

## About Our Speakers



### Jody Karlin

*"The Best Dwarf & Unusual Conifers for the Georgia Landscape"*

After finishing his Master's degree in Clinical Psychology in Manhattan, New York, Jody Karlin decided upon a different career path. After years as a fish hobbyist, he began Just Add Water, a custom design aquarium company. Several years later, Jody relocated to Atlanta, where his business has expanded to include designing and maintaining aquariums, turtle and fish habitats, ponds and water art. Through the natural design process with pond construction, Jody began to landscape and decorate his work. Jody used his favorite trees, conifers and maples almost exclusively, as they provide year-round color. Soon, another business was begun, grafted to the aquariums and pond building. Just Add Water's Rare Plant Nursery now offer's Jody's self-taught expertise as we provide the Southeast's most extensive collection of rare and unusual conifers and Japanese maples. Jody has lectured both the State and Atlanta Botanical gardens, to the Koi Club, and several Master Gardener groups on conifers in the south, pond building and maintenance and the best maples for the Southeast.



### Bob Head

*"Conifers for the Southern Landscape"*

Bob Head is a second-generation nurseryman. He earned his B.S. in Ornamental Horticulture from Clemson University and worked for 14 years as an Area Ornamental Horticultural Specialist for Clemson's Cooperative Extension Service. He is president of Head-Lee Nursery, Inc. in Seneca, South Carolina, a 45-year old family-owned retail-wholesale nursery. In 1999, Bob formed Head Ornamentals, Inc., with his wife and brother. They advertise through their website at [www.gardendebut.com](http://www.gardendebut.com), and their trademark, Garden Debut(R), has introduced several plant cultivars including Magnolia grandiflora 'Teddy Bear'(R), Acer rubrum 'Summer Red'(R), Ilex x 'Christmas Jewel'(R), and Loropetalum chinense'Snow Muffin'(R).



### Richard Bitner

*"Gardening with Conifers"*

Richard L. Bitner, M. D. studied horticulture at Longwood Gardens and has been a Plant Study Walk instructor there for many years. He is a popular teacher of the Conifer and Deciduous Flowering Shrubs II Certificate courses and is an instructor in the Professional Gardener Training Program. His writing and photographs have appeared in various national and regional magazines. He is a member of the PHS Gold Medal Plant Award Committee. His best-selling book *Garden Conifers: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* was recently published by Timber Press. . When he isn't pursuing his passion for plants, Richard is a practicing anesthesiologist on the faculty of the Penn State School of Medicine/Hershey Medical Center.



### John Ruter

*"Conifers for Sweltering Environments: Evaluation and Research"*

Most horticulturists belonging to the Zone 6/7 mafia don't know that summer lasts for 5 months in the lower Coastal Plain of Georgia or that we average 90 to 100 days per year at or above 90F! Many believe that yellow or blue-foliaged conifers don't stand a chance in the land of planted pines. Dr. Ruter will discuss 10-plus years of experience evaluating conifers in the Lower South, new plant development, and research trying to develop the latest "mean green screen" for Southeastern landscapes.

John Ruter's projects at the University of Georgia focus on nursery crop production and plant breeding and selection for the Southeastern United States. He is also chairman of the Coastal Plain Research Arboretum which concentrates on the native flora of South Georgia. He is currently working in three areas: developing and evaluating new plants for Southeastern landscapes which have new horticultural characteristics or improved environmental tolerances; developing sterile forms of popular ornamental plants such as Berberis, Buddleia, and Euonymus and development of Camellia oleifera, Tea Oil, as a new oil crop for the Southeastern United States.



### Dave Creech

*"Bald is Beautiful"*

This will be a brief review of recent botanizing expeditions by Dr. Creech to China and Mexico and how these acquisitions end up as new plants for the deep South. These include the latest evaluation work in *Taxodium*, *Acer*, *Hydrangea*, *Azaleas*, *Camellias*, *Japanese Plum Yew*, *Abelias* and other advanced selections coming down the pipeline.

Dave Creech, the Regent's professor of Horticulture at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, directs the 10-acre SFA Mast Arboretum, the 8-acre SFA Ruby Mize Azalea Garden and the campus' 40-acre Pineywoods Native Plant Center. He writes and lectures widely, has enjoyed numerous international consultancies and has traveled extensively throughout the world.



