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 American Conifer Society Southeast Region

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia



From the Southeast Region President

What an interesting spring and early summer we are having this year. I know we all have spent many more hours in our gardens than we normally would. I am sure it has helped many of us through these trying times. We have unfortunately had to cancel most of the Conifer Society events for the year. But I do hope that members will try to have a few small get togethers to show off their gardens.

There are several ways members can make this happen. The membership list is searchable on the website and you can send members in your area an email letting them know you want to have an open garden. The other way is to announce it on the ACS Southeast Facebook page (American Conifer Society Southeast

Group), and see who shows up. Just remember to follow the latest CDC recommendations regarding COVID-19.

If you do have an open garden or just want to share photos of your garden, please post them on the Facebook page (American Conifer Society Southeast Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/351809468684900/>) or send them to Sandy to put into an article for next issue.

Some good news is we are already planning on having our 2021 Regional Meeting in Knoxville, the first weekend in May. Dr. Alan Solomon has agreed to be on tour. His garden is aptly named GATOP (God's Answer To Our Prayers). You can Google it to see several articles that have been written over the last couple of years and several video tours, too.

In May, we held an election for Vice President and Regional Director, using Survey Monkey. We had a great response: 85 people voted and, overwhelmingly, almost all voted within 24 hrs of the first email going out. That was amazing! Thank you all for voting in Leanne Kenealy for Vice President and electing Sandy Horn for Regional Director. Leanne takes over from Wayne Galloway who did a great job for us, having served as President for a year during his term as Vice President. Sandy has also serving out my term as Regional Director, once I was elected President of the Southeast Region. Leanne, Sandy, and I are are looking forward to working together to bring you some exciting events in 2021 and beyond.

The elections will most likely continue as an electronic ballot, and we want to make sure everyone has a vote, so if you have a household membership, please make sure you have the second member's email address on file with the central office to ensure everyone gets to vote and receive our updates on events and newsletters. Our main form of communicating to everyone is through email. Meanwhile, Keep safe, and keep gardening!

Jeff Harvey, President

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Around the Southeast Region

Let Your Light Shine! I Need Your Help!

As you can see, this newsletter is a bit brief, in comparison with previous issues. The main reason is that all the events we had planned for the SER have been canceled, due to health considerations. Many of you are not comfortable with traveling during the pandemic and gathering with others, no matter how many precautions are taken, and we feel the same way, so it'll be a while before we see each other in person, again. Anyway, that brings me to the problem of publishing an interesting, exciting, and fun newsletter in the time of COVID-19.

We have two fine articles to share with you this time, and I'm sure you'll find them interesting. However, as of this moment, I don't have Thing One for the September edition. If you have done something of interest in your garden, or if you know of someone who has, write up an article, take a few pictures, and send it to me. If you are in the trade or in academia and are doing research or have insight into plants, their cultivation, propagation, diseases, pests, etc., or have been out adventuring for plants, please share your expertise with us in an article! If you know someone who's done any of those things, put them in touch with me!

The next page contains two contributions to our *In the Garden* column from your fellow SER members. Their recommendations may just make your gardening chores a little easier. What do you know that might be news to others in the Southeast Region, when it comes to tools or "how to's"? All I need is a couple of paragraphs and a good photo.

I'm counting on all of you to keep our newsletter special. Send your contribution to me, anytime, at littletrees@earthlink.net.

September 15th Newsletter Deadline is August 15th!



Photo by S. Horn

Make Friends and Share Ideas with Other Coneheads!

by Robin Tower, Facebook Group Administrator

The ACS Southeast Region's Facebook Group is really taking off! We now have nearly 230 members, and you can be next! Just go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/351809468684900/> and click JOIN! Anyone can join, and anyone can post. If you have any questions about how to join or post to the group, email me at goldnpaws@gmail.com.

People who have posted questions are getting quick responses and good advice. Pictures of conifers and conifers in combinations with other plants are an inspiration to all of us! There are already a lot of good conversations going.

