

# Along The Trail

by

## ken legg

Since rare trees have a fascination for me I went looking for the weeping spruce a few years ago. My first reference to the tree came from an old article in Nature magazine written by a friend of mine. This friend, C. Edward Graves of Carmel, had visited a group of these odd spruces around a high mountain lake in the Trinity mountains and had obtained some beautiful photographs.

I could not visit the Trinities, but had been told that the trees could also be found among the rocky spires of the Castle Craggs state park in Shasta county. In October, 1952, a friend and I went to the park seeking information on the trees. We were told that a very few could be found at the higher elevations and that a trail, seven miles long, would lead us there.

Equipped with lunches and picture-taking equipment we set out up the mountain early in the morning. Dew was still on the plants and walking through the pine forest was a refreshing experience.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Ordinance No. 484 of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, that a public hearing will be held on January 30, 1957, at the hour of 1:15 P. M., in the Board of Supervisors Room, Court House Annex, Santa Cruz, California, by the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission, upon the application of Vernon A. Nelson for a Use Permit to convert the Arabian Motel into a Guest Home, located at Rob Roy Junction, off of the Santa Cruz-Watsonville Freeway.

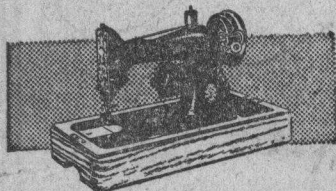
For further particulars reference is made to application on file in the office of the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission, Court House Annex, Santa Cruz, California.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION,  
HENRY A. JOHNSON,  
Planning Director.

Dated: January 18, 1957.  
January 20

**\$15 and UP!**  
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**SALE**

OF USED SEWING MACHINES



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As the morning wore on and the sun, as well as us, climbed higher, we lost our forest cover and it became hotter and hotter. Much of the trail led across, or between, towering white cliffs, which, though splendidly picturesque, served only to increase our discomfort.

Around noon we pulled out upon a partially barren mountain top. A few scrub manzanitas and some pines mixed with the white spires to complete the scene. Although we were both tired, we began to explore the top for conifers which were not pines, and presently we found a group of five trees, which, though no straighter than the surrounding pines, were distinctive because of their pendulous foliage.

We found the main branches to be at right angles to the trunk but all of the branchlets hung straight downward giving one the impression of being like a weeping willow tree. The cones, found only near the top, were those of a spruce and we knew that we were seeing, for the first time for either of us, the weeping spruce (*Picea breweriana*).

Although it was discovered probably for the first time in 1863 by Prof. William H. Brewer, the weeping spruce is still a little-known tree. It is found only at high altitudes on steep mountain slopes and ridges of the Coast range in southern Oregon and northern California. Growing, as it does, where the snow is often 15 or 20 feet deep and remains on the ground more than half of the year, its atmosphere is humid most of the time, and attempts to grow it outside of its normal range have not been successful.

There is a story that one tree which was brought from the mountains and transplanted in a lowland garden cost its owner more than \$100 a foot to grow, so great was the required care. The seeds do not germinate artificially and even transplanting has not proved practical.

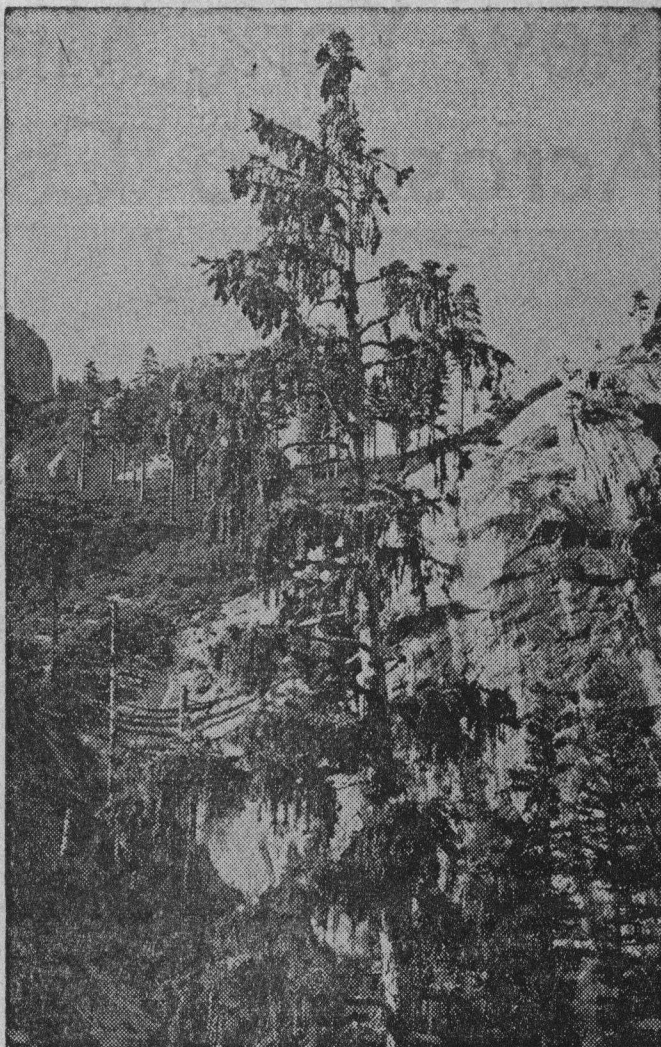
In the sparse earth where we found our trees they were quite attractive against the blue sky, or in the lee of the pinnacles. We realized, however, that those found around mountain lakes are denser of foliage, and that their weeping, string-like branches often are from four to eight feet in length, while we found none longer than three feet.

After the seven-mile climb in the hot sun I felt like stretching out upon the ground and falling asleep. Instead, I set up the equipment and took a few pictures before allowing myself a rest, since this was the purpose of the trip.

Among the rocks and bushes we saw chipmunks scampering about and thought, what a lonesome and isolated world their's was! Beautiful, in a rugged way, windswept and half barren, was their world, where they lived with one of the rare trees of California.

Evidently few humans visited this place, for we have long ago realized that where humans go they leave their signs. Not a cigarette package, gum wrapper, film box or beer can did we see. So appreciative was I of this fact that I remarked to my friend, "We will leave nothing behind but our ill-defined footprints in the gravel, and the wind will soon smooth these."

## Weeping Spruce Is Rare



One of the rarest trees in existence is pictured here. This weeping spruce was photographed by Author Ken Legg after a seven-mile climb in Shasta

county up to the Castle Craggs state park. The tree, a denizen of the higher stretches of the coast range does not like lowland living.

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