

Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 21 No. 3

Summer 2004



Courtesy of William Valavanis



William Valavanis is known internationally for his creative and educational accomplishments in the world of bonsai. See pages 32-35 for three examples of projects photographed at several stages of development.

Picea pungens 'Fat Albert' in Jim Brennan's Chattanooga, Tennessee, garden stands 10 feet (3 m) tall among a variety of contrasting evergreen textures. He reports the tree has grown five feet (1.5 m) over the past three years.



Jim Brennan

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Cover photo: *Picea pungens* 'Spring Ghost' at the home of Dean and Linda Linderman.
Photo courtesy of Dean Linderman.

Wild Cedars

by J.R.P. van Hoey Smith

Our *Conifer Quarterly* (Winter 2004, Vol. 21 No.1) recently gave special attention to *Cedrus*, the true cedars. This induced me to write down my own personal experiences with this genus, as I have seen all four species growing in the wild.

I saw *Cedrus deodara* (**Deodar cedar**) during the International Dendrology Society (IDS) tour in Nepal in 1984. This species is most clearly different from the others and is immediately recognizable by the drooping ends of its young shoots. (*Cedrus* cones are all the same shape, so the species are difficult to identify by the cones, though *C. brevifolia*'s cones are the largest.)

Cedrus atlantica (**Atlas cedar**) from

J.R. P. van Hoey Smith to Receive Award of Merit

Traditionally, the winners of the Conifer Society Merit Awards are a closely guarded secret until the annual National Meeting. However, one of this year's winners will not be present to receive his award.

This year's Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Garden Conifers is J.R.P. van Hoey Smith. His award will be presented in the Western Region following the National Meeting.

Morocco and Algeria is very difficult to distinguish from *C. libani* (cedar of Lebanon). However, I have observed a difference that you will not find in any book. As soon as a *C. atlantica* matures and starts to produce cones, the color of the needles turn from green to bluish. I first noticed this at the Arboretum Trompenburg; during several visits to the Atlas Mountains I noticed the same

Through rigorous measures, the Turks succeed in keeping sheep and goat populations to a minimum so that they do not harm the young forests.

feature, both in Morocco and Algeria. But the differences between *C. atlantica* and *C. libani* are so small that I can understand why several authors have lumped them together under the name *C. libani* subsp. *atlantica*. I have read both that Atlas cedar produces a flat spreading crown with age, and also that it does not. As shown in the photo, the tops of these trees can be flat.

Just like *C. libani*, *C. atlantica* can achieve enormous size. On the popular Michelin travel map of Morocco, two gigantic specimens were plotted, "Cédre Gouraud" and "Cédre Lyauty." The first of these, located in Azrou near Ifrane,

Morocco, is shown in the photo with a trunk measuring an estimated 10 feet (3 m) in diameter.

C. atlantica was brought to Europe in 1839, two centuries after *C. libani* was introduced here.

Cedrus libani (**cedar of Lebanon or Lebanon cedar**) had already been introduced to Europe by 1638. To commemorate the battle of Waterloo in 1815, where Napoleon was defeated, cedar of Lebanon was planted all across England, as the tree was very much in fashion at the time. This is the reason why nearly every estate includes at least one Lebanon cedar that is approximately 190 years old.

