



# George Landis Arboretum Newsletter

Volume 9 Number 1

January, February, March 1990

THE GREENHOUSE PROJECT has been the most ambitious undertaking ever attempted by our members. Initiated through a generous donation by Dr. and Mrs. Raymond of seed money and a greenhouse frame, our appeal to the membership raised \$16,584, approximately one half the total needed for completion. In addition to one \$5,000 anonymous donation, two very substantial donations came from new Arboretum supporters Ruth D. MacDowell and Catherine Kord. Significant assistance from Wallace I. Johnson, Inc. enabled us to complete the foundation work within our budget. Mr. Johnson orchestrated donations from local suppliers of earthmoving equipment and labor to perform the elaborate excavation, forming, drainage and backfilling of our earth-bermed workspace and greenhouse.

Theodore MacDowell, our skilled carpenter, has patiently understood my peculiar design modifications which will make our facility easy to heat and to maintain. Both greenhouse and workspace have been framed and the latter has been enclosed and insulated. The balance of the greenhouse budget is now \$2,329, which should be enough to sheathe interior workspace walls and provide finish roofing. The project will then be at a (cont. p.6)

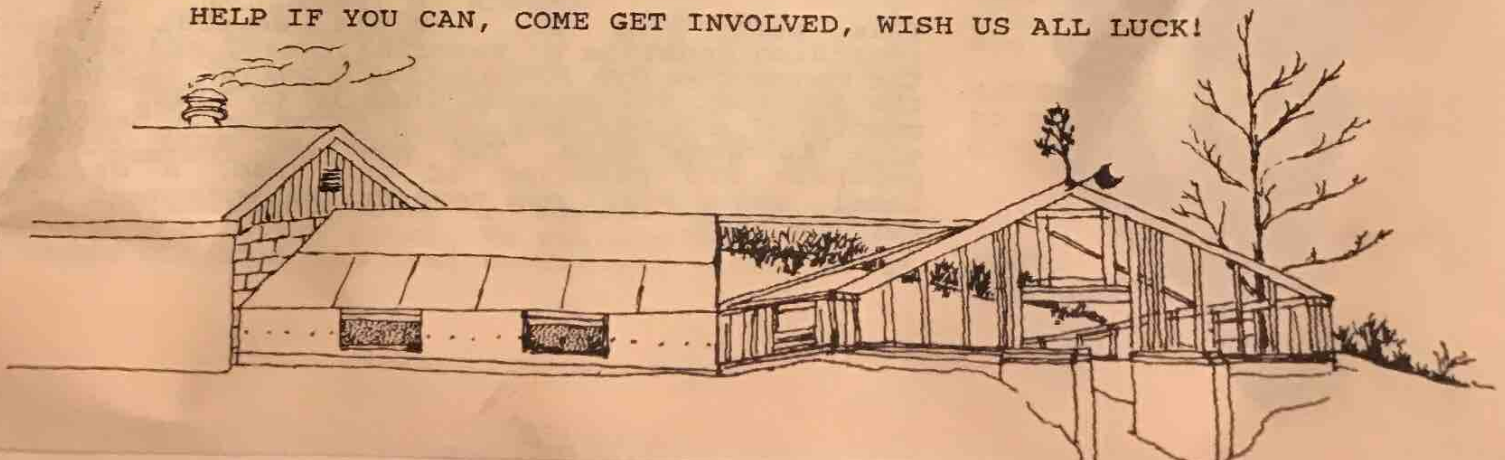
THE GREENHOUSE DEDICATION was on a windy cold day, brightened by the happiness of the Arboretum group who were gathered to celebrate our new footing. We all shivered with the weather, eagerly dipped into the refreshments and all felt warm thinking of the new possibilities for the Arboretum.

Our President, Elizabeth Corning, welcomed all. Margaret Law spoke a lovely remembrance of William Thomas Raymond in whose name the greenhouse is dedicated. Director Pamela Rowling mentioned a few of the benefits--dreams to reality--of our undertaking. The prayer of dedication was given by Vice President Dale Morgan.

It is our hope that both Dr. & Mrs. Raymond felt a sense of joy and completion in their mission to see their son's dreams coming true.

APPLETASTING, sponsored by Arboretum Trustee Peter Ten Eyck of Indian Ladder Farms was added to the day's fun. Guests were asked to sample from two groups of fruit. The first, old fashioned apples popular from the time of the American Revolution to the mid 1800's, were Smokehouse, Spitzenburg and Sheepnose. The second grouping, modern apples developed in the last 50 years were Empire, Jonagold and Mutsu. (cont.p.6)

HELP IF YOU CAN, COME GET INVOLVED, WISH US ALL LUCK!



**GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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- Pamela Rowling.....Director
- Amy Lent.....Asst. Director

**FRIENDS OF THE ARBORETUM**

Interested persons should contact  
Peter Rumora (518) 449-5374

**LITERARY STAFF**

- Kathie Lippitt.....Editor
- Amy Lent.....Copy Editor
- Anne Jaster.....Art Editor
- Shirley Redington.....Book Review
- Mary Ann Finley..... Finley Fun
- Contributors: Elizabeth Corning,  
Margaret Law, Pamela Rowling,  
Peter Rumora, Peter Ten Eyck.



**DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

As detailed in Mrs. Corning's President's message, 1989 was a year of much growth. From the Albany Master Gardeners to the inmates of Summit Shock to all our volunteer laborers, the Arboretum was truly alive this past year.

Donations above and beyond membership dues chronicled the increasing confidence with which people are viewing our garden. The Ellis H. & Doris B. Robison Foundation has generously contributed for the second year for our general operation support. One of the items from our "wish list", a computer and printer was recently donated by Kay MacArthur, a consistent supporter.

"Results" of our grant-seeking are excruciatingly slow in coming, but we have received two in 1989: The Institute of Museum Services funded an assessment of our operations and collections, and NYS Parks and Rec. (ZBGA, Natural Heritage Trust) funded the development of children's educational programming for 1990 season. I research many funding sources and welcome your suggestions of possible grantors.

An ambitious schedule of educational programs is being planned for the 1990 season. Weekends will focus on a series of lectures and classes to be held on Saturdays. Weekdays will overflow with botanic illustration taught by Anne Jaster, bird walks led by Beverly Waite, innumerable school field trips, and two bold new ventures. Pending financing we will present two ecology series, one for adults, one for elementary-age children.

As always there will be countless jobs for volunteers, jobs which generally turn into fun by virtue of the company and the surroundings. We especially need volunteers to host the Saturday programs, an easy chore and a pleasant opportunity to lots of nice people.

Mrs. Corning, Treasurer Paul Blair, and the Board of Trustees are aggressively seeking financial strategies to assure our economic security and future. Funds have been strained to the limit by our organizational growth, but growing pains are not uncommon to transition. Trustee Phyllis Rosenblum has taken on the challenge of building the Arboretum's endowment. The current annual income from the endowment will provide only 25% of the proposed 1990 budget, so the time is ripe for this noble cause.

P.S. As we go "to press". I've learned that our Summit inmate crews have been assigned to other job sites. Our heart felt thanks to the inmates, Bill Johnson, and all the other great staff of EnCon and Corrections. We hope to have the crews back next season.

**DEDICATED TREES**

This past year we received several inquiries regarding donation of memorial trees, and as we like the concept we are formulating a policy to facilitate the process. The general idea is to plant a tree in memory of a loved one or in honor of a newborn-- a gift to grow with. The donation will cover the purchase and planting of the tree, a dedication label, and a small sum towards the endowment to care for the tree.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings and warmest thanks to all those who support the Arboretum so generously. It's been a wonderful year with record membership and ever increasing response to our needs. It's a real pleasure (and challenge!) to serve as your president, and to work with such an excellent Board of Trustees, who are always a source of support and wise counsel, and with our valiant volunteers.

1989 will go down in history as the "Year of the Greenhouse". We are actually becoming the proud possessors of a magical crystal palace, thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of Bob and Marian Raymond, and especially thanks to the know-how and endless hours of construction work put in by Pam, and the construction crews she has commandeered and overseen.

It's been a long slow process as we hold our breath and watch it grow, and envision row upon row of seedlings and cuttings, which will not only enhance our own plantings but also be a valuable commodity for our Plant Sales. The possibilities seem endless, as are our thanks to the Raymonds and to the many generous contributors who responded so readily to our special appeal.

Bit by bit we see our Image magnifying as we become better known throughout the area. A recent article in SCHENECTADY MAGAZINE spotlighted our origins and progress. We are especially grateful to our Schoharie county legislator, Paul Tonko, and to our Secretary of State, Gail Shaffer, who have been consistently helpful with advice on grant possibilities and other avenues for us to pursue. It is heartening to know our governmental leaders are behind us and that we are taking our rightful place as a special attraction in the country and the entire Capital District.