We are especially excited to use this site as a support group, so: Are you having a problem with a particular conifer? Pest, disease, unexplained illness? Post a question! Share the good and get help with the bad in the American Conifer Society Southeast Group!

Email Robin at: goldnpaws@gmail.com

In the Garden

An Ode to My Mantis

By Bobbie Cyphers

Back in the day before I closed my old rose nursery, my customers and I, business concluded, used to swap gardening tips and plant lore over a cup of tea. One afternoon, a group of us started talking about how to plant those roses they'd just purchased—in particular, who dug the holes. Leaning back against the porch rail, one woman – split nails and soil-grimed fingers her badge of authenticity – asked if I'd ever heard of a Mantis tiller. She then went on to tell me she'd bought one a few months back, riding it around in the trunk of her car, waiting for the right time to tell her husband about her new farm implement. She knew she'd been busted when he rounded the corner of the garage, the tiller swinging from his left hand. She said she'd prepared a half dozen mitigating factors in her favor, but couldn't seem to come up with a single one before he said, "I don't know what you paid for this tiller, but whatever it was, it wasn't enough."

A couple of weeks later I took delivery of my own brand new 1999, 20 pound, 2 cycle Mantis. Over the years I must have dug a few thousand holes with it, wearing out two sets of tines – replaced for free as they came with a lifetime warranty. I do allow my husband to use it on occasion. The Mantis is a great gender equalizer. I recommend it to every gardener I come in contact with, especially the females.



Not Just for Construction Work!

By Jeff Harvey

As many of you know, Jennifer and I haven't had as much time to work in the garden in the last couple of years as we would have wanted or needed, and the unplanted/weed trees have really enjoyed the time we have been away. We've tried many different ways to remove them: digging, pulling with tree pullers, sawing with old pruning saws, and clipping the small ones with pruners. Needless to say they all can be expensive, \$20 to \$30 for pruning saws or new blades, hundreds of dollars for tree pullers, and just tons of time to dig them out. But then we got smart.

We started using a battery powered reciprocating saw!

The saw wasn't too expensive, and the blades are cheap! Just stick the blade in the dirt under the crown and pull the trigger. It gets the tree out at the roots and works well on small to medium sized trees. 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches. It can handle bigger ones, but they can take a little longer. Plus, when you see some medium-sized pruning that needs doing, you can take some big limbs out with it as well. And then, of course, you can always use it for the construction work it was meant for.

**Note from Sandy: I'll second that! I've been using my reciprocating saw for all kinds of gardening, for years! Don't know how I ever lived without it!*



Pendulous Conifers for the Southeast

Text and Photos, except as noted by Hugh Conlon

Across the Southeast conifer world, collectors choose to grow weeping conifers for the beauty of their unique branch architecture. Individual specimens serve as key focal points in the garden. Plant scientists have theorized how and why pendulous branched plants may have evolved. For the curious, it makes for good reading, but will not be discussed here. In general, weeping conifers are generally rare in nature, yet some like hemlock (*Tsuga spp.*) and Deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) may sport 50 or more pendulous cultivars, each.

The Southeastern U.S. conifer world is blessed with several dwarf pendulous forms. Their natural form is truly a garden sculpture. Their graceful drooping branches are real eye catchers. Some display a strong vertical landscape presence, and don't take up a lot of space. Additionally, their pendulous branches tend to shed snow.

Some grafted pendulous favorites include weeping blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'), weeping white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula'), weeping Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Pendula'), and weeping bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum* cv.). Some entire evergreen species flaunt naturally pendulous foliage, such as Himalayan cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) and Nootka cypress (*Cupressus nootkatensis*).

Early care is essential when planting many weeping species. At planting, young nursery plants require continuous support on sturdy vertical stakes for several years, at least. Without proper staking and pruning, many weepers will tend to sprawl along the ground. Taller stakes or props may be added to create taller specimens.

The following is a list of the dozen most popular weeping conifers found in the southeastern U.S. Several are limited to growing in northerly areas of the region because of their susceptibility to pest and disease troubles as well as southern heat and humidity. USDA hardiness zones are provided.