### **Carol Reese**

*"Staging Your Conifers for Maximum Wow!"*

Collecting the coolest conifers is just the beginning. Those special specimens deserve a setting that sets off their finest features. Complimentary plants are a given, but take it up a notch. Striking structural elements, siting for maximum silhouette, or painting the house a contrasting color are just a few themes explored in this program. Make sure no one walks by your favorites without being stopped in their tracks.

Carol Reese is a garden writer, photographer and lecturer whose engagements have taken her all over the nation, camera in hand. As Ornamental Horticulturist for the University of Tennessee, and Q & A columnist for Horticulture Magazine, she has vast practical experience, but it's her enthusiasm and zany humor that make her presentations memorable and compelling.



### **Chris Carley**

*"The Gotelli Conifer Collection at the National Arboretum – a Glance Back and a Look Forward"*

On seven hillside acres in Washington, DC, the Gotelli Collection displays hundreds of taxa of conifers, accented with Japanese maples, crape myrtles and companion plants. Glancing back to the establishment of the collection, and what would become the oldest and largest curated conifer collection in the United States, provides an opportunity to watch the collection develop and mature. Looking forward to the next forty years, the challenges of preserving the collection while keeping it current, as well as the Arboretum's role in plant conservation will be discussed.

Chris Carley has a master's degree in horticulture from Texas A&M University and pursued further graduate work at North Carolina State. He taught nursery and landscape classes at California State University, Chico for many years. He filled his coastal California garden to capacity with conifers, a state of affairs possibly familiar to many. Chris later moved to Savannah, Georgia where he managed a commercial greenhouse operation. In 2006, he accepted the position of Plant Health Care Specialist at the National Arboretum and jumped at the chance to manage the conifer collections as well.



### **Rita Randolph**

*"Conifers & Companions for Containers and Small Gardens"*

Rita specializes in unusual foliage and flowering plants for containers, outdoor rooms and small gardens. Her beautiful photography will take you around the country, showing you dozens of ways conifers and evergreens are partnered with perennials and annuals in fascinating designs.

Rita Randolph is widely known as an enthusiastic speaker with cool humor. She is a true plant collector, preferring golden, variegated, or any 'plants of exceptional color'. Containers are Rita's canvas. Unusual and eye-opening combinations spill over everywhere, often with plants rarely seen before. She is past president of Tennessee Flower Growers Assoc., and a member of numerous horticultural societies. An avid photographer, she is also a member of The Garden Writers Association, and writes for GMP Pro Magazine and other horticultural publications. Randolph's Greenhouses is a 60 yr old family business that has become a collector's destination. Upon arrival you immediately suspect that a Plant Nut is in the midst! Her flair for combinations is well known. An excited customer was overheard calling to cajole a friend to come shop stating "... It's only a four hour drive!" You are guaranteed to leave this lecture inspired!

### **Tom Cox**

*"Conifers at the Cox Arboretum—An 18 Year Odyssey of Successes & Failures, What the Reference Books Never Told You"*



Tom will begin his presentation with the origins of the arboretum; from a collector's garden to a serious institution and how conifers began to play a role in the landscape, which simply began as a way to add color to drab winters. Conifers, as a group of plants were not specifically a part of the original plan, but over time, discovering that they were a fairly easy division of plants to work with and the losses were comparatively few. Realizing there was not much diversity in the southern landscape and information was scarce on what had been trialed, Tom will share his experiences with what has worked, especially at the species level. He will also discuss how the drought and recent cold temperatures have affected conifers; this will include a seasonal view of selected conifers at various times of the year to highlight four seasons of color.

In 1990 Tom along with his wife Evelyn purchased an undeveloped 13-acre parcel in Canton, Georgia and started the Cox Arboretum & Gardens. Over the ensuing 18 years, this has evolved into one of the premiere collections of woody taxa in the southeastern U. S. In 2002 the arboretum was selected as one of the host sites for the American Conifer Society's national meeting and is now a frequent stop for gardening enthusiast as well as those involved in serious plant study. Tom is the current national President of the American Conifer Society and is in the process of co-writing a book on conifers for the south with Dr. John Ruter. He is now retired and devotes full time to the collection and evaluation of rare plants with a specific focus on conifers.

