

THE IPPS . . . WHAT IT IS

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This is our first meeting — the inaugural meeting of the Southern Region of IPPS. We need members — from this group and from those who are not here today — who will join us and share their knowledge and their enthusiasm to make this Society outstanding. We would like to take a few minutes this morning to talk about IPPS — what it stands for, how it functions as an international group and how it came to be the outstanding Society that it is today. We have two eminently qualified speakers who will address themselves to the question of “What is the IPPS?”; Bill Curtis, Sherwood, Oregon, and Jim Wells, Red Bank, New Jersey. Both of these people have really been there in IPPS — they have been president and vice president of their individual Regions and president of the IPPS. Mr. Wells was one of the founding members of the IPPS and its first president. These two gentlemen are going to address us on the history of the society, the rules and the procedures of the society in a discussion format.

BILL CURTIS: I have a roommate with whom I ate dinner last night. While dining we discussed various operations in the nursery and I came away with an idea how to avoid spending \$2.50 a bundle for lath to tack plastic on the house — a tape which I hadn't heard of before; the labor that I will save in putting plastic on my houses next year will more than pay for my expenses in coming out here. You will find that as you are members of this society, and as you associate with your fellow propagators, you will get tremendous benefit; you can't attend a meeting without getting some benefit out of it — maybe it will be just a little item, but it may mean many dollars to you so I would advise all of you never to miss a meeting. If you do you are going to miss something that you need in your operation. There may also be a person there that needs the information you have. It is unbelievable the amount of information that is present and available to all of us in the 170 or so people here today! So come to the meetings — don't miss any of them!

JIM WELLS: What happened way back in the beginning? There are only two people here in this room — Bill Snyder and myself — who were actually at the first meeting. Way back in the summer of 1951 I received a letter from Ed Scanlon, Commissioner of Shade Trees, Cleveland, inquiring whether or not it would be a good idea to start a plant propagators' society. I said YES! He apparently received affirmative replies from a number of people and so he called the first inaugural meeting

held in the Senator Hotel in Cleveland early in December, 1951. There were between 75 and 80 people there. A number of interesting papers were given and, as far as I know, the first written paper on the propagation of rhododendrons from cuttings was given at that time. The thing that stands out in my mind most, Bill, about the meeting was that we spent the whole time arguing. There was a committee formed and it argued all night about how the Society should be organized. I wanted the organization to be called the Plant Propagator's Guild, but nobody wanted a guild — this was un-American. The arguments were really about what membership requirements should be — I wanted it to be a society in which the voting members had some knowledge. You would have to be a practicing propagator for at least 10 years. This was too long — 5 years was finally agreed upon. We also wanted to unlock the "locked greenhouse door" to guarantee a free exchange of information from one member to another.

JOHN ROLLER: Before this organization (IPPS) there was a Propagators' Society. The first Propagators' Society failed because it did not promote the free exchange of ideas. This Society now is composed of members who have a moral obligation to share their knowledge *with other members*. This is the reason why we have grown and not failed as did the first one.

JIM WELLS: We therefore required that a person should have experience, but we didn't eliminate the person without it — that was built in later with the introduction of the Junior Member, so that he or she could come along and learn, but the main structure of the Society was built around people who had knowledge and who would regularly share it. Being doubting Thomases, we wanted proof that people had, and would, share with each other; and this has been developed over the years until now we have a system whereby you are required to produce in writing three sponsors. These sponsors have to take the trouble to state on a form provided by the Society that the candidate is known to them personally and that the candidate does meet the membership requirements of the Society. This is not just a casual requirement. Where you work or where you come from has no bearing; it is you the propagator who is the important consideration — it is what you do, what your knowledge is, and how much you are willing to share your knowledge with other people that counts.

Everyone went home from the first December meeting without much having been firmly decided. A portion of that first group met the following summer in Detroit and elected Jim Wells President, commissioning him to carry out the establishment of the Society. During the next ten years or so the meetings were held at the Wade Park Manor Hotel in Cleveland. I

stated during the early meetings several times, rather bluntly, that anyone who was not willing to share with each other was not welcome, and a couple of people walked out. We also had 1 or 2 people who didn't share and I had to tell them to share or get out. Anyway, it began to work. People came knowing that they would go home with more than they brought. People were charged up; they wanted to participate — they couldn't be stopped. Discussions continued after the meetings until the early hours of the morning.

