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## Asheville bamboo expert steps forward for festival

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August 10, 2007 12:15 am

ASHEVILLE — When Stefani Oshima, of Haiku Bamboo Nursery in Edneyville, was planning the Bamboo Festival at the N.C. Arboretum, she thought she knew all the region's bamboo experts through her work in the Southeast Chapter of the American Bamboo Society. But she was in for a surprise.

Oshima put together a program of lectures by top names in the bamboo world, including David Cozzo, an ethnobotanist at Western Carolina University, and Mike Hotchkiss of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Research Service in Georgia. Then Oshima got a call from Dr. Joseph Haun, a pioneer bamboo researcher. "We didn't know he was in Asheville," Oshima said, "and we were all shocked."

Haun co-authored one of the first and best-known works on bamboo in the U.S., "Bamboo in the United States: Description, Culture and Utilization," published by the USDA in 1961.

"I'm 86 years old," Haun said, "and I've been retired for 25 years." Haun's son, Steve, an Asheville landscaper, saw a notice about the festival and alerted his father. "I thought I'd better join up and see what's happening," Haun said. "I was quite complimented they discovered me and wanted me to speak."

He'll be talking about his research on bamboo as a new commercial crop for Southern farmers. "We demonstrated that you could make paper from bamboos that grow here," Haun said. "It's been estimated that bamboo will produce two to six times as much cellulose per acre per year as pine. Pines are not sustainable. Bamboo keeps reproducing itself."

Oshima said hearing Haun "is going to be a rare treat." Margaret Kosco, informal programs coordinator at the arboretum and herself a bamboo grower, called Haun "a secret treasure." She added, "I didn't know he lives here, and I love all things bamboo."

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