



# George Landis Arboretum Newsletter

Volume 14 • Number 3

Summer 1995

## Stop That Centipede! Family Fun at the Arboretum

"There's a good one over there" he said, pointing a large moldy moss-covered log. The flock of children moved in a wave through the woods. "Everyone on this side, let's roll it over gently and see who is living here." Twenty small hands gently roll the log slightly uphill. "Oh look a sow bug. Here's a salamander. Stop that centipede!" The children scurry to delicately collect or delay all manner of bugs and beasts to share with those further back from the action.

George Steele, a master at his craft,

uses every opportunity to teach the wonders of our world. In his holistic approach he conveys a thoughtful, caring way to connect with nature. He teaches difficult concepts of ecology and habitat through games and stories while having fun.

Two programs will be offered each remaining month of this season through October (see enclosed calendar). Everyone is invited. The family programs are made possible through the generous support of many area businesses and individuals.



George Steele (center) investigates the world under a log with a group of children.

## Special Treasures Find New Homes

The weekend could not have been more perfect. Sunny and warm. The drought had not yet put a strain on the gardens and each plant seemed to be putting its best foot (or is that root?) forward to welcome and inspire plant enthusiasts. The site for the sale returned to its historic location adjacent to the Lape homestead. Although parking for the huge crowd posed somewhat of a problem, no one seemed to mind parking along the

roadside. It was such lovely weather even the honey bees were in an amiable disposition.

The homestead location is more sheltered from the wind, and seems to engender a mellow attitude. One of the greatest assets of this location is its proximity to the Van Loveland Perennial Beds, Acorn Shop and Raymond Memorial Greenhouse. Confronted with an abundance of blooms, our guests were enticed to explore. They ventured through the perennial gardens and out

## Rain

*The parched crops call to you,*

*Lady of misty mourning colors,  
Rain.*

*Trail your widows weeds across the  
thirsty earth,*

*Grey Lady, grieving Lady,  
Rain.*

*Patience dwindles slow to pain,*

*Leaves droop sadly down,  
Flowers fade unopened,  
Seedlings reach the  
sun...and die.*

*Oh Lady lost in sorrow,*

*Hear us, gift us with your tears,  
Softly, Silvery,  
Weep for us,  
Oh Rain.*

A prayer for rain by Susan Murray, an Arboretum member and poet who lives and gardens in Berne, NY.

into the Arboretum's wealth of woody plantings. The free lectures presented were well attended. Many participants went back to the plant sale to purchase plants discussed during the lectures.

Great selection and reasonable prices sent many home with special treasures. Refreshments and wonderful homemade baked goods provided by volunteers were greatly appreciated. Gardeners sure can bake!

It was a lovely family type day. Countless dandelions framed smiling faces of young children back from foraging in a hillside meadow under their

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# At The Garden

## Director's Report

Pamela H. Rowling

### The George Landis Arboretum Newsletter

is published quarterly for members of the Arboretum. The GLA's mission is to provide natural history and horticultural education through programs and through its plant collections.

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Very early on these sultry, summer mornings it is wonderful to take tea at the Arboretum Meeting House and look out over the valley below. Thick fog follows the creekbed like a giant amorphous serpent slithering southward. Some mornings the fog will lift as I sit and wash over me leaving crystal clear air in its wake. It is a great way to start the day and well worth getting to work before my 'official' day begins.

#### WELCOME ABOARD!

We are pleased to welcome 60 new individuals and families into our Arboretum family in response to this year's membership drive. I hope that they will find the Arboretum to be a wonderful part of their lives and utilize fully all that we have to offer.

#### WINNERS OF ARBOR DAY CONTEST RECEIVE AWARDS

Arboretum educator George Steele once again has headed up another successful Arbor Day Contest. George and others volunteered many hours soliciting entries, coordinating a panel of judges, evaluating works, keeping track of over 400 entries and assisted in the production of award certificates. First, second and third prize winners were presented award certificates and savings bonds. Schools of top award winners were each given a tree to plant on their grounds. Each child participating in the contest received a certificate and our thanks for their entries. Thank you and well done George!

#### GEORGE LANDIS VISITS ARBORETUM?

George Landis of Cromwell, Connecticut, understandably intrigued by our sign on Route 20, stopped by recently for a visit. Although no relation to our namesake we all had a good laugh. George and his wife Louella became members and went home laden with T-shirts and totes from "their" Arboretum.

#### GREAT STRIDES MADE IN MAPPING AND LABELING PROJECT

Each Monday and Friday a devoted crew of staff and volunteers meets to forge ahead on our two year survey, mapping and labeling project (see Spring 1994 issue). Each crew member has settled into their area of strength: data entry, computer reports, plant identification, archival research, drafting, survey work and herbarium collections. Great progress is being made. A major batch of 274 individual plant identification markers is now in production and will be installed in the month of August.