It is my most happy opportunity to be associated here now with the sixth inaugural meeting of a section of this Society. I remember the atmosphere of excitement at Asilomar, California, with the Western Region, and how the whole thing picked up and started running along full steam ahead. I've seen the same thing now in England, Australia, and New Zealand, and now, happily, here. I don't think anyone can argue that the idea doesn't work, hence there is no reason why it shouldn't be a success with this new Region.

BILL CURTIS: I think all of you will find that the best step you ever made was when you became a member. This has been an open meeting. Normally, a member will give invitations to a few selected individuals to attend the meeting. This Society is very ethical, and if you are not ethical then you will have problems finding people to recommend you. We have had a few proposed members on the West Coast who wanted to join who told their boss that they were required as members to share information freely with other members; their boss said "No, there are things we are doing which we do not want broadcast", and so these individuals could not become members. The information we have we want to share. You are going to find that one of the greatest advantages of membership is sharing your information, and as you share, the person along side of you will share with you. You will find a fellowship in this organization that you won't find anywhere else. You will go home just full of enthusiasm (mental indigestion).

JOHN ROLLER: We have been talking about membership. When this Society gets going in the mailing of the program, there will be two guest cards included. You fellows who are members, I hope you will use them wisely and invite people who have knowledge they are willing to exchange. They can attend one meeting as a guest with this card, after which they must join the Society if they wish to come back.

JIM WELLS: Membership in this Society is fundamentally by invitation; you cannot normally say "I wish to belong and I wish to apply." The only time this occurs is at a meeting such as this first open inaugural meeting of a group. Then people come here to find out what the Society is like, and whether

they would like to be part of it. If they do, then they file an application conforming to the regular application procedure, which is processed by a membership committee according to the rules of the IPPS. At subsequent meetings, potential members must apply as guests who then may file an application to join.

BILL SNYDER: There are some other requirements, Jim. You must be employed in the commercial production of plants or engaged in teaching, research, or extension, or you must be a student taking a course including plant propagation. Amateurs cannot belong; there are restrictions. We want people who are seriously interested in propagation who can contribute to the Society.

BILL CURTIS: After you become a member there are certain things you must do to remain in good standing. This is a sharing organization; you can't share with your fellow members if you stay home. The meetings are moved around so you won't have too far to go all the time; you must attend one meeting every three years or give a meaningful contribution in writing to the Society on some aspect of propagation in which you are engaged and want to share with other members. This should be mailed to the Regional Secretary (Dr. Stadtherr).

JIM WELLS: This Society has grown rapidly in recent years, but we have had our problems too. There was a great deal of argument at the time over changing the name of the Society to include "International". There has also been argument over the dues structure; the International Board (President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Editor and one executive member and one director from each Region) has seen fit to give the Regions more autonomy in governing themselves — a move which will strengthen the Society. Dues go mainly toward publishing the Proceedings (\$15.00) — a great buy at the price. How else could you get all the information included in it? The cost is insignificant compared to the benefits of belonging to the Society.

When I came to this country 30 years ago, I was told Rhododendrons could not be rooted from cuttings, although a few people were doing it. At the 1951 meeting, we illustrated how it could be done, and, as you know, now hardly anyone is grafting a Rhododendron. I attribute my ability to grow Rhododendrons such as the one you see here, directly to the help which I have received and help our company has received from this Society.

JOHN ROLLER: One idea which can be obtained here at the meetings can pay for all the rest of the dues and registration fees.

BILL CURTIS: The Proceedings of all the meetings are recorded and, in addition, copies of all the papers are given to the Editor and these are all bound together in one volume, so that you are getting information in this book that isn't available anywhere else in the world. That, to me, is one of the most valuable things in regard to the Society. Most members can hardly wait each year to receive their copy of the Proceedings to see what has happened in the other Regions at meetings that they might not have been able to attend. Quarterly, we also receive a newsletter, "The Plant Propagator", full of interesting articles in regard to the problems we face or new information about plant propagation.

JIM WELLS: It has been an absolutely firm rule of this Society that there shall be no commercial selling or effort at display or other attempt to commercialize upon your product or your operation while at this meeting. As far as the organized, published technical meetings of the Society and the displays at the meeting, they are never intended to sell material, but merely to inform the members as to specialized procedures or techniques in regard to plant propagation. Salesmen are not allowed unless they are also growing and propagating what they sell. A commercial man might be invited to present a paper on, say chemical weed control, or whatever, but he is not to promote his product.

WILLIAM SNYDER: There are two reasons for this — Number 1 is you are here as an individual, not as a firm. Secondly, there are enough trade meetings where there is ample opportunity to sell so that it is not necessary to commercialize this one. The commercial people in general felt that this meeting should be limited to an exchange of information about plant propagation exclusively.

