

Western Region 50th Anniversary Recollections of IPPS Before, During, and After 1960[®]

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INTRODUCTION

On this 50th anniversary of the Western Region of the International Plant Propagators' Society, it is important to remember our history and to look to that history to guide us into the next 50 years. Today we are going to look at the origins of the Western Region, who conceived it, and who gave it life, energy, direction, and character. The formation of the Western Region established an important precedent for the establishment of additional autonomous regions around the globe as part of an international organization, the International Plant Propagators' Society.

The original creation of the International Plant Propagators' Society can be credited to the vision and commitment of many people, and especially to Ed Scanlon and his publication "Trees Magazine." Ed Scanlon felt an organization was needed to share updated information on plant propagation. This type of organization had formed in 1934 during the depression, but had subsequently failed. At a meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, 8–9 Nov. 1951, the Plant Propagators' Society was reborn. Jim Wells of Redbank, New Jersey, was the keynote speaker. He likened plant propagators to the craftsmen of the Old World who banded together in trade guilds. A guild was a fraternal organization where full membership was considered a well-earned honor and not something that could be handed out on a platter to just anyone who desired membership. A guild established high standards of experience, skill, and ethics. A guild established the required number of years of training for an apprentice and the required number of years to become a journeyman before being recognized as a master of one's trade. Jim Wells felt that all members of an organization dedicated to plant propagation should be required to share their experience with others. He was adamant that propagators overcome secretive practices and open their greenhouses to fellow members to allow members to seek and share their knowledge of plant propagation. These radical ideas set forth by Jim Wells formed the basis for membership requirements of a resurrected Plant Propagators Society. At continuing deliberations in July 1951, a constitution was adopted and officers were elected: Jim Wells, President; Dr. L.O. Chadwick, Vice President; and Edward H. Scanlon, Secretary-Treasurer. The Society's first logo was a figure of two hands cutting a bud from a stem with a budding knife. This figure was attributed to a 1920 Edition of the Nursery Manual authored by the noted horticulturalist, Liberty Hyde Bailey. In the summer of 1957, Phil Barker, a graduate student of Dr. Chadwick at Ohio State University, moved to the University of California, Davis, to teach a plant materials course. California was new to him, as were most of the

trees and shrubs about which he would be teaching. As a junior member of the Plant Propagators' Society, Phil remembered the Plant Propagators' Society meeting he had attended in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1955. It had been a particularly simulating learning experience because of the very forceful dialogue among venerable plant propagators. Phil valued his membership in the Plant Propagators' Society and appreciated the opportunity to be able to call any fellow member of the Plant Propagators' Society if he had questions about plant propagation. Phil believed that there were probably many plant propagators in the western United States who would welcome an opportunity to attend such a meeting in the western U.S.A., rather than make a 2,000-mile trip to Cleveland, Ohio. Phil Barker went into action and called on Dr. Hudson Hartmann, U.C. Davis, co-author with Dr. Dale Kester of a recently published text on plant propagation. They immediately became a team in pursuit of a common goal and, together, they wrote letters to the 12 members of the Plant Propagators' Society who lived in the western U.S.A. about starting a western region chapter of the Plant Propagators' Society. The replies received from these members were wholeheartedly favorable and were forwarded to the Eastern Region Executive Committee with a request for approval to establish a western chapter.

At the December, 1958 meeting of "West Coast Section" of the Plant Propagators' Society which would be under the direct control of the parent body Phil Barker and Hudson Hartmann called a meeting in Davis, California, for 24 June 1959. Twenty-two enthusiastic people attended. They expressed unanimous opposition to parental control by the Plant Propagators' Society and insisted on a chapter that would be an autonomous part of the Plant Propagators' Society, rather than merely a subordinate and theoretically probationary "West Coast Section." Autonomy was not a lukewarm concept. Hartmann, Barker, and the others felt autonomy would be a key element in future efforts to organize western meetings. A committee was organized to plan an official meeting in Asilomar, California. Don Hartman was elected to lead the committee as Chairman, Herman Sandkuhle to serve as Vice Chairman, and Dick Harris to serve as Secretary. Much effort was devoted to formulating a program, selecting a meeting site, and announcing the event. The committee assembled an impressive array of speakers with the intent to stimulate interest and insure a significant turnout for the founding meeting. It was also intended to impress appointed delegates of the Eastern Region with the quality and content of a program that could be assembled by plant propagators in the Western U.S.A. The first official meeting was held the weekend of 14–16 Oct. 1960, at the famous religious conference center at Asilomar on the picturesque Monterey Peninsula of California. Over 150 plant propagators registered, more than twice the number the organizing committee had hoped to attract. The information-filled meeting included discussions of grafting techniques using mechanical devices, seedling production in containers, profitability of healthy plant propagation techniques, mist propagation and how to bring plants out of the comfortable womb of the mist-filled propagation house to the hard realities of life in a greenhouse or, worse yet, the field. At the Saturday night meeting in the Chapel at Asilomar, Phil Barker introduced leaders from the Eastern Region. Each spoke on the philosophies, practices, and rules of the Plant Propagators' Society that were unique and sometimes even radical. The attendees to this meeting in Asilomar felt that the activities of each Region should be governed by bylaws adopted individually by each respective regional group and that the Society should be under the direction of an International Board with rep-

resentation at the International Board from both regions. Mr. Herman Sandkuhle emphasized that each region should have their own autonomy, but within a master organization. The Tenth Annual Meeting of the Plant Propagators' Society convened on 1 Dec. 1960, in Cleveland, Ohio. The Society was reminded that arrangements had been made in Asilomar several months previously to promote a Western Regional organization of the Plant Propagators Society. Dick Fillmore, as chairman of the delegation that had been sent to Asilomar to help organize the Western Region, reported that at their organizational meeting at Asilomar, they had had some 160 enthusiastic and interested attendees. A motion was proposed to approve the constitutional re-organization plan. This plan provided for a single Plant Propagators' Society with Eastern and Western regional organizations and created an International Board of Directors. Past President Ed Scanlon spoke against the motion: "I question seriously the wisdom of organizing this Western Region. It seems to me that for a period of 2 to 3, or maybe 5 years, it should be strictly on a chapter basis, and that other considerations should be given along that line rather than taking this group in. About the addition of the word 'International,' I see nothing to be gained by the addition of a 13-letter word that would mean absolutely nothing." Jim Wells responded, "I think International is splendid. I would be tickled to death to accept a European region and Australian region, and any others that might crop up. Therefore, I would like to make a motion that we accept the report of the Executive Committee with all that it implies with relation to the incoming western group." The motion was adopted to approve the organization plan for the International Plant Propagators' Society. The officers of the Plant Propagators' Society then appointed Bill Snyder to work up a new Constitution that would take in both regional areas and still be able to give each region its autonomy. They called it the Constitution of the International Plant Propagators' Society, Inc.

CONCLUSION

We now have regional chapters all over the world. There is little doubt that the group of Don Hartman, Herman Sandkuhle, and Hudson Hartman, led by Dr. Philip Barker, were responsible for breaking open the structure of the Plant Propagators' Society. Their insistence on regional autonomy created a precedent, which has facilitated the creation of regional organizations for meeting and sharing in many parts of the world. They reveal their thoughts, experiences, and discoveries to one another. They submit their work to regional editors for inclusion in a Combined Proceedings of the International Plant Propagators' Society to benefit plant propagators worldwide. Now we can understand more clearly how and why our creative predecessors fashioned such a dynamic organization.