

## NEW PLANT FORUM

Compiled and Moderated by Jack Alexander

### PRESENTERS:

**Jack Alexander**, The Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130  
*Syringa ×chinensis* 'Lilac Sunday'

**Mark Brand**, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06269  
*Halesia carolina* 'UConn Wedding Bells'

**Tim Brotzman**, Brotzman's Nursery, Madison, Ohio 44057  
*Cercis canadensis* 'Covey'

**Steve Cotta**, Portsmouth Nursery, Portsmouth, Rhode Island  
*Rhododendron* 'Amy Cotta'

**Alan Jones**, Manor View Farm, Monkton, Maryland 21111  
*Thuja* 'Green Giant'  
*Cornus kousa* 'Wolf Eye'

**Phill King**, Greenwood Propagation, Hebron, Illinois 60034  
*Hamamelis vernalis* 'Autumn Embers'  
*Fothergilla gardenii* 'Beaver Creek'

**Kevin Parris**, Gilbert's Nursery, Chesnee, South Carolina 29323  
*Cryptomeria japonica* var. *sinensis* 'Green Grissly'  
*Prunus incisa* 'Snow Cloud'

#### ***Cercis canadensis* 'Covey'**

This is a unique weeping form which grew in northwest New York for over 30 years before its recognition by Brotzman's Nursery in 1991. In 6 years of observations, 'Covey' has exhibited moderate to rapid growth, hardiness to -23F, larger than normal leaves, and lavender flowers borne profusely on young and old plants. When left untrained this plant will mound and twist back over itself producing a large arching form. When trained upright and single stemmed, a striking, small weeping tree is possible in 3 to 4 years. Leaves are so large and dense that trees appear to be shingled. First commercial release of 'Covey' will be in 1998 from licensed growers.

#### ***Cornus kousa* 'Wolf Eye'**

A variegated form of *C. kousa* selected at Manor View Farm a few years ago. The variegation is very consistent with no reversion occurring. The habit is similar to regular *C. kousa*. An added bonus is that the bracts are also variegated adding an unusual quality to the plant. No leaf burn has been reported with this selection, but it does require some shade to reduce leaf curl during extreme summer heat.

#### ***Cryptomeria japonica* var. *sinensis* 'Green Grissly'**

In August 1991 Gilbert's Nursery received seven distribution bags at the NCAN Short Course and Trade Fair. Each bag contained a seedling of *C. japonica* var. *sinensis* (syn. *C. fortunei*). After two growing seasons we evaluated the plants and selected one clone to propagate. This clone was darker green than its six siblings were in the month of January when cryptomeria typically shows signs of winter foliage discoloration. It was also two-thirds the height of the others with a more

compact habit. The branch tips have same pendulous nature as other specimens of *C. japonica* var. *sinensis*, which separates it from most *C. japonica* selections. It is easily rooted from winter hardwood cuttings under mist with bottom heat. We think this selection will satisfy those who are looking for a slightly pendulous conifer with good winter foliage appearance. It will likely be faster in production than *Cedrus deodara* but achieve a similar function in the landscape. Despite little marketing, the plant has received interest from our local landscape and garden center customers. Two-gal and 10-gal sizes are available for those interested.

### ***Fothergilla gardenii* 'Beaver Creek'**

This excellent selection is from Mr. Roy Klehm of Beaver Creek Nursery.

He selected this clone from a single plant and has rooted all further generations from this selection. The uniformity and superior form of this selection is unsurpassed in the selections of *F. gardenii* presently available.

The growth form is that of a full, low-growing mound about 35% wider than tall in youth.

Field-grown specimens are "cookie cutter" in form with no variation in shape. This makes choosing of finished nursery plants easy and a delight. Other selections of *F. gardenii* that we have seen vary from upright to wide spreading in shape within the same field. This variation is probably due to the fact that most *F. gardenii* being rooted use seeding-grown mother plants as stock sources.

'Beaver Creek' also exhibits flower bud hardiness not often seen in fothergilla in northern climates. Unlike most *F. gardenii*, flowering occurs evenly over the entire plant, not the one-sided flowering most often seen in our cold climate.

Fall coloration is a rich red/purple/gold with yellows and oranges intermixed.

The plant is a good grower and will tolerate up to 50% shade quite easily.

Softwoods are rooted late June and overwintered without disturbance of the root system.

It took much cajoling to get Mr. Klehm to name this selection which we can now use as a standard for *F. gardenii* future selections.

### ***Halesia carolina* 'UConn Wedding Bells'**

USDA hardiness Zones: 4b to 8.

Origin: Discovered as an outstanding specimen in Columbus, OH. Observed, propagated, and named by Mark Brand.

Landscape niche: A small flowering tree with multiseason interest. Excellent for smaller properties where bloom is important.

Ornamental features: Displays white, bell-shaped flowers in early May. Profuse flower production occurs annually and young plants flower precociously, making them readily marketable at small sizes. Flowers open wider than typical for the species so they are showier. Foliage is somewhat shiny. Interesting four-winged fruits are conspicuous in the fall and persist into early winter. Bark is a striking steel-gray, streaked vertically with cream.