The Twelve Most Popular Weeping Conifers

Picea abies 'Pendula' (weeping Norway Spruce):

'Pendula' is a very common spruce in northern areas of the Southeastern U.S., but it does not tolerate the heat and humidity of the deep South (Zone 8) except at higher elevations. The species tree grows to 60 feet tall with a strong pyramidal form, but 'Pendula' will only reach a height of 20' and spread of 10', after many years. Its evergreen needles are $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, overlapping, and sharp-pointed, with a deep green color that, in winter, may take on a blackish-green look. Norway spruces produce pendulous, brownish, banana-shaped cones that are 5 to 6 inches long. Two additional pendulous selections worthy of consideration are 'Acrocona' (12-15' high and wide after 10 years)—a semi-dwarf, pyramidal form (if a leader is staked) with pendulous branches and reddish imma-



Picea abies 'Pendula'

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A young *Picea pungens* 'The Blues', a dwarf weeping Colorado spruce suitable for smaller gardens. Photo by S. Horn

ture cones that form at the tip of its branches), and 'Inversa' (15-20 feet high by 3-4 feet wide). (Zones 3-7 (8)).

***Picea pungens* 'Pendula' (weeping Colorado blue spruce)** produces dense sharp blue needles and pendulous branches that create a beautiful, cascading effect. A pendulous form generally grows only as tall as its final staking height. 'Glauca Pendula' is a vigorous, irregular, weeping selection with bright silvery-blue, sharp pointed needles. (Zones 3-7)

***Picea glauca* 'Pendula' (weeping white spruce)** is an exceptionally cold-hardy evergreen conifer, native from Canada to Newfoundland, south to New York and Michigan. A full size tree grows large, 60-80 feet tall, while 'Pendula' grows 12 to 40 feet high, with a narrow 5 to 8 feet spread. It has 3/4-inch, sharp-tipped blue-green needles coated with white wax, which provides its bluish green needle color. Mature cones are 1-2 inches long. (Zones 2-6).

***Pinus strobus* 'Pendula' (weeping eastern white pine)** requires staking when young but can achieve a height and width of 15' in ten years, if trained, early. However, some pendulous forms possess a stronger vertical central leader (trunk) and don't need as much multi-year staking. Two such cultivars 'Angel Falls', which can profit by staking but will grow into a somewhat vertical mound, without it, and 'Niagara Falls' (semi-pendulous habit / long, soft, blue-green needles). (Zones 3-8).

***Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula' (weeping blue Atlas cedar)** hails from the Atlas Mountains in north Africa. The species grows to 40-60 feet in height, but individuals over 70 feet are not difficult to find. Young cedars start out pyramidal but develop wide-spreading, slightly weeping, horizontal branches as they start to

mature after 30-40 years in age. The popular cultivar, 'Glauca Pendula', is beloved for its blue-green foliage. Gardeners may opt to weave branches onto a trellis or gateway. It grows exceptionally well in the Southeastern U.S. Purchase grafted nursery stock rather than seed-produced plants, which do not retain exceptional needle color year-round. Branches may defoliate in exceptionally cold winters. (Zones 6-9).

***Tsuga canadensis* 'Pendula' (weeping Canadian hemlock)** adds a graceful element to either sunny or shady areas. Several weeping cultivars are available. Sometimes incorrectly sold as 'Sargentii', 'Pendula' is a popular old-timey favorite, a graceful, broad-spreading, mounding shrub with weeping deep green, finely textured foliage. Several ultra-weeping prostrate (mound) shrub forms are also available, including 'Cole Prostrate', 'Brookline', 'Bennett', 'Jeddeloh', and



Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca Pendula' - weeping blue Atlas cedar

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Tsuga Canadensis 'Cole Prostrate' Canadian hemlock

Photo by S. Horn

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'Gracilis'. Compact shrub forms are suitable for rock gardens or border plantings. Hemlocks thrive almost anywhere from full sun to partial shade. Native U.S. hemlocks are susceptible to hemlock woolly adelgids. (Zones 3-7).

