her seedlings was obviously different. It had flowers that were arranged in a panicle rather than the more usual raceme. The size and habit of the plant were not unlike the wild plants that grow along the Massachusetts roadsides, maybe a little shorter and more compact than usual, but the inflorescence was unique. I had never seen any *Clethra* quite like it.

Mrs. Bidwell gave to the Arnold Arboretum the right to introduce the cultivar, hoping that we might derive some income from it. We have named it *C. alnifolia* 'Anne Bidwell' in her honor. Our oldest plants are grown from cuttings taken in

1985. They are now about 5 ft high and 5 ft wide. The inflorescence is usually a 4 to 6 in. panicle made up of 5 to 7 racemes. In Boston, it blooms about the third week of August, 2 to 3 weeks after the species.

Unfortunately, at least under our conditions, the whole plant does not bloom at the same time; and although this extends the season, bloom at any one time may appear to be sparse. This shortcoming was sufficient to keep us from patenting the cultivar, but it is still an attractive plant and may perform better under other conditions. While preparing this presentation, I found photos of the original plant growing in Cotuit, on Cape Cod and it appears to be covered with bloom.

***Forsythia ovata*** 'Dresdner Vorfrühling' is from Sastzucht, Germany and was introduced to the trade there in 1973. The literature reference is from *Beitrage Zur Geholzkunde* p. 73-74. The main advantage of this forsythia is the very early appearance of abundant pale yellow blossoms from top to bottom of the shrub 4 to 5 days earlier than cultivars such as 'Lynwood'. Even during sudden cold spells in spring this cultivar can be in full bloom 2 to 3 weeks before any other cultivar.

The plant was received at the Royal Botanical Gardens in 1982. Today it measures 9 ft high by 12 ft wide and has a very upright and dense growth habit. The flowers appear in dense clusters, open up to seven per flower bud. Our 1-year liner plants which are 20 in. high by 15 in. wide flowered heavily the first spring. The actual flowers are usually only half open, 3 to 4 cm wide. The tops are somewhat twisted.

This cultivar is not recommended for cutting and forcing but, because of the long and generous flowering time, it is quite effective in the landscape.

As with most forsythia cultivars, this one roots nearly 100% from softwood cuttings in June or July. Any one interested in hardwood cuttings can contact David Schmidt, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton Ontario, Canada L8N 3H8 (Tel 1-905-527-1158; fax 1-905-577-0375)

### ***Magnolia*** 'Butterflies'

*Magnolia acuminata* 'F.M.' (not introduced) × *M. denudata* (K. Sawada - Semmes, Alabama)

Hybridized by Phil Savage, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Propagation and distribution by Klehm Nursery, Barrington, Illinois; Briggs Nurseries, Olympia, Washington; and licensed growers.

A neatly shaped magnolia with deep yellow flowers (darker than 'Elizabeth'), truly a precocious bloomer. Blooms are 3 to 4 in. in diameter, 10 to 14 tepals with red stamens. This magnolia blooms before leafing out—blooming late (first week of May in Illinois). Flowers sit on the branches like yellow butterflies. A 5 ft plant may have 20 to 30 blooms while a 6 ft plant may display 80 or more flowers. Plants are bushy and hardy to at least USDA Zone 5a. Plant is patented.

### ***Pieris japonica*** 'Cavatine'

Selection from wild collected *Pieris japonica* seed at high elevations on Yakushima Island in Japan.

Seed collection by R. de Belder - Kalmthout, Belgium 1970

Propagation and selection by Firma Esveldt Nurseries, Boskoop, Holland, 1978-83.

Esveldt Nursery grew 6000 seedlings of this select seed and initially selected 50 *Pieris* plants to evaluate, of which 15 compact forms have been named. These selections have more upright instead of drooping flower trusses and a spreading rather than upright plant habit. Plants bloom profusely in Washington. Flowers are white and held upright. Plants are hardy (at least USDA Zone 5b), very bushy (requiring little to no pruning), and vigorous. Plants normally may reach 2 to 3 ft tall and 3 to 4 ft wide in 8 years.

These plants appear to be definitely hardier than other *P. japonica* selections, and their compact stature should increase their value in the landscape.

***Pinus strobus* 'Shaggy Dog'** originated as a witches'-broom seedling. Its twice as wide as high and has an annual growth rate of approximately 6 in. 'Shaggy Dog' looks like a shaggy dog. Its new shoots tend to grow slightly upward and then curve down a few degrees lower than horizontal. As a consequence there are dense layers of branches closely overlapping other branches, all with shoots inclined towards the ground.

Its form is irregular and has grown to a height of 3-1/2 ft and a width of 6-1/2 ft in 12 years. The new shoots are relatively thick and are easily grafted.

***Prunus pumila* var. *depressa* 'Gus Mehlquist'** is a new cultivar with interesting landscape possibilities as a woody, deciduous groundcover. This cherry is native from New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario south to Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Hortus III treats it as a separate species, *Prunus depressa*, while Krussman treats it as *Prunus pumila* var. *depressa*.