Our greatest assets are our wonderful volunteers, who under Pam's direction have accomplished so many improvements. It would be impossible to single out any one or even dozen, who have given so willingly of their time and muscle. Of course with Pam as slave-driver it becomes a pleasant task, and the reward of Pam's sparkling eyes and happy grin make it all worth while. Our thanks also to Amy Lent, Pam's assistant, who though new to us has melded right in to the Arboretum pattern and is a great asset.

Our greatest labor force has been from the Summit Shock Incarceration program units, consisting of both men and women, who have faithfully appeared ready to take on any jobs Pam has mapped out for them, through heat of summer and the sub-zero weather and fearsome winds experienced in December. They have put in an extraordinary amount of time and work. Their achievements include a highly visible clearing out of huge areas of brush and digging the essential drainage ditches. Our thanks to Camp Summit for their contribution to the appearance of our grounds.

The Friends continue a source of valuable assistance on every front. We welcome Peter Rumora as their chairman and feel confident (cont. p. 6)

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WISH GRANTED--  
--WE GOT IT!!!  
A COMPUTER  
donated by  
Kay MacArthur Abbuhl

## THE ARBORETUM'S "WISH LIST"

~~~~~  
GROUNDS EQUIPMENT  
A brush chipper  
Good hand mowers  
Golf carts for elderly  
and handicapped visitors

GREENHOUSE  
PARAPHERNALIA  
(See the Director)  
FURNITURE  
Folding chairs for the  
Meeting House  
Bookshelves, carpet,  
lighting for the library  
Pots and pans for the  
Meeting House Kitchen

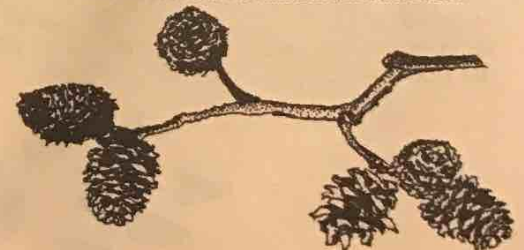
OFFICE EQUIPMENT  
Desk lamps  
Service for our  
(donated) Xerox  
photocopier  
Miscellaneous office  
supplies

CONSTRUCTION  
MATERIALS/LABOR  
Winterization of the  
Meeting House, woodsiding  
for beautification of  
library, repairs to barn

COLLECTIONS  
Books to update the  
library (per list  
generated by  
horticultural librarian  
Shirley Redington: see  
Director)

LIVING COLLECTIONS  
(per list of replacement  
plant materials needed:  
see the Director.)

MEMORABILIA: appropriate  
to historical Arboretum  
display



# BIRDING

by Beverly Waite

"You're one of THOSE," groaned Pam Rowling as I pointed out the singing house wren without lifting my head. So natural was it for me to "bird" by ear, the identification did not seem extraordinary, while Pam's comment reminded me that knowledge of bird calls adds dimension to the art of birding. Art. It could hardly be called a science when it was pursued for interest, sport, company, and fun, the way I first checked out the birdlife at the George Landis Arboretum. My assignment at GLA was to weed, which task made it easier for me to count rocks than to count birds. How lucky as I tended to the digging, eyes down, that I was able to keep ears a-flap. I heard plenty.

Thus far, spring walks scheduled in the formal programs for the public had shown 56 species to be either residents or migrants, not a complete picture, considering the environment. The Arboretum's 100 acres have enough ecological variety to pull in more birds than that: a hilltop near the Schoharie River makes a good flight path for hawks, open fields favor sparrow and blackbird types, numerous kinds of trees and shrubs may shelter warblers and other woodland species. The five wet spots add yet another attraction, as do the old barn and bird houses. Even the exposed dead trees and the power lines are places that lure birds. I had the advantage of covering the area during many hours, many weeks, many months. It was new territory for me to explore, a challenge no birder can resist.

So began my "official" accounting of the birdlife at GLA. Although it was a while before the weeding allowed time or energy for much prowling, the binoculars were always as close to me as my trowel and I listened as easily as I breathed, coming up for peeks as the action indicated. From April 29 to November 15, 1989, I identified 65 species. Not included in this report are the hawk that got away (an accipiter), the mockingbird down the road (fly up there, you!), and 12 individuals reliably seen by others but not confirmed (project for 1990).

Great Blue Heron	Field Sparrow	Cedar Waxwing	Least Flycatcher
Northern Harrier	Bobolink	Blue-winged Warbler	Great Crested Flycatcher
