

Kit Yeatman and Kris Morgenstern

“Faces of Forest Tree Genetics and Tree Breeding”



Kit Yeatman has fond memories of his time at Petawawa. From 1953 to 1989 he participated in Mark Holst's 1950 research program, establishing range-wide provenance studies of the primary commercial conifer species of the Boreal, Great Lakes - St. Lawrence and Acadian forest regions of Canada. This work, from seed collection to planting and measuring numerous provenance trials established at Petawawa and from Newfoundland to the Prairie Provinces, was made possible by the active collaboration of Provincial forest services and Canadian forest industries. Results have made clear adaptive patterns of geographic and genetic variation which strongly support the creation and necessity of applying seed zones (areas of similar climate and latitude) and seed transfer rules to reforestation from seed collection to tree planting. Such long term research emphasizes the need for accuracy, security, and maintenance of experimental information and data files, a key attribute of the Petawawa Research Forest. This was a priority from the beginning and continues to provide invaluable records. This information is still required for further studies on the many plantation field trials and arboreta of provenances, progenies and clone collections at Petawawa and elsewhere in Canada.

Kit and Kris Morgenstern first met when they arrived in Canada aboard the same ship in 1953 and found a common interest in forestry. It was thanks to Kit that Kris started working at the Petawawa Forest Experiment Station. “When I arrived at Petawawa in January 1961 as a research officer and junior member of the team, I was given a variety of tasks” Kris Morgenstern recalled. “The most important one was to assist with a large white spruce provenance study in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Formal studies of this kind with regular spacing, large plots and blocks designed to provide data for several decades, were a complete novelty. Tree planting at that time was an unimportant activity and techniques of site preparation and planting were in their infancy. Moreover, since white spruce demands sites of above-average quality for good growth, these sites are much more subject to competition by other species and susceptible to spring-frost damage. Optimal, uniform land was hard to find, particularly in northern Ontario. Consequently this was not an easy job, because it tested my silvicultural skills as well as my diplomatic abilities in the dealings with our forest industry and provincial cooperators. For the next 14 years, black spruce was the focus of my work at Petawawa a time I remember with gratitude for the good atmosphere with colleagues and the many international contacts abroad”.

After retirement both scientists were given the Tree of Life Award by the Canadian Institute of Forestry. Kris Morgenstern passed away December 31, 2008.



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