



Conifer Selections for Georgia – A 2006 Update

Dr. John M. Ruter, University of Georgia, Dept. of Horticulture, Tifton, GA 31794

email: ruter@tifton.uga.edu

Nature of Work: Conifers are important landscape plants in many parts of the United States, but have been overlooked in the Southeast. In 1997, a conifer evaluation project was initiated at the Tifton campus. Seed from promising conifers such as *Chamaecyparis obtusa* var. *formosana*, *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Ben Franklin', *Cupressus glabra* 'Carolina Sapphire' and *Platycladus orientalis* (Xian Shan selection) were collected during the winter of 2002-2003, germinated, and grown in #1 containers. Seed from other selections were gathered from various sources and were grown in liners. Plants in #1 containers were shifted into #7's at the CANR on February 17, 2004, whereas liners were shifted to #3's on April 7, 2004. The substrate consisted of 6:1 pinebark and sand amended with (in lbs. per cu. yd.) dolomitic limestone (4.0), Micromax (1.5), Gypsum (1.5), Osmocote Pro 18-8-8 (14.0), and Talstar (2.0). Plants were grown under standard cultural practices and were shifted to larger containers in 2005. All plants were evaluated in November of 2005 and 2006. Numerous plants were then transplanted into a field evaluation plot at the CANR as noted. Heights of plants in the field were taken on 15 November, 2006.

Results and Discussion:

Calocedrus

one plant of *C. formosana* was planted in the garden in 2004, the other was planted in the field in November, 2005 along with one plant of *C. macrolepis*. In November of 2006, the height of *C. formosana* planted in the garden was 51" and the plant in the field was 29" tall. *C. macrolepis* in the field has a height of 33".

Cedrus deodara

one 'Kashmir' was planted in the field, 62".

Chamaecyparis obtusa

34 seedlings were raised from var. *formosana*. Mean height was 48" in 2004 container trial. Ten plants were shifted to #15 containers for 2005. Three were transplanted to the field, the other seven were discarded. Plants have been selected for form, dark green color, and for remaining green thru the winter. Mean height of the three plants was 69". One vegetatively propagated plant from Tifton known as Clinton selection was also placed in the field (20").

Cryptomeria japonica

One or two plants each of 'Araucarioides' (31"), 'Cristata' (50"), and 'Sekkan' (58") were planted in the field. Seven seedlings were raised from the cultivar 'Ben Franklin'. Two of the seven have been selected for further evaluation. One seedling has horizontally layered foliage and another has twisted foliage. Five seedlings of 'Sekkan' were also planted in the field. Three seedlings from

‘Tarheel Blue’ were discontinued. Thirty two seedlings of ‘Yoshino’ were grown in #7 containers. All showed physiological needle blight in late summer. Twenty-three of the best were kept for further evaluation in 2006, but all were discarded.

- Cupressus cashmeriana* plants received as *C. himalaica* are now classified as *C. cashmeriana*. Two have been planted in the field (~79”), one in the garden in 2004 (99”). The identity of *C. himalaica* var. *darjeelingensis* is questionable. It does not look like *C. cashmeriana*. Five seedlings were planted in the field (~56”), nine were discarded. Three of the five in the field have been selected for further evaluation.
- Cupressus glabra* 24 seedlings were raised from the cultivar ‘Carolina Sapphire’. Foliage color ranges from gray-green to gray-blue. Mean height was 55" with a range from 37" to 77" in 2004. Nine seedlings were shifted to #15 containers. Of these nine, five were transplanted to the field (mean height of 75”). Another batch of seedlings was evaluated in #3 containers in 2005. 74% of the seedlings were discarded due to development of *Cercospora* foliar blight. Thirteen plants have been shifted to #15 containers. Four selections from the 13 have been placed in the field in 2006. Two plants of ‘Chaparral’ were transplanted to the field in November (42”), one other plant is growing in the garden (55”).
- Cupressus lusitanica* Two seedlings were field planted (heights 76” and 54”), as were five seedlings from *C. lusitanica* var. *benthamii* (range 63” to 72”). Ten seedlings of var. *benthamii* were discarded in 2005.
- Nageia nagi* one plant of this selection from Valdosta was planted in the field (31”).
- Pinus densiflora* three seedlings of var. *multicaulis* were shifted to #15 containers, three were discarded. Three seedlings of *P. densiflora* were shifted up, nine seedlings were discarded. One seedling is dwarf and is being considered for future release, all other plants have been discarded.
- Platycladus orientalis* from nine seedlings of ‘Golden Surprise’, six have variegated foliage. Four have been selected for shift up. Of the original 48 seedlings from the Xian Shan mountains in China, 16 were selected for further evaluation. Nine were planted in the field while seven were discarded. Plant height ranged from 60" to 78" in #15 containers. 101 more seedlings from the Xian Shan selection in Tifton were brought to CANR in May, 2005. In November, 35 were kept for further evaluation.

Sequoia sempervirens one plant of 'Soquel' was planted in the field (42").

Taiwania one plant each of *T. cryptomerioides* (22") and *T. flousiana* (23") were planted in the field. Both plants exhibit plagiotropic growth and have resisted forming a central leader.

Thuja occidentalis one seedling from 'Brandon', three variegated seedlings from 'Golden Globe' (range 24 to 30"), six seedlings from 'Holmstrup' (range 12" to 17"), and two seedlings from 'Malonyana' (28" and 31"), were shifted up to #15 containers in November of 2005 or planted in the field.

Significance to Industry: Seedling germplasm has shown a great deal of variation for form and foliage color. Advanced selections will be vegetatively propagated and evaluated further under container and field conditions for future release.