American Kestrel	Common Grackle	Prairie Warbler	Black-capped Chickadee
Mourning Dove	House Finch	Common Yellowthroat	White-breasted Nuthatch
Downy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch	Indigo Bunting	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Pileated Woodpecker	Green-backed Heron	Chipping Sparrow	Gray Catbird
Eastern Phoebe	Red-shouldered Hawk	Song Sparrow	European Starling
Tree Swallow	Wild Turkey	Eastern Meadowlark	Yellow-throated Vireo
American Crow	Black-billed Cuckoo	Northern Oriole	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Brown Creeper	Northern Flicker	Evening Grosbeak	Scarlet Tanager
House Wren	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Turkey Vulture	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wood Thrush	Eastern Kingbird	Red-tailed Hawk	Rufous-sided Towhee
Brown Thrasher	Barn Swallow	Killdeer	Dark-eyed Junco
Red-eyed Vireo	Tufted Titmouse	Belted Kingfisher	Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow Warbler	Veery	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Oven Bird	Eastern Bluebird	Blue Jay	
Northern Cardinal	American Robin		

The list does not tell the whole story. There were high spots. It was heaven to work under a canopy of bobolink songs. One day Pam and I were enchanted as we stood by the peony bed, watching a great blue heron land at the Duck Pond below. Uncountable barn swallows swooped endlessly in and out of the barn, skimming the water of the pond, rattling to their young from the wires overhead. The barn also protected a kestrel whose three babies provided a comedy routine as they left their nest-hole. I felt as sorry for the brown creeper temporarily trapped in the Meeting House as I was elated over seeing the harrier, the red-shouldered hawk, and the successful bluebird family.

These observations have made a good basis or framework of data. Missing are winter studies and bad-weather sightings-- such times not conducive to weeding. Next year I want to find the expected birds which eluded me this season. What's more, I want to watch for the surprises bound to turn up. Birding is like that.



4  
Sunflower seeds

## THE TRUE FIRS-- *Abies*

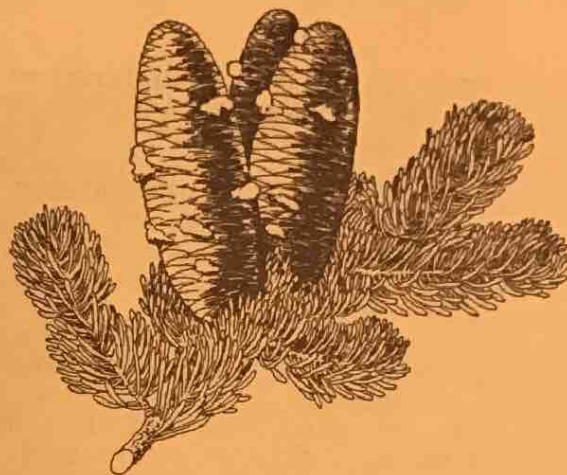
by Pamela Rowling

As a sensuous experience for smell, sight, touch and sound the true firs are hard to beat. Everyone is familiar with the intoxicating, room-filling odor of balsam from winter holiday decorations. Needles, buds, bark and cones all possess great quantities of scented resins. The resin is frequently in such abundance that it forms glistening blobs on various plant parts. Each species has its own distinctive resin scent-- turpentine, lemon, orange, balsam, etc. easily detected by crushing some fresh needles.

A visual joy, the firs are among the most formal of conifers-- strictly spire-shaped. The characteristic of retaining their lower branches into great age gives a visual impression of great solidity. Leaf color varies from glaucous blues found in *A. concolor*, to deep black green of *A. Nordmanniana*. In many species the topside of the needles and the lower surface contrast sharply due to linear bands of lighter color on the lower surface. The cones are phenomenal! Cones are borne upright on the ends of horizontally thrusting branches. They are luscious fat, covered with spots of resin and come in the most impressive array of colors. Cone color changes with maturation, passing through good purples, blues, greens and golds. Their one disadvantage is that in most species the cones are produced on the very tops of the trees and so are difficult to see well. Siting in the landscape to allow looking down at some of these plants from a higher vantage point could overcome this problem. To the touch, firs are 'friendly'. Their needles are blunt tipped. One of my childhood achievements in plant identification was to separate a fir from a spruce by 'shaking its hand'. Spruces, with their sharp needles, bite.

The auditory impression of firs is one of silence. In contrast to the wind singing in the pine woods, firs muffle sound with their dense soft foliage.

The genus *Abies* is well represented in the collections at the George Landis Arboretum by many 35+ year old specimens of both native and exotic species. A brief listing of species currently grown and their nativity follows; *Abies concolor*-- White Fir from



Rocky Mountains; *A. grandis*-- Giant Fir, North California to Montana; *A. lasiocarpa*-- Rocky Mountain Fir