#### SO THAT'S THE WAY TO THE LILACS!

Interpretive and directional signs developed during the course of last year's ZBGA funded project are currently being fabricated. We have made every effort to make these markers visible but not intrusive. We hope that visitors will know if the markers and maps improve their visit. The goal for installation of the first group of these markers will be in July. These markers will help orient visitors and assist them in making the most of their time at the garden.

#### MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL TO ASSIST IN COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

We have just been notified of award of a grant, Map II - Collections Management Assessment. This will support a professional consultation to specifically address the problems of collections policies and procedures as they relate to our garden. This aid comes at a very good time for us. The ongoing survey and mapping project will provide the data for living collections assessment.

#### BOTANIST JOINS SURVEY CREW

Janet Mattox is the newest member of our survey crew. She has assumed the responsibility for collecting and processing plant samples for our herbarium.

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# There's a Mountain in My Yard!

## Creating a Rock Garden on a Level Site

Dorothy Clark

We always seem to want what we don't have! Lovers of alpine plants who are not blessed with craggy terrain and rocky outcrops, take heart. Even those with the flattest of gardens can create interest by digging here and piling there to introduce different levels. The object is to simulate massive outcrops typical of the world above the tree line.

Arboretum Horticulturist and Rock Gardener Dorothy Clark explains below how to create a suitable home for alpine plants.

True alpiners, those plants which are found above the tree line on mountains, cling to rock and gravel strewn upland slopes called Scree. Constructing replicas of these features permits you to grow rare alpine treasures from exotic mountain ranges. Scree occurs in the natural landscape where frost shattering has caused an accumulation of angular rock fragments at the base of a mountain slope. Plants with special needs for quick drainage and dry crowns, such as certain types of bellflowers (*Campanula garganica*, *C. pusilla*), pinks (*Dianthus arenarius*, *D. sylvestris*), candytuft (*Iberis saxatilis*) and phlox (*Phlox subulata*, *P. douglasii*) love to dig their vigorous, deep roots into the scree's gravelly debris.

Replicate a scree in your garden site at the base of a rocky outcrop or in the depression between two outcrops, preferably in an area that is sunny and airy. In regions where the noon sun is strong, choose an eastern or northern exposure for the scree. You can modify certain sections for growing plants that demand special conditions. Rock garden plants in general want an open quick draining, but moisture retentive soil of a neutral pH, with only moderate fertility.

These soil characteristics are most easily supplied by mixing together sharp sand or fine gravel for drainage, with loam and leaf mold for moisture holding and fertility. One part of each of these ingredients by volume is a rough guide. Scree-like soil would require more drainage, an alpine lawn would require more loam, while more leaf mold would approach the soils of woodland sites.

Usually, sand and gravel do not vary a great deal, although the size and shape of the grains may differ. The standard rock garden soil mix using 3/8-3/4 inch gravel provides the best drainage. Coarse sand may be substituted, however gravel provides a more open texture to the soil. The most desirable loam is a friable, fine grained dirt that does not lump and cake when dry, yet tends to hold together when wet. Newly cleared soil is usually full of weed seeds and will require considerable attention for the first couple of years.

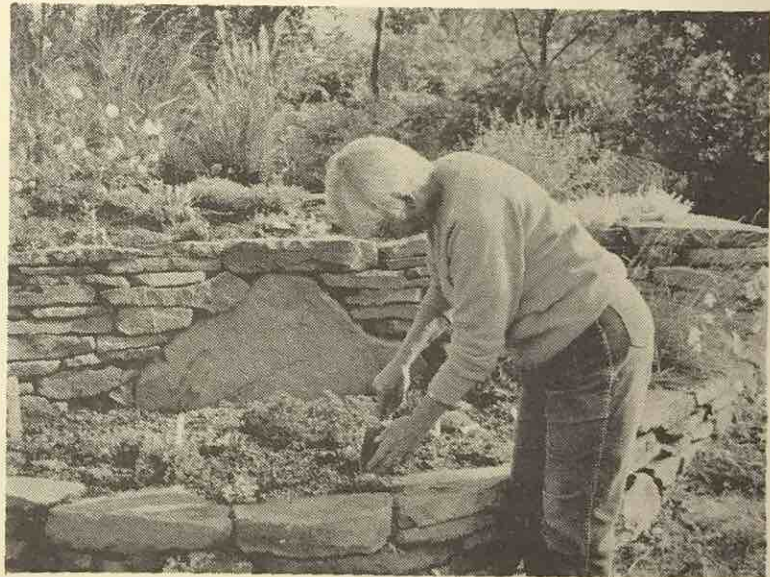
When you construct a rock garden, give it numerous different angles and exposures, ranging from full sun and wind to sheltered shade. Create separate pockets for different growing mediums from sharply drained gravelly mixtures to moist, comparatively rich soils composed of organic materials. By providing a variety of growing conditions, you will have just the right spot for establishing any kind of plant that happens to intrigue you in the future, without having to rebuild areas of the garden to accommodate them. Since most alpiners are tiny and quite dainty, construct paths so that

visitors can get up close to the plants on display. Plants should be sited to make it easy for you to work in the garden. Construct the paths with good drainage and firm foundations. Using native materials will ensure a natural look. Worn and rounded stone will look natural when used to form an eroded outcrop or alpine meadow.