***Cedrus deodara* 'Pendula' (weeping Himalayan / Deodar Cedar)** Deodar cedar can reach 150 feet tall and up to 40 feet in width. It forms an attractive pyramid tree form; the needles display a lovely green-silver color. In the past thirty years, numerous varieties have entered the U.S. nursery trade, making *Cedrus deodara* a conifer collector's delight. This Central Asian conifer

is indigenous from northern India to Afghanistan and east to Nepal. Growth rate and winter hardiness is highly variable depending upon the cultivar. 'Shalimar' and 'Kashmir' are rated very cold hardy. 'Feelin' Blue' and 'Devinely Blue' are popular low growing mounding forms with bluish green needles. (USDA zones 6b-9).

***Cupressus nootkatensis* 'Pendula' (weeping Nootka Cypress / Alaskan cedar)** is native to moist soils along the Pacific Coast from southeastern Alaska to northern Cali-



Cedrus deodara 'Shalimar' Himalayan cedar



fornia. Pendulous forms develop straight, strong central leaders with flat sprays of medium green, horizontally arranged, scale-like foliage. Alaskan cedars cast a unique narrow profile in the landscape. Several cultivars are available, starting with these four popular cultivars: 'Jubilee', 'Green Arrow', 'Strict Weeping' (most narrow profile), and 'Glauca Pendula' (blue-green foliage). They grow 20 to 30 feet tall and 8 to 12 feet wide. (Zones 4-7).

***Taxodium distichum* cvs. (bald cypress)** is a native deciduous conifer found in coastal areas from Maryland to Florida to Texas. Two compact weeping cultivars are widely available. 'Cascade Falls' grows 8-12 feet tall over the first 10-15 years, eventually to 20 feet tall. 'Fallingwater' is a second weeping variety that grows 20 feet tall and 15 feet wide. Both cultivars display a strong weeping habit, requiring staking for multiple years. Select plants that are grafted high onto *T. distichum* understock. The feathery, light green

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foliage (1/4 inch long, soft flat needles) turns orange/cinnamon-brown in autumn before falling. Wrinkled, ball-shaped, 1-inch diameter, purplish-green cones mature to brown in the fall. (Zones 6-9).



Taxodium distichum 'Cascade Falls', in fall color.
Weeping bald cypress



Taxodium distichum 'Fallingwater'
weeping bald cypress

Photo by S. Horn

larches are iffy at best in the South. (Zones 5-7).

***Picea omorika* 'Pendula' (weeping Serbian spruce)** *Picea omorika* hails from Serbia and Bosnia. Species trees grow 40 to 60 feet tall and 15 to 25 feet wide, but pendulous forms grow a lot shorter. 'Pendula', 'Berliner's Weeper', 'Kuck's Pendula Kuck' (14 feet x 4 feet in 10 years), and 'Pendula Bruns' are four available cultivars. Needles run up to 1-inch long with two white bands on the underside. Serbian spruce does not grow reliable south of zone 7, related to disease and pest issues. (Zones 3-7).

General care: The conifer species listed here should be planted, properly spaced, in fertile, well-drained soil. Weeping conifers need room to grow. None of the conifers listed here, with the exception of bald cypress, like boggy soils. Plant in partial to full day sun (6 hours minimum). To repeat, young plants may require staking for upwards of 3-4 years and should be pruned (trained to a sturdy central stake. Inspect twistems or tie-ons periodically to ensure that they are not girdling the tender stems.

***Juniperus rigida* 'Pendula' (weeping Temple Juniper)** is native to the dry, mountainous regions of northern China, Korea, and Japan. This small, weeping evergreen makes a striking specimen in the garden. It tops out at 20 feet with pendulous branchlets and a loose, open and irregular habit. Foliage is green to gray-green in color. Junipers are dioecious (separate male and female plants). The berry-like fruiting cones on female plants emerge green, and ripen to bluish-black the following year. Fruits are eaten by some birds and mammals. The tree is often planted on temple grounds in Japan, giving the tree the common name of 'temple juniper'. (Zones 6-9).