This cultivar was selected by Rob Nicholson of the Smith College Botanic Garden and Dr. David Boufford of the Arnold Arboretum from a stand along the banks of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire. It was growing on a sand and gravel bar in full sun. At flood stage the mother plant would be fully submerged while during low water in August the plant endures almost desert like conditions. It is probable that the entire stand may be a single plant, spreading and layering over the centuries.

This cultivar has rooted well from cuttings and is a rapid spreader growing 3 ft in a year once established. It is entirely prostrate, forming a dense mat that stands 6 to 10 in. above the ground. Its flowers are small, with five white petals. It has a strong scarlet fall color.

The Smith College Botanic Garden is pleased to name this selection in honor of Dr. Gustav Melquist, renown teacher, hybridizer and propagator. Those interested in propagules can contact the Smith College Botanic Garden, Northampton, MA 01063 (413-585-2748)

### ***Rhododendron* "P.J.M. Compact Form" Tetraploid form**

Unnamed as yet; origin—induced polyploid.

Flowers have greater substance and are much larger (2 to 3 in. diameter) than the diploid hybrid. Trusses have 4 to 5 flowers and the truss is 4 in. wide x 2-1/2 in. high.

Plants bloom in mid-March in Olympia. Flowers are lighter in color than the "P.J.M. Compact Form" and are in the purple group, 77B fading to 77C in the center. Foliage is broadly elliptic and is thicker and wider than the diploid form. Stems are stout, erect, and thick. The plant habit is upright and spreading, and plants are bushy, and hardy. Plants bloom at the same time as 'P.J.M.'

Performance testing is in process.

***Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Foxtail'** was selected because it is so different from other umbrella pines.

'Foxtail' was so named because of the unique development of its branches which are heavily foliated with short densely-arranged lateral shoots. Another unusual characteristic is its branching habit. Arising from a single leader and widely spaced, each branch is distinctive.

Along with its asymmetrical form, 'Foxtail' is in sharp contrast to the "typical" tree which is usually densely branched, sparsely foliated, and symmetrical in form.

***Viburnum* × *burkwoodii* 'Conoy'**. 'Conoy' has a compact growth habit, fine-textured, extremely glossy evergreen foliage and abundant, bright red fruit which colors in August and ripens to black in October. The shrub is a spreading, dense, evergreen shrub that has reached 5 ft in height with a width of 7 ft in a period of 17 years. In winter, the dark green foliage will take on a dark maroon tinge, but will revert to green with the advent of warm weather. The slightly fragrant flowers appear with the young leaves in late April; the buds are dark red opening to a cream white. Reliably evergreen to Zone 7 and perhaps Zone 6, it is hardy though deciduous in Zone 5.

### ***Xanthoceras sorbifolium*, yellowhorn**

With the decline of the American dogwood (*Cornus florida*), due to anthracnose, nursery people and landscape designers have been using alternate trees to fill the flowering niche of the dogwood. One such tree is the yellowhorn. Native to northern China the tree was first introduced to western gardens by Pere David, who sent a seedling to the Paris Museum in 1866 with first fruit production recorded in 1873.

Yellowhorn develops into a large shrub or small tree 15 to 20 ft in height with an upright pattern. With age it tends to be stiff and open causing it to become more picturesque than many small trees. In the Boston area flowering occurs, annually, in mid-May. Flowers are borne in terminal racemes 6 to 10 in. in length. Individual blossoms are five petalled, approximately 1 in. in diameter, white to creamy white with a color blotch at the base of each flower which gradually ages from yellow to carmine. Fruit occurs as leathery, three valved capsules which ripen in late August to early September. As they ripen the capsule opens allowing the seeds to drop to the ground. At the Arnold Arboretum a grove of four plants, 14-years old produces an abundant crop of seeds each year from which we have started and distributed many young plants. Seeds are edible and said to have the flavor of Macadamia nuts.

The foliage is pinnately compound, moderate green throughout the summer and becoming greenish-yellow prior to autumn defoliation.

With the hot dry summers of North America the plant seems to harden off and be tolerant of low winter temperatures. Mike Dirr tells of a nurseryman in Blair, Nebraska, who has successfully grown this out of doors where winter temperatures dip to -25 to -30F.

Jack Alexander, plant propagator at the Arnold Arboretum, tells us that the plant is easy to propagate. Seeds germinate after 2 months of cold stratification at 40F. He related that seedlings bought by the Arnold Arboretum had long thick roots. In order to get the seedlings into pots he removed the bottom four inches of root. So as not to waste the root pieces he potted them up allowing the top quarter inch to show above the soil line. Quick shoot proliferation resulted in another crop of strong, healthy plants.

In order for you to locate sources for trial at your location I offer the following sources and apologize to those I have missed! Large quantities of seedlings are being marketed by Lawyer Co., 950 Highway 200 West, Plains, Montana 59859. Mail order plants, for trial and testing are available from Forestfarm, 990 Tetherow Road, Williams, Oregon 97544-9599.

#### **MONDAY MORNING 6 DECEMBER 1993**

The morning session was convened at 8:00 a.m. with Dale Deppe serving as moderator.