Have fun! Alpine gardening is a wonderful obsession.

### Attention Crafters

We are in need of crafts for our Fall Festival. Anyone interested in making craft items which could be sold at our Fall event please contact the Arboretum office (518) 875-6935



Dorothy (Roy) Clark planting alpiners in one of the new constructed raised beds adjacent to the Raymond Memorial Greenhouse

# The Genus Connection

## Beeches: *Fagus* and *Nothofagus*

Sonja Javar

Martha is dead! Martha, named for Martha Washington, was the last known passenger pigeon. She died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo. Passenger pigeons had a passion for beech nuts. The flocks scouted the forests for beech trees, descending to eat and roost. Beech boughs broke under the weight of hundreds and thousands of birds. The American beech, *Fagus grandifolia*, survives, although severely stressed during the 19th century by pioneers seeking prize farmland. The felling of the beech forests probably contributed to the demise of the passenger pigeon. Other contributing factors were hunting and social disorganization within the flocks as populations declined. The relationship between the birds and the beeches evolved over the last 100 million years and was severed in less than a century.

Beeches all have alternate leaves, male and female flowers in separate clusters on the same tree, and edible nuts enclosed by a woody husk. Many have thin smooth gray bark which is sensitive to light; the dense crown of the beech protects the bark. Many have the horizontal surface root systems which tend to discourage close neighbors--albeit giving them the tendency to fall over. Many species develop almost pure stands with sparse understory. Whether in the forest or as a specimen tree, the beeches include majestic, graceful, and ornamental trees. Beeches have a place in history. The term "beech" derives from the Old English word "boc", as does the word "book, which refers to the carving of characters on beech wood tablets. The gloomy beech forests of England inspired Shakespeare. Daniel Boone and other notables have left their messages on the beech. Europeans and colonial pioneers stuffed their mattresses with the crisp leaves of the beech. Mice, squirrels, bears, raccoons, turkeys, hogs

and ruffed grouse no longer have to compete with the passenger pigeon for beech nuts. Germany used beech nut oil during World War II. At one time, much of Ohio, Indiana, and southern Michigan were covered by maple-beech forests. From Stone Age graffiti to modern-day horticulture, beeches have affected human populations and other living things for thousands of years.

There was only one species of passenger pigeon. The mourning dove, a close relative, survives as a smaller and more drab reminder of the colorful species which once exceeded in numbers any other bird species on this planet. The American beech, the only North American beech, survived the decimation of the last century. Visit the Smithsonian Institution to see a stuffed and preserved "Martha". Visit GLA's woodland trail to see the American beech. No passenger pigeon will ever roost in a beech tree again.

Beeches, *Fagus* in the north temperate zone, and *Nothofagus*, in the south temperate zone, are two closely related genera. The beeches are few in species, but impressive in their quest for dominance. All ten species of *Fagus* are dominant trees in various forest ecosystems in North America, Europe, and East Asia.

The approximately 40 species of *Nothofagus* are deciduous or evergreen trees and shrubs native to South America, New Zealand, Tasmania and southeast Australia, New Caledonia, and New Guinea. Many of the *Nothofagus* are hardy to Zone 7 or 8, especially in the coastal areas of our own Pacific states.

The native ranges of *Fagus* and *Nothofagus* strongly support the idea that all the continents were at one time connected. The present species have evolved from primitive beeches since the phenomenon of continental drift separated land masses into their present configurations.

Species adapt to conditions within their native ecosystems. Some species, such as the European beech, *F. sylvatica*, have developed tolerances which enable the species use for ornamental and landscape applications. Other species, such as the American beech, *F. grandifolia*, are unsuited for ornamental use except in favorable sites within their own native distributions. European beech adapts to North America. American beech rejects Europe. The European species were subject to more environmental stresses during the ice ages, according to one theory on the hardiness of European species. The east-west orientation

of the mountain ranges in Europe was a barrier to species migration. Species had to adapt or die. In North America, species could move south unimpeded. Ice-age remnants of maple-beech forest are located on some remote mountain slopes of Mexico, although now separated from the maple-beech forests of the Great Lakes states and the Northeast. The beeches are just one example of species that are similar but different as a result of barriers to reproduction and adaptations to the conditions within their environment.