***Larix kaempferi* 'Pendula' (weeping Japanese larch)** is a deciduous conifer that grows only as high as it is staked, in an open sunny garden. Weeping larch should be grafted high. Larches generally fail in hot and humid summers in the Southeastern U.S. south of USDA Zone 6b to 7a. The species is troubled by sawfly, larch looper, tussock moth, Japanese beetle and woolly aphids. Add potential disease problems such as needlecast, needle rust and cankers, and

About the Author



Hugh Conlon is an ACS member and a retired University of Tennessee horticulturist, who lives in Johnson City, TN. He posts a weekly garden blog: www.whatgrowsthere.com

Taxodium Grafting Workshop Held at JC Raulston Arboretum

Text and Photos by Leanne Kenealy

Back in February, I taught my first class at the JC Raulston Arboretum and my final grafting workshop of the winter. It is always such a pleasure to get an opportunity to teach people how to graft, it is sincerely one of my favorite things to do and I look forward to trees going dormant all year for it. The JCRA generously supplied *Taxodium*, *Metasequoia*, and *Ginkgo* rootstocks for everyone, as well as a huge assortment of scion wood from the garden for each genus.

I really like using deciduous conifers in my grafting classes because they are much more forgiving for a beginner, or for anyone who doesn't have an ideal growing space at home. The wood on deciduous con-



fers is very soft and easy to work with. The less pressure you have to put on your knife as you make the cuts, the easier it is to get a straight cut and the right angle. Getting the technique right with these types of soft-wooded trees will get you the muscle memory you need to tackle the harder stuff. Deciduous conifers also have a large cambium layer beneath the bark. The cambium layer is where the two trees will actually fuse to create your graft union. The larger the cambium, the more surface area there is to fuse, hopefully leading to higher success rates.

I like to start off my workshops talking about why we graft and how grafting is used in the nursery industry. It truly is the only way to propagate many of the trees we know and love. Even when a cultivar can be propagated from a cutting, it's often much faster to propagate it by grafting. I then show a few slides about the different grafting techniques. For this workshop, I focused on the side veneer, which is what we practiced that day.

The class was full of Raulston Regulars who had taken grafting classes before, so I shouldn't have been surprised at how well everyone did. I have had the best time getting emails about everyone's results. It is so rewarding to be around people that find joy in learning to graft the same way I do.



About the Author

Leanne Kenealy earned her MS degree in Horticulture at Clemson University where she worked in the peach breeding program. She then worked at Moore Farms Botanical Garden in Lake City SC where she became Production Coordinator, managing all propagation, scheduling and maintenance of their greenhouse and nursery crops. Currently she is assisting Denny Werner with his breeding program and propagating and caring for the incredible collections in the nursery of the JC Raulston Arboretum. She is Vice President of the ACS Southeast Region.

ACS SOUTHEAST REGION CONIFER REFERENCE GARDENS

Gardens of the Big Bend, Quincy, FL

Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, GA

Armstrong State University Arboretum Conifer Garden,
Savannah, GA

Lockerly Arboretum, Milledgeville, GA

Smith-Gilbert Gardens, Kennesaw, GA

The State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens, GA

Baker Arboretum, Bowling Green, KY

JC Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, NC

Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, SC

Hatcher Garden-Woodland Preserve, Spartanburg, SC

Historic Columbia, Columbia, SC

Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City, SC

East TN State University Arboretum, Johnson City, TN

Memphis Botanic Garden, Memphis, TN

University of Tennessee Gardens, Knoxville, TN

Plateau Discovery Gardens, UT Gardens, Crossville, TN

**West Tennessee Research and Education Center
Gardens**, Univ. of TN Jackson, Jackson, TN

Al Gardner Memorial Conifer Garden, Reynolds
Community College, Goochland, VA

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA

Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk, VA

State Arboretum of Virginia, Boyce, VA

**Map of all SE Region reference gardens, with complete
addresses:**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LCf4i-gim6ltGKdMAdv6aeVaji0&usp=sharing>

When you go to the Southeast Region Reference Garden Map via the link provided above, clicking on the name of a reference garden in the list on the left zooms the map to that garden's location and provides information on the garden you clicked. Click on a star to identify gardens in locations you may want to visit. Depending upon what's available, you will see any or all of the following: the physical address, phone number, web site, photos, and a link to click if you need directions. Our Reference Gardens are a treasure! Visit soon!

