

Greetings to IPPS Japan from the International President®

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I bring greetings to you from the International Broad and from the Eastern Region, North America. I am very happy to be here visiting with IPPS Japan. Thank you for inviting me, thank you for your welcome, and thank you to all who have helped make this trip possible. I must apologize to you for not speaking in your language — but mastering it will take a long time. English is not really my language either, but we will have to meet in it today.

When we go to an I.P.P.S. meeting we naturally think about how to put roots on cuttings and many talks center around this. But instead of talking about rooting, I want to share some of my life in I.P.P.S. with you — some thoughts and a bit of philosophy. I was born in the little country of Denmark in Europe at the beginning of the Second World War. My father and mother had a little 1-ha nursery and that is where I grew up and started my life with plants. I apprenticed with bigger nurseries and went to horticulture school in Copenhagen. Soon, thereafter, I enlisted in the Royal Danish Army and became a military man. Later, after some years as a military man I went to the United States of America and became the plant propagator in a large evergreen nursery. Towards the end of the first year my boss took me to an I.P.P.S. meeting. This was one of the best things that ever happened to me. There, I.P.P.S. people welcomed me, they talked to me, they even listened to me! I developed friends whom I could call for help — my life with seeking and sharing had really started. I had never been to a place where academic people and practical people, and young people and older people, blended together in such a way as I had experienced in United States of America. They did not care that my father was poor or where I came from. They cared about what I wanted to do in a life of growing plants and they shared and they shared; this was indeed an opportunity.

I.P.P.S. was started 50 years ago by a group of people in need of information and a few people with great vision. They adopted the motto “To Seek and to Share” and they started living by it. They knew that sharing one good idea and getting 10 back not only provided for good relations, but it was also good business. We humans have a need to travel our world to seek, to explore, and to build, to organize, and to gain influence — and that is okay to a point. But we must also learn to share, or our lives and our world comes out of balance which can have terrible consequences. Eight years ago I sat around a table in Moscow with several Russian plant people. We shared plant information and we shared food and drink. It hit me for a moment; these are my people — my human brothers and sisters — and in earlier years as a military man I would have shot and killed them! So I am so very glad to be here with you, my brothers and sisters in the I.P.P.S. plant world, seeking and sharing for a better balance in the world. Your culture goes back longer than most. The European culture I came from also is old. The United States of America is so new, being build on the cultures and civilizations of the past and seeking new directions.

Shall we all be good stewards of nature and the world we have been given to work with and do it together in the I.P.P.S. spirit of seeking and sharing.