# George Landis Arboretum

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## Calendar

Programs appropriate for youth and family are marked (YF).

### August

- 5 - Flowers of the Roadsides & Meadows
- 5 - What Tree is That? (YF)
- 12- Propagation by Grafting
- 15- Star Party 7:30 pm (YF)
- 19- Nature Games (YF)
- 24- Botanical Illustration/Pen & Ink (and 5 consecutive Thursdays)
- 26- Insects at the Arboretum

### September

- 8 - Full Moon Campfire Sing-along (YF)
- 9 - Native Woodland Plants
- 16- Wild Food Exploration
- 22 & 23- Star Party 8:00 p.m. (YF)
- 23-The Colors of Autumn (YF)
- 23- Outdoor Watercolor Workshop
- 23- Fall Planting of Trees & Shrubs
- 23- Photo Workshop: Autumn Color and Landscape Photography
- 30 - Sun/Moon Party 3:00 pm
- 30 & October 1 - Fall Festival

### October

- 1- Fall Festival
- 14- For the Birds-Feeding Workshop (YF)
- 28- Owl Prowl (YF)

### November

- 24 & 25 - Star Party 7:30 pm (YF)

### December

- 15 & 16 - Star Party 7:30 pm (YF)

\* **Preregister** by calling the Arboretum. Class sizes are limited, so register as soon as possible to reserve your place. If you would like more information on any of the programs call (518) 875-6935.

## 1995 Classes & Events August - December

### Saturday Series

#### Flowers of the Roadsides & Meadows

Anita Sanchez, area naturalist and educator, will lead this walk to help you get to know the summer flowers. Some are native plants and some were brought by pioneers. Many have interesting uses and histories.

#### Meeting House

**August 5** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Non-Members \$5

#### Propagation by Grafting

Fruit trees, roses and many other woody plants are propagated by grafting. Grafting is an absorbing hobby and part of the all round education of every horticulturist. Nurseryman Floyd Guernsey will guide this class in a hands on experience of grafting techniques.

#### Green house

**August 12** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Nonmembers \$5

#### Insects at the Arboretum

What's this eating my plants? The answer can be an interesting story. Entomologist Jerry Diefendorf tells the story with enthusiasm and expertise. Bring your insect specimens in a jar for identification and get to know this little-known world.

#### Meeting House

**August 26** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Nonmembers \$5

#### Native Woodland Plants

Well-known naturalist Ruth Schottman, leads a walk on the Arboretum Woodland Trail. Students will learn to identify some of our native woodland plants; trees, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns and perhaps a few mushrooms depending on the weather.

#### Meeting House

**September 9** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Nonmembers \$5

#### Wild Food Exploration

Explore the Arboretum grounds with botanist and wild food enthusiast Gordon Tucker. Students will learn what is safe and what is NOT safe to eat in the woods. We will finish the program with some wild-food snacks to taste, furnished by knowledgeable volunteers.

#### Meeting House

**September 16** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Nonmembers \$5

#### Fall Planting of Trees and Shrubs

If you did not plant your plant-sale trees yet it's not too late! Nurseryman Ken Thompson, will give you some guidelines about what to plant and how to plant it to get your plants through the winter, making fall planting more successful.

#### Meeting House

**September 23** Members \$3  
10 am - Noon Nonmembers \$5

#### Photo Workshop: Autumn Color and Landscape Photography

This class is for outdoor photographers of all levels of expertise. Photo session will include instruction tailored to the type of camera brought by the student. An illustrated lecture and discussion at the Meeting House will follow. Students are encouraged to bring their photographs. The instructor, Frank Knight, is an environmental educator whose work has appeared in the Conservationist and Kaatskill Life. Class will take place rain or shine.

**September 23** Lower Parking Area  
8 am - Noon Members \$10  
(Preregister\*) Non-Members \$15



## Acorn Shop

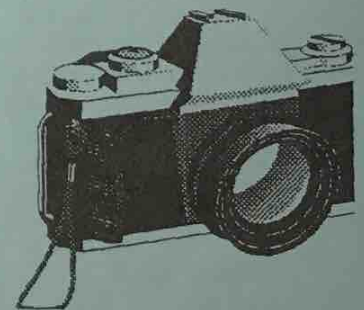
Open Saturday 10 - 5  
Sunday 12 - 5

Weekdays by chance or appointment

Features nature gifts, gardening supplies & books, unique T-shirts & more

Remember members receive a 10% discount on many items

Stop by soon!