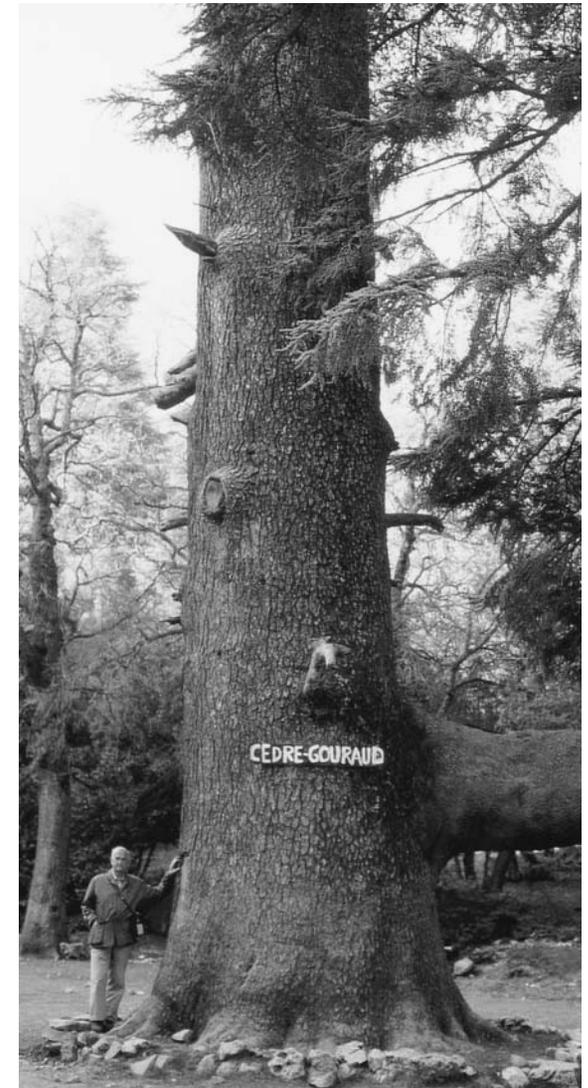
I have never seen *C. libani* in Lebanon or Syria, and I am told that only a few very old trees remain there. For many years, young seedlings have apparently been eaten by grazing goats and sheep. However, I do know the cedars in Turkey very well. The local name of *C. libani* there is Tauruscedar, and the timber is used exclusively for building purposes. After a plot is harvested, it is replanted as prescribed by law. Through

The author stands beside a *Cedrus atlantica* in Morocco whose trunk measures approximately 10 feet in diameter.

All photos courtesy of the author.

rigorous measures, the Turks succeed in keeping sheep and goat populations to a minimum so that they do not harm the young forests. If a goat is found outside the permitted boundary, a heavy fine is levied.

Lebanon cedar can grow to be very old. The champion tree in Ciglikara,



A fastigiata *C. libani* contrasts dramatically with a normal tree of the same species in Turkey.



Turkey, is estimated to be 1600 years old.

During our travels, we saw many subspecies and varieties of *C. libani* in various habitats, including:

C. libani subsp. *stenocoma*. This hardier form grows in higher elevations throughout the Taurus range. As for shape, there is no difference between this subspecies and the normal *C. libani*, and both display the same flat top with age.

C. libani 'Glauca' is not as blue as the selection of Atlas cedar, *C. atlantica* 'Glauca.' It grows only in a few places, but in blue forests with a few conspicuous green trees among them. Arboretum Trompenburg has a beautiful specimen received from Hayrettin Karaca of Yalova, Turkey.

C. libani 'Karaca Column' has a nice compact form, as shown on page 29. Mr. Karaca found and named it, and he



Top: The original *C. libani* 'Karaca Column' displays a compact form alongside the species in the background.

Bottom: This *C. libani* 'Karaca Column' was planted at the author's Arboretum Trompenburg in 1987, and appears here with its namesake, Mr. Karaca.

sent me a nice specimen in 1987 that is now 20 feet (6 m) high.

C. libani (Fastigiata Form), a single specimen shown in the photo on page 28, has not yet been propagated.

C. libani (Horizontal Form) is also shown. We found several plants like this one, but it is possible that it originated by some animal browsing or other damage, so it has not been propagated.



In cultivation, many more cultivars have been available at one time or another.

C. brevifolia, the Cyprus cedar, does grow on the island of Cyprus. However, we also found these short-needled trees in the Taurus Mountains opposite Cyprus, scattered among *C. libani*. This suggests a very close relationship between the two species, and I would not object to Cyprus cedar named as a subspecies or natural variety of *C. libani*. In *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Islands*, Bean writes that the cones of *C. brevifolia* should be smaller than those of *C. libani*, but I have found the opposite to be true, *C. brevifolia* having the biggest cones of all. ▲