JIM WELLS: We will have a short question period. If you have a question, please use the microphone so we can record your name and your question so we can have it for the Proceedings.

FLETCHER FLEMMER: I joined the Eastern Region three years ago. How is the Southern Region now going to be distinguished from the Eastern, and being in a borderline state, which states are going to be "Southern" and which are going to be in the Northern Region.

WILLIAM SNYDER: We used to separate the Eastern from the Western Region by the Rocky Mountains; however, people in border areas can become a member of the region of their choice. We have several members in Colorado, Texas, and Oklahoma who belong to the West; others who belong to the East. If the Southern Region in fact does become established,

and is accepted into IPPS (which will take a full year to be accomplished), then at that time, each of the Eastern Region members who live in roughly the Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and Maryland area southward, will be given the opportunity to stay in the East or to affiliate with the South. If, as a member of the Eastern Region, you decide to affiliate with the South, can you attend the Eastern Region meeting? — YES! Can you attend the Western Region meeting? — YES! and etc. Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand? — YES! However, you can only vote in that Region in which you are a member, although you can attend any and all meetings of the Regions, as long as you are a paid up member of your Region. Current IPPS members will be given an opportunity about a year from now to indicate a preference for their affiliation — to stay with the East or to join the South.

JIM WELLS: Attendance at any regional meeting will cover your attendance obligation for that year.

WILLIAM SNYDER: Meetings are handled by the regions; the regional Secretaries will mail out programs and registration materials to their members and usually put the program into the American Nurseryman or some other industry-oriented publication which lists the programs. The Plant Propagator will always list the dates and places of the upcoming meetings for all five of the current regions. After you become a member of the Society, you have the privilege of buying back issues of the Proceedings. A few are presently out of print, but these are being reprinted now, so soon all volumes will be available to you at a fixed price. You can obtain all the benefits of the past 26 years even though you joined this year.

JIM WELLS: The Proceedings is a vast encyclopedia of knowledge about plant propagation — irreplaceable. If you wanted to pay the \$300-400 cost to get the complete set it would be worth it because you couldn't get anywhere a more complete and exhaustive set of information and knowledge on such a vast amount of plant material from all over the world. With the accumulated indices available now you can go back and get whatever you need.

DAVID MORGAN, Texas A&M: Those of us with universities oftentimes can't attend these types of meetings unless we present a paper. While we may desire to present one, I have not seen an invitation to do so. I wrote the secretary and inquired about this and he said that at the conclusion of every meeting a call for papers is issued. Do you have one?

JOHN ROLLER: Yes. We have a pink sheet available here now which requests information as to whether you would be willing to present a paper as well as certain other information

such as your preferences for meeting topics, times, and places, as well as whether you would like to moderate a section.

DAVID MORGAN: Does that mean we would be on the program?

BRYSON JAMES: No, the program chairman plans the program and selects the speakers. The vice-president is the program chairman for the annual meeting. The vice-president usually will canvas the members for program contribution and ideas. If you have something you want to present, by all means let the program chairman know!

PROPAGATION AND LINER PRODUCTION OF AZALEAS

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Since there are almost as many ways to root cuttings and grow plants as there are nurserymen, I will not try to tell you how it should be done, but will tell you what we do at Cottage Hill Nursery. First and foremost — whatever method one uses in propagation — sanitation and cleanliness are a must if it is to be at all successful. This begins with the stock from which the cuttings are to be taken. Stock plants must be healthy and free from disease. The clippers or knives used to make the cuttings and the baskets or boxes used to hold cuttings must be clean. The area in which the cuttings are processed, the greenhouse or area in which the cuttings are placed for rooting, the rooting medium, and the benches or containers in which the medium is placed — all of these should be disinfected and/or sprayed down with a fungicide to eliminate contamination from any residue from previous crops.

The greater part of our propagation is done under saran shade or lath shade (50-60% shade). Only in the winter do we propagate under cover, and then we use a polyethylene cover over our quonset type houses with some heat to protect from freezing. This probably sounds strange to many of you, especially since it is so easy with the plastics to make an enclosed "greenhouse". We have found that we have better success and far less disease problems with the cooler temperatures and additional air movement we get in the "open" beds.

Another matter in conflict with our old way of thinking is the time we take cuttings. It used to be that the only time we made cuttings was in the late spring and early summer — now we root cuttings at almost any time of the year. The wood must be at the proper stage of growth, however. Not just any cutting