## Drawing From Nature

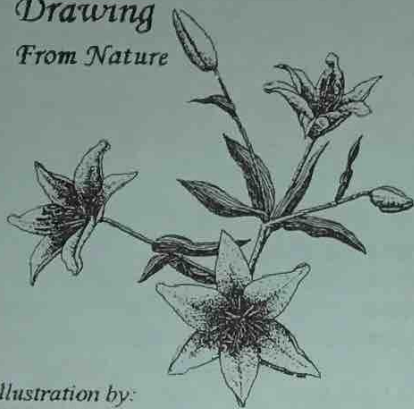


Illustration by:  
Heather Thompson

### Botanical Art: Watercolor

Watercolor is the traditional medium for botanicals. Anne Jaster will lead the class in an exploration of watercolor techniques using specimens from the Arboretum as models. Students of all levels of experience are welcome. Please bring a picnic supper.

**Thursday, July 13 & 5 consecutive  
Thursday's through August 17**  
6:00 pm Series cost Members \$40  
(Preregister\*) Nonmember \$45

### Botanical Illustration/Pen & Ink

Heather Thompson will teach botanical illustration using pen & ink as a medium. This class is for those who enjoy drawing. All levels are welcome from beginner to expert. Pen & Ink drawings add to the enjoyment of the beauty of your garden. Not only do they look professional, but they form a permanent record of your observations. Student work may be published in our newsletter! Please bring a picnic supper.

**Meet in Library Thursday, August 24 and  
5 consecutive Thursday's through  
September 28**  
6:00 p.m. Series Cost Members \$40  
(Preregister\*) Nonmembers \$45

### Outdoor Watercolor Workshop

In this all day workshop, Painting on location will offer students the opportunity to observe and explore the many elements of nature. Sherry Holmes will demonstrate how to carry a sketch through the process necessary to develop a painting. This program is designed for beginning and intermediate students. Limit ten students.

**Bring a picnic lunch! Meet in Meeting  
House**  
Saturday, September 23 9 am - 5 pm  
Members \$40  
(Preregister\*) Nonmembers \$45

### Materials list

upon registration for all classes.

Call 518-875-6935 for additional info

# Free Family Programs

All programs are given by George Steele,  
Arboretum Science Educator  
and will begin at the Arboretum Meeting House.

### What Tree is That?

The Arboretum is a living museum of trees. Join us in an easy walk along the woodland trail to learn about the native trees of our area and how to identify them.

Saturday, August 5 2:00 p.m.  
Free of charge

### Nature games

Learn about nature through games and activities. The games will vary from quiet to active, and they'll all be fun! If you have a favorite game we'll try it.

Saturday, August 19 2:00 p.m.  
Free of charge

### Full Moon Campfire Sing-along

A popular tradition at the Arboretum. Enjoy a beautiful moon rise while singing songs and enjoying nature stories around a campfire. Bring something to sit on and dress for a cool evening. There will be an indoor sing-along in case of inclement weather.

Friday, September 8 7:00 p.m.  
Free of charge sponsored by The Open Door  
Bookstore

### The Colors of Autumn

Join us at this special time of the year for a fall foliage tour of the Arboretum. We will take an easy walk around the woodland trail looking for signs of fall.

Saturday, September 23 2:00 pm  
Free of charge sponsored by Black Sheep  
Antique Center

### For the Birds-Feeding Workshop

Fall is the time to get ready for winter bird feeding. Learn what it takes, the kind of seed to get and how to identify the visitors at your feeder. We will build some simple bird feeders from natural and re-used throw-away materials.

Saturday, October 14 2:00 pm  
Free of charge

### Owl Prowl

Discover the creatures of the night. We'll talk to owls, watch for bats and learn about nature at night.

Saturday, October 28 7:00 pm  
Free of charge

## HELP...WE NEED YOU!

### Mark your calendar for Volunteer Workdays

This is an opportunity for volunteers to get together for a fun, social and productive day! Workdays run from 9 am - 3 pm and have a focus on a particular project or area. Bring a bag lunch, refreshments will be provided

August 19 - Pruning and Shrub Cleanup  
September 16 - Weeding, Pruning & Potting  
October 7 - Putting the Gardens to Bed.



Everyone is invited  
no special skills are needed!  
Come for as little or as long as  
you like!



The American beech, *F. grandifolia*, wins the attractive foliage award. The large paper thin leaves have no match. The European beech, *F. sylvatica*, has the most cultivars, some of which can be viewed at GLA. *N. cunninghamii* of Australia and Tasmania reaches 200 feet, twice the height of any other beech. Many beeches are important timber trees and are used for furniture, charcoal, soapmaking, utensils, boxes, and fuel. *N. antarctica*, *N. obliqua* and *N. procera* of Chili and Argentina have the best autumn color and serve as hosts for a unique food source. Charles Darwin noted in 1834 a "...bright yellow fungus which grows in vast numbers on the beech trees...In Tierra del Fuego...the fungus...is collected in large quantities by the women and children, and is eaten uncooked." The fungus was the major vegetable food source for the Fuegians. Related fungi are found on each species of South American beech.