SORRY.  
NO IMAGE  
IS AVAILABLE  
AT THIS  
TIME.

**Don Howse**

*"Conifer Treks-Collecting Plants in Remote Corners of the World"*

Don was born in 1943 and raised in Altadena, California. Since his teenage years Don has had an interest in collecting and growing plants. Growing up in Southern California he worked after school for Coolidge Rare Plant Gardens in Pasadena, developing an interest in tropical and sub-tropical plants. He attended the University of Idaho where he attained his BS degree, majoring in Ornamental Horticulture. There he learned to appreciate plants requiring cold hardiness, and his interest in conifers ensued. During his summers he worked and trained as an intern at Monrovia Nursery Co. in Azusa, California. After college he remained in Idaho for six years teaching basic horticulture to students at the Idaho Youth Training Center in St. Anthony, Idaho. Upon moving to Oregon in 1972 he worked for a nursery in Boring, Oregon as a field and canyand manager. The nursery soon became Iseli Nursery, Inc. and Don was elevated to the position of Vice President of Operations. He and Lloyd Porter started Porterhowse Farms in 1981 and they have been growing conifers as the primary crop since. Today, Porterhowse Farms of Sandy, Oregon is well known as a source of rare and unusual conifers, with more than 2400 species and varieties in their collection. Many of the conifers are diminutive and ideal for the rock garden. Porterhowse Farms has an extensive display of conifers, large and small displayed in an arboretum. He has trekked and collected plants in Yunnan, China and Pakistan in Asia, and in the mountains of Spain. He has written articles for the Conifer Quarterly about his travel experiences. Don is an active member of, and has been on the board of the American Conifer Society. He served as President of the Western Region, and has chaired or co-chaired several national meetings. He also chairs the Merit Awards Committee for the ACS. Don also has strong interest in growing rock garden plants. He has a display garden at the nursery with both alpine rock garden plants and many conifers. Don is a past president of the Columbia-Willamette Chapter of North American Rock Garden Society. He has been a board member of the Berry Botanic Garden, and also on the board of the Hoyt Arboretum Friends Foundation. He also served on the Conifer Committee at The Oregon Garden in Silverton, Oregon. Today, Don is semi-retired and living on the site of Porterhowse Farms where he gardens and works in the arboretum.



**Jean Williams-Woodward**

*"Common Plant Diseases Affecting Conifers"*

Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward is an Associate Professor and Extension Plant Pathologist in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Georgia in Athens. She has been with the University of Georgia for 12 years, and has statewide responsibility for assisting green industry professionals in identifying plant diseases and developing disease management programs for commercial ornamentals in greenhouses, nurseries, and landscapes. She also teaches several courses at UGA including Ornamental Pest Management and Clinical Plant Pathology.



**Maarten van der Giessen**

*"Conifer Propagation – What To Do When It's Not In Dirr's Book"*

Maarten van der Giessen majored in Chemistry at the University of South Alabama. He was the assistant manager at Cottage Hill Nursery in Irvington, Al from 1987 to 1990 and has been manager and Vice-President of van der Giessen Nursery in Semmes, Al since 1990. He is a past president of the South Alabama Nurserymen's Association, and current president of the Mobile Botanical Gardens. Van der Giessen Nursery is a 47-acre liner and container operation that propagates a wide variety of woody ornamental plants.



**Randy Clark**  
**The Bonsai Learning Center**

Randy Clark, 60, has been learning the art bonsai for more than a quarter century and for the past decade, has traveled throughout the United States and Europe teaching the subject. He strongly encourages his students to develop an individual approach to the art. During his thirty plus years of involvement with bonsai, Mr. Clark has spent seven of them serving as a vice president of the National Bonsai Foundation in Washington D.C. as well as two terms as president of the Minnesota Bonsai Society and as Chairman of the 1987 International Bonsai Conference which was held in Minnesota. He also served two years as the managing editor of Bonsai Magazine, the official publication of Bonsai Clubs International and is the author of Outstanding American Bonsai, a book published by Timber Press in Portland, Oregon. His bonsai have won numerous first place and best in show awards at both the local and regional level.