

Ted Hildebrandt
winner of the
**Award of Merit for Development in the Field
of Garden Conifers**
The Justin C. “Chub” Harper Award



Ted is a third generation nurseryman. In the early seventies. Ted's mom and dad bought his grandfather Hildebrandt's fruit tree nursery in Oldwick, NJ , from his grandmother. It had been closed since his grandfather died, and as a family they reestablished it as Hildebrandt Nursery. Ted was just a toddler at the time, but his mom mom says that he liked to follow her around

and from the age of five “soaked up all the information he could manage regarding all things “plant”. He helped her with bedding plants in the greenhouse and followed his dad around learning about trees and shrubs (also tractors, trucks, and maintenance of all sorts equipment)

Ted was in 4-H and FFA and raised a cow or two--typical farm kid. As he and his brother got older, they helped his dad with landscaping and Christmas tree sales. In high school, the boys ran a hay business together, and Ted worked for a dairy farm part time. After high school Ted went to Iowa State with the idea of farming but came home after a year to work full time at the nursery for his dad.

At 20, Ted bought a house, built his own greenhouse, and started his own nursery a few miles away, while still working part time for his dad. At about this time, he and his dad took a class in grafting, which became a passion. He started looking for land in NY to expand because NJ was expensive and found the land that became Coldwater Pond Nursery. He moved there in 1992 with his ex-wife, disassembling his original greenhouse, which he brought with him.

They grew various woody liners, raised commercial chickens (the chicken house came with the land). Outside the nursery he worked for a local wood working business and then in sales for Rush Machinery. He served on the board of Ontario County Farm Bureau at some point, too.

Ted closed the nursery briefly to deal with pressing personal matters but reopened it in 2006 with Elly Keyel. 20 years later, the nursery and the partnership continue. For the first couple years, the nursery mostly stuck with liners with minimal grafting of trees, but as the market changed, Ted and Elly found the rare plant niche where Coldwater Pond Nursery flourishes, today. Collecting scions from local parks and helpful rare plant people, Ted started selling specialty plants at plant shows, which led him and Elly to contract grafting of thousands of maples and conifers and to the ACS and all the great friends and connections they have now.

Ted has been a very generous supporter of the ACS since he joined in 2009. He has propagated thousands of conifers for members and has donated many to auctions around the country. He has served as NER director for 4 years.

Ted has done dozens and maybe hundreds of workshops on grafting and propagation, both locally and afar. Coldwater Pond has hosted local horticultural students, YouTube influencers, and interns on site and generally teaches customers how to choose trees and keep them healthy while encouraging likely coneheads to join the ACS.

Coldwater Pond also does a lot of specialty grafting for customers who come with questions like, “Can you make more of this?” or “Can you save this tree? It was my mother’s..; the town’s...; got hit by lightning...:beavers ate it...”, etc., etc., etc. Through actions like these, Ted spreads goodwill for knowledgeable, caring small nursery folk everywhere.

Congratulations TED!