SPECIES	ORIGIN	HARDINESS
<i>F. grandifolia</i>	America	4
<i>F. sylvatica</i>	Europe	5
<i>F. crenata</i>	Japan	5 or 6
<i>F. englerana</i>	China	
<i>F. longipetiolata</i>	Eastern Europe	
<i>F. orientalis</i>	Eastern Europe	
<i>N. procera</i>	Andes in Chile & Argentina	??? untested
<i>N. antarctica</i>	Chile	most promise for hardiness testing
<i>N. obliqua</i>		
<i>N. procera</i>		

### Fagus & Nothofagus Summary

Sonja Javarone is a free lance photographer and writer, formerly a high school biology teacher at Mayfield Central School. She has been a volunteer at GLA since the spring of 1994.



*Fagus grandifolia*  
American Beech  
Illustration by Anne Jaster

## Star Parties at the Arboretum!

### A Different Kind of Beauty

Alan French

By day, the Arboretum is a beautiful place, populated by numerous trees, shrubs, and flowers. Its vantage point provides a great view of the Schoharie Valley. By night, the Arboretum is a wonderful place to enjoy beauty of a different sort -- the beauty of a star strewn sky. The distance from large cities and all their outdoor lighting, and the open horizons make it a marvelous place to view the stars.

Several times during the year, the Albany Area Amateur Astronomers take advantage of this fine site, and host Star Parties in the field by the Meeting House. Many Arboretum members have enjoyed past Star Parties, and we invite you to join us in exploring the night sky with naked eye and telescope. Star Parties are open to everyone, all ages are welcome. All programs are FREE of CHARGE.

Star Parties begin with a brief introductory program, which will be held outside at the north end of the Meeting House. This will include a naked eye tour of the prominent constellations, some constellation lore and mythology, and some hints on enjoying Star Parties. Bring a blanket to sit or lie on for this part of the program.

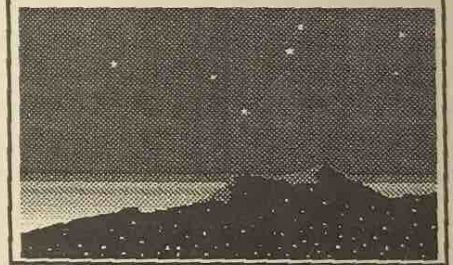
Following this program you are invited to look through the many telescopes provided by the Albany Area Amateur Astronomers. At the start of the evening they are pointed at various celestial showpieces. Later on, club members will be happy to provide you with views of your favorites. They are also on hand to answer your questions about telescopes and astronomy. When not looking through a telescope, keep an eye on the sky. We almost always see some satellites passing over head and a few meteors streaking across the sky.

Many people are surprised at how cool it can get in the evening, even in the warmer months, so bring some warm clothing. When you are inactive and under a clear night sky, it feels twenty to thirty degrees cooler than it is. Being warm and comfortable makes Star Parties more enjoyable -- and underdressed people often find they have to leave early.

A new addition to this year's schedule are some "Sun/Moon" Parties. It is NEVER safe to observe the Sun with a normal telescope, so the Amateur Astronomers have purchased a very special telescope designed specifically for safe solar viewing. It has a special filter that allows safe viewing and reveals prominences -- huge eruptions of from the surface of the sun. The "Sun/Moon" Parties will begin in the afternoon with solar viewing through this telescope. You are invited to bring a picnic dinner to enjoy at sunset. As darkness falls, telescopes will be trained on the Moon, providing breathtaking views of the lunar landscape.

Please come join us -- and enjoy a different kind of beauty at the Arboretum! Both Star Parties and Sun/Moon Parties are canceled if the skies are mostly cloudy. If you are in doubt about the weather, or need further details about these programs, call Susan or Alan French, Star Party Coordinators, at 374-8460.

### Next Star Party Tuesday, August 15th 7:30 PM.



### Special Treasures

*Continued from page 1*  
parents' watchful eyes. The Arboretum was fortunate to receive a membership from a future garden enthusiast, Erin Hanvey. Erin is an elementary student who loves plants, according to her mother. Miss Hanvey is the youngest member of the Arboretum and we are proud to have her on board! Hopefully the Arboretum will inspire her to continue her interest in plants.

If you missed the sale this year, come in 1996. It's more than a plant sale - this event is a really pleasant day out!

