



*Picea Rubens*



## Southern Highlands Reserve



### *Help Us Green-Light the Greenhouse.*

The secret to abundant life, to relationships that benefit us all, to beauty, survival, and harmony lies within plant ecosystems. Every species, even the smallest microorganism, is delicately balanced in a symphony that makes life possible. All of it, and us, are intertwined. Southern Highlands Reserve recognizes these truths and is dedicated to the study and conservation of the plants of our Blue Ridge Mountain region.

The red spruce, the largest conifer indigenous to the Southern Appalachians, is an iconic and central piece of the Blue Ridge ecosystem. Through more than a century of logging, fire, pollutants, and parasites, the red spruce population in our mountains endured existential decline. Southern Highlands Reserve has endeavored to restore and preserve the red spruce in our forests through research, cultivation, and creating partnerships such as the Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative, which combines the efforts and resources of federal and state government agencies, colleges and universities, and other nonprofits. Most recently we played a critical role in the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree project as a partner with the U.S. Forest Service to highlight the importance of red spruce for our region's ecosystem and economy. With 6,000 of our trees planted on public

lands in three states and another 50,000 requested by the U.S. Forest Service, Southern Highlands Reserve is the only entity growing red spruce in such large numbers. Our extraordinary planting success rate is 90 percent, but we still face challenges. To develop robust root systems and become strong enough to thrive, red spruce must spend two years growing in Southern Highlands Reserve's nursery before planting.

Our 20-year-old hoop houses have served us well but cannot accommodate the scale or the technology we need to honor our promise. A new greenhouse will more than double our current capacity. Its new automated systems will reduce costs as well as our carbon footprint. And while the red spruce remains at the forefront of our mission, the greenhouse will serve a variety of other native plants throughout the year. Visitors, both on site and virtual, will benefit from enhanced education and information as we highlight propagation techniques and share the many possibilities for their own native plant gardens.

Together, we can restore our native plants to their original habitat and seed a new future for our forests and for generations to come.



### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESERVE

Southern Highlands Reserve is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We welcome your partnership, ideas, and tax-deductible support to ensure the project's success. For more information, please contact us.

558 Summit Ridge Road | Lake Toxaway, NC 28747 | (828) 885-2050 | [info@southernhighlandsreserve.org](mailto:info@southernhighlandsreserve.org)





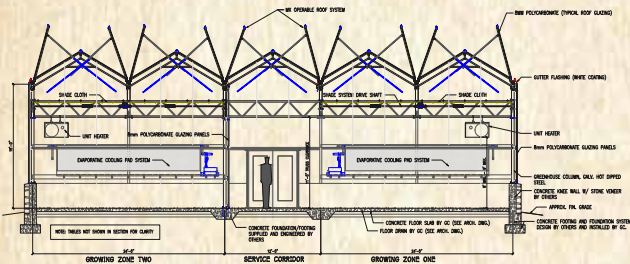
*Red spruce grow for two years in our nursery, from seeds to strong young trees that are planted on public lands.*



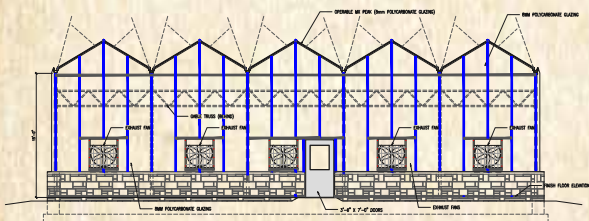
*At an elevation of 4,500 feet, Southern Highlands Reserve propagates and grows dozens of native plant species.*



*Our red spruce trees have an unprecedented 90 percent survival rate on public lands.*



XX CROSS SECTION - MX ROOF



E1 FAN WALL ELEVATION



*The new facility will more than double capacity while maintaining our hoop houses' current footprint.*



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*Southern Highlands Reserve* is dedicated to sustaining the natural ecosystems of the Blue Ridge Mountains through the preservation, cultivation, and display of plants native to the region and by advocating for their value through education, restoration, and research. Located in Western North Carolina at an elevation of 4,500 feet, the varied topography and forest types of our 120 acres allow us to emulate many of the plant communities found in high-elevation forests of the Southern Appalachians. Southern Highlands Reserve has been aptly described as "the largest and most diverse collection of native Southern Appalachian plants and their cultivars." This nonprofit organization is a leader in high-elevation forest restoration and the heart of red spruce propagation for the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Reserve's garden illustrates how thoughtful design combined with complex native plant communities can showcase our high-elevation microclimates. Each garden room is designed to elicit an emotional experience, fostering a human connection with the plants, animals, and environment surrounding us. While exploring our garden, we hope our visitors feel the ancient spirit of this Cherokee land and carry home a renewed sense of mystery and marvel. We hope the experience inspires their thinking and creativity, perhaps even to create native plant sanctuaries within their own garden and community.

Southern Highlands Reserve found its beginnings in the great love Betty and Robert Balentine have for the natural world. Their initial goal was to protect the land in order to strengthen their family's connection to nature and share the magic and spirit of the mountains with their children and grandchildren. Through 20 years of unwavering vision and hard work, through thoughtful cultivation of partnerships, and through a steady and future-minded investment in the health of our land, Southern Highlands Reserve has grown into a leader of conservation projects for the region as well as a center for research and education. All of this is inspired by the understanding that we are part of an interdependent worldwide ecosystem, and the choices we make today can have far-reaching benefits for future generations. There is much at stake here in one of the most biodiverse ecosystems of the Northern Hemisphere, and putting trees in the ground is crucial. The next chapter of this mission is preserving the magic of the Blue Ridge Mountains as a self-sustaining nonprofit organization. We invite you to join us.



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