ACS Southeast Region ...

Garden Markers

- ★ Al Gardner Memorial Conifer Garden
- ★ Armstrong State University Arboretum C...
- ★ Atlanta Botanical Garden
- ★ Baker Arboretum
- ★ Brookgreen Gardens
- ★ East Tennessee State University Arboret...
- ★ Gardens of the Big Bend
- ★ Hatcher Garden-Woodland Preserve
- ★ JC Raulston Arboretum
- ★ Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
- ★ Lockerly Arboretum
- ★ Memphis Botanic Garden
- ★ Moore Farms Botanical Garden
- ★ Norfolk Botanical Garden
- ★ Smith-Gilbert Gardens
- ★ State Arboretum of Virginia
- ★ The State Botanical Garden of Georgia
- ★ University of Tennessee Gardens
- ★ UT Gardens, Crossville, Plateau Discover...
- ★ West Tennessee Research and Educatio...

Newsletter Wrap-up



I am having the hardest time beginning this brief little inconsequential note. I seems somehow disrespectful to BE inconsequential in the midst of our new reality. Right around the day the last newsletter was published, we all went into lockdown. I don't think we'll be back to "normal" for a very long time. In an entirely different crisis, people are asking to be treated decently and fairly without regard to what color they are or how much money they have. And then there are all the people in health care, essential services,

grocery stores, packing plants, delivery trucks and 18-wheelers, on and on, of all races and religions, who put their lives on the line to care for us in so many ways, sometimes because they consider it their duty, but sometimes because they have no choice.

I turned 70 this March, so I remember the upheavals from the 60's in Chicago, Miami, and LA. I remember the peace marches against the war in Vietnam and the marches for civil rights and how, amongst the anger and frustration, there was also much love and courage—how, among the young people, also walked soldiers; among Blacks walked Whites. This week, I saw, once again, rage and frustration, but also courage and love, and among the marchers of all races also walked veterans, policemen, and National Guardsmen. There was a little march here in Cary, too, and our police walked with the citizens. It makes all the difference, when we walk side by side, even six feet apart.

So I'm a total failure when it comes to being inconsequential, this time around. But I am hopeful and grateful, too. Hang in there, Everyone.

Sandy

Share Your Tips! In the Garden

Share your garden tips and tricks, favorite tools or design ideas, successes and failures. Tell your fellow ACS members how you made a path, built a new planting bed, dug up a stump, dealt with weeds, defeated a fungus or a critter (2-, 4-, 6-, or 8-legged!). How do you fertilize, make compost, or improve your soil? Do you have a strategy for moving big rocks, digging up stumps, clearing draining the swamp? What is the best way to help a new planting succeed?

Send your helpful thoughts to us, along with a picture or two, and be our next "In the Garden" author. We look forward to hearing from you!

Help Us Raise Needed Money!
Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's

You can order bulbs from Brent and Becky's and support the Southeast Region at the same time, so why not take advantage of this opportunity to surprise your friends with **bulbs for Christmas**? It's easy to do, and they'll be so glad you did! Instead of going directly to the Brent and Becky's website, go to **BloominBucks.com** and select **American Conifer Society Southeast Region** from the dropdown menu. You will then be taken to the Brent and Becky's website, and 25% of anything you spend there will go to the Southeast Region! You don't pay anything extra for your bulbs, but your purchases will support the Southeast Region.
Happy Planting!

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Submit questions, comments, articles, photos, or suggestions for the next newsletter to

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Remember! Deadline for the September 15th newsletter is August 15th!