Habit and growth rate: A rounded, deciduous small tree reaching 15 to 20 ft height, with an equal crown spread. Can be grown as a single- or multistemmed form. Growth rate is moderate when young, slowing with maturity.

Culture: An understory tree naturally, so it is tolerant of light/moderate shade to full sun. Prefers a moist, well rained, slightly acidic soil, but has proven adaptable to most soils that are not excessively alkaline.



Pest/disease problems: No significant problems.

Propagation methods: Summer softwood cuttings treated with IBA/NAA will root >90% in fog or mist. In a single season, 24- to 30-inch plants can be obtained from rooted cuttings. 'UConn Wedding Bells' has also proven to be easy to micropropagate.

Patent/royalty information: The University of Connecticut is requesting a \$0.25 per plant royalty, with funds returning to the ornamental plant development and evaluation program in the Department of Plant Science.

Availability/distribution: Softwood cuttings and tissue cultures are available from Mark Brand.

### ***Hamamelis vernalis* 'Autumn Embers'**

Mr. Roy Klehm of the Beaver Creek Nursery in Poplar Grove, Illinois, made this selection of vernal witchhazel.

Mr. Klehm first noticed the impressive fall coloration in a large block of *H. vernalis* seedlings. He at first felt that the plant was perhaps another species or cultivar mistakenly mixed in with its more common sisters. The fall coloration is a rich red with overtones of purple, yellow, and orange. The breathtaking effect is that of a glowing campfire on a crisp fall evening.

Best fall coloration is triggered with the hard frosts of colder climates and the plant is at its best there.

The flowers are colored in shades of ripe grain and are quite fragrant.

A national mailorder nursery firm has sought this plant as its "cover girl" and many have been quite surprised that Mr. Klehm did not wish to patent the plant.

Unlike other witchhazels this cultivar roots quite well in June-July.

Perhaps the best selection of witchhazel to date within the realm of fall color, 'Autumn Embers' is the equal of fothergillas in the north.

### ***Prunus incisa* 'Snow Cloud'**

This tree was personally selected and named by Dr. John Creech, formerly of the National Arboretum. Dr. Creech shared cuttings with us in 1994 from the parent tree growing in his personal garden. This cherry is ideally suited for the small garden, having a more compact growth habit than the typical species. You could describe this tree as a diminutive white-flowering *Prunus xincam* 'Okame'. Softwood cuttings root easily under mist with 1000 ppm IBA or KIBA. A small quantity of 2 gal-sized plants is available for those interested.

### ***Rhododendron* 'Amy Cotta'**

Named in honor of Amy Cotta who through her endless generosity allowed Portsmouth Nursery to exist and succeed as a wholesale growing operation. This plant serves as a reminder of her love of all plants

*Rhododendron* 'Amy Cotta' can best be described as a dwarf 'P.J.M.' Developed as a mutation of *R.* 'P.J.M' this plant features dense azalea-like foliage that is somewhat darker than the *R.* 'P.J.M' and less than half the size. A dwarf growth habit assures a tightly rounded form that matures at 3 ft high with a wider spread. Plentiful blooms cover the plant in early spring and are the same lavender pink as the *R.* 'P.J.M'. Hardy to Zone 4.

Propagation methods used for *R.* 'P.J.M' have proven to be equally effective for 'Amy Cotta'. However, no micropropagation has yet been attempted. This plant can be classified as one that is easy to root.

***Syringa* × *chinensis* 'Lilac Sunday'**

This new lilac cultivar is named in honor of the Arnold Arboretum's annual lilac celebration. It is an open pollinated seedling, that I grew and selected from seed that we obtained in 1979 from the Botanical Garden of the Chinese Botanical Academy, Beijing, Peoples Republic of China.

'Lilac Sunday' produces a great abundance of fragrant, light purple (78-C on the RHS color chart) flowers. Flower buds form along the stems for a distance of 2 or more feet from the terminal and come into bloom with the earlier cultivars of common lilac. When in bloom, the weight of the flowers causes the thin branches to arch some almost touching the ground. The late summer and autumn foliage has shown little affect of mildew or leaf-roll necrosis.

Softwood cuttings of 'Lilac Sunday' root readily when treated with 5000 ppm K-IBA. These rooted cuttings, at just 1 and 2 years of age, produce flowers. Plants have also been produced by micropropagation and are now becoming commercially available.

It is estimated that plants will attain a height of 8 to 10 ft and a width of 10 to 12 ft. and to be hardy to USDA Zone 3. For a more complete description see *Arnoldia* 57 (Spring 1997): 12-13.

***Thuja* 'Green Giant'**

This hybrid between *Thuja plicata* and *T. standishii* grows as fast as Leyland cypress. Relaxed dark green foliage adds to the elegance of this fast-growing pyramidal conifer. A growth rate of 3 to 5 ft can be expected once established, making this plant very useful for screening. Is considered by many as a replacement for Leyland cypress. It is deer resistant. Ultimate height unpruned is 30 to 50 ft.