# How Does Our Garden Grow?

## New Members (\*), December 1994 Renewals, Endowments, Donations and Memorial Contributions.

### Patron

Andrea & James Modney  
Richard C. Rockwell

### Supporter

Paul Basile  
Sarah E. Gage  
Claudia McLaughlin \*

### Contributor

Hermine Anderson \*  
David & Sarah Goodrich \*  
Plantscapes Country  
Gardens \*  
R. Foster Scott

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Eamon & Loretta Murphy \*  
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Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Ross \*  
Charles & Jean Sheviak  
Mr. & Mrs. James C.  
Southgate  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Tobiessen  
Pam Trickett & Family \*

### Individual Member

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### Patron Organization

Garden Club of Schenectady

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Astronomers Inc.

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### General Donations

Garden Club of East Schodack  
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VAHS Holiday Program

### Donations in Memory of

Tom Burbine  
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### Donations in Memory of Einar Gustafson & Dorothy Mc Cartin

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Sophie T. Barber  
Colleen Burn  
Ann Cotch  
John Cotch Jr.  
Mark Cotch  
Rose Marie DeCetise  
Frances Ganson  
Brent Scott

### Equipment/Misc. Donations

Dave Vermilyea - *Ricoh Copier*  
Pamela Yourno - support for  
perennial garden maintenance

### Member Challenge!

An Arboretum member (AKA Good Fairy) has issued a challenge. They will match dollar to dollar up to \$1,000 total contributions designated to the care of the Van Loveland and adjacent garden areas. Please make check payable to GLA and indicate Van Loveland Garden Fund in the memo. Thank You!



# Garden Forum

## Exposure Tests of Temporary Signs and Labels

David A. Vermilyea

Gardeners frequently want to mark plants temporarily for easy subsequent identification and location. During the past year the following combinations were exposed to the elements for about 9 months at the Arboretum.

Substrate	Marker			
	Hort Pen	Sharpie	Nalgene Lab Pen	Black China Pencil
"Rite-in-the-Rain" Paper	X	X		X
Nalgene "Polypaper" Label			X	
Plastic "TUF TAG"	X	X		X
Styrene "Pot-Pad" T-stakes	X	X	X	X

The "Rite-in-the-Rain" paper and Nalgene labels, obtained from Ben Meadows Company in Atlanta, Georgia, are waterproof plastic materials; the Polypaper label was applied to one of the Pot-Pad Stakes to test adherence. The TUF TAG's and T-stakes were obtained from A. M. Leonard Company of Piqua, Ohio. The Hort pen, Sharpie pen, and marking pencil also came from Leonard. The Nalgene Company makes the Sharpie pens; the Sharpie and Nalgene pens behaved similarly in the tests.

The sample labels and signs were exposed near the upper pond at the Arboretum on August 10 or 12, 1993 and recovered on May 30, 1994 for a total exposure of about 42 weeks. The waterproof paper was attached with thumbtacks to a plywood sheet nailed to a pine tree, and was partially shaded during the day. The T-stake with attached Polypaper label was inserted into bare ground near the pond, with the polypaper facing south. The TUF TAG was attached to a bush near the pond, and both sides were written upon.

The following observations were made after exposure. First, concerning durability, all of the substrates showed some deterioration. The waterproof paper tore at the thumbtacks, and was later applied to the plywood at each 1/2". The edge still tore some, but the paper was basically intact. The paper no longer shed water as it had initially, but after wetting it dried intact and unaffected.

Adherence of the polypaper label was fair, but about 1/3 had pulled loose. The T-stake broke at ground level after a few months due to wind flexing; the label was reset so that only the upper T part was exposed, and it then survived. The TUF

TAG was unaffected except that the initial yellow color was nearly gone (it was now beige).

All of the writing was legible after exposure. Least

affected were the Nalgene and Sharpie pens; writing from these was essentially as good as new even on the sunniest exposures. The "China Pencil" was also nearly unaffected except that there was some smudging on the TUF TAG and "Rite-in-the-Rain" paper where nearby branches had rubbed against the writing. Least durable in these tests was the Hort pen, which seemed prone to fading, especially on exposure to full sun.

From these tests the most durable combination was the TUF TAG plus Sharpie or Nalgene pens. Other tests are planned, and readers are encouraged to report their experience and suggest additional studies.

David Vermilyea is a retired engineer who has taken a lead role in the ongoing survey and mapping project at the Arboretum. See Spring 1994 Newsletter.

## BOTANIST

*Continued from page 2*

Once mounted and correctly identified these dried plant samples will serve as an historic record of each woody plant specimen growing on our site at this particular point in time.

This project is being funded through the ZBGA (Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program which is administered by the NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the Natural Heritage Trust).

Volunteers will be needed to work with Janet on this project. Please call the office if interested.

## ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER REVISITED

On June 8th a small group comprised of staff, volunteers and trustees met to look at the Newsletter. Style, composition and content were all examined and related to current as well as anticipated needs. A number of changes will be evident in this current issue. More changes will be incorporated in subsequent newsletters. Your comments and suggestions for better filling your needs are always welcome. We encourage the participation of our members/readers and look forward to your ideas, articles and illustrations. Please let us know how we can best serve you.

## "MORE GIFTS...MORE GIVERS"

Contributions made by businesses as challenge matches provide a great source of funds for the Arboretum. We are blessed with many members who are GE Employees and Retirees, and whose contributions qualify for corporate matching funds. We are pleased to announce that we have recently received a check from the GE Fund for \$6,544.09. This represents contributions made during 1994. Thanks to GE and all the members and friends who made this support possible!

## WISH LIST

Working room air conditioner  
 Window darkening shades  
 Refrigerator  
 Volunteers for sign making  
 Weeders!!!  
 Librarian to organize our books

# Gardens to Visit

## Harriman Garden in Academy Park

Lucinda Willeman

When you are visiting downtown take a little extra time to visit the parks. This applies especially to the Harriman Garden in Albany, located in the center of Academy Park. In this garden, coniferous trees from around the world are concentrated into four large beds. They can be viewed nearly all at once and seen, at least superficially, in half an hour. They are dwarf forms, of course.

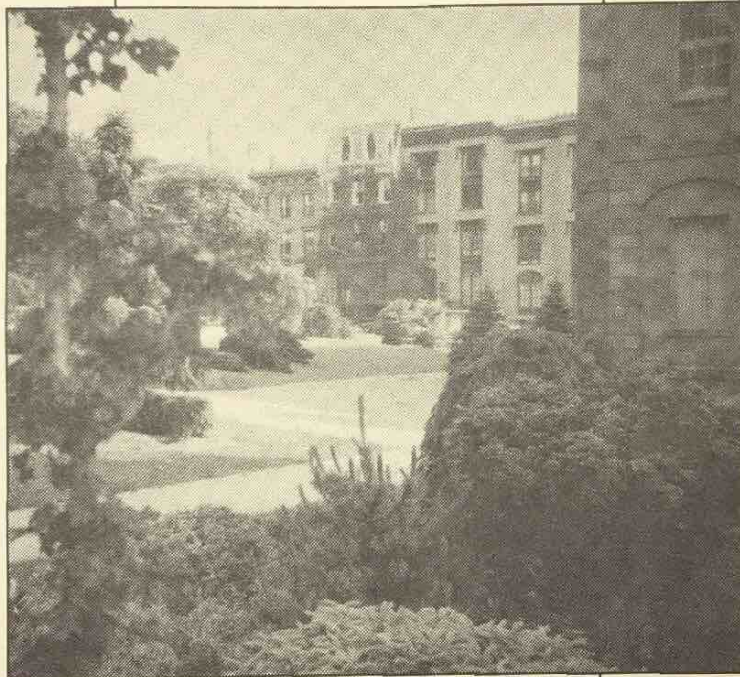
The conifer garden beds border a walkway that crosses the city-block sized park. City parks around the world resemble each other. They seem to have the same kind of trees, statues, fountains and monuments. The surrounding buildings peek through leafy frames. Their conflicting architectural styles are reconciled. Albany's Academy park is a traditional old-style park but it contains garden collections that make it special. A collection like this bears the stamp of an individual's dedication to horticulture. The conifer garden part was designed and installed by Arboretum member Peter Rumora. He comes to prune and weed weekly, usually on Sunday mornings.

Special things planted with the conifers include some plants that are perhaps not hardy in other parts of this area.

*Sarcococca*, a ground cover, and *Cryptomeria*, a Japanese conifer, are two of these. The hardy cacti are in bloom now (*Opuntia* sps.) and heathers were lovely in the early Spring. The Academy Park form of columnar Norway maple emerged as a unique seedling here in these conifer beds and can be seen in the last bed as you walk away from Washington St. This unique garden form has a straight trunk over eight feet tall, very little branching and deep green curly leaves. Other columnar maples in the park have normal leaves.

On the other side of the sidewalk from the conifer garden is the Kirsch Garden of New York State Wildflowers. It is nicely planned and planted. It attracts butterflies to the heart of downtown. I'll leave you to discover it on your own.

This park is all on flat terrain and limited in size. Walking is easy. When you take your camera, remember to take your close-up lens. You may want a notebook to copy down the name of a plant you meant to order for your own garden. The plants are newly marked with readable labels. Thanks to Peter Rumora for showing us this garden.



View from Harriman Gardens, Norway Maple left. Photo by Lucinda Willeman.

### General Information

**Open to the public  
year round all the time**

**Admission free.**

**Parking is difficult.  
Taking the bus would be a  
good idea for the last part  
of the trip.**

**George Landis Arboretum  
Lape Road  
Esperance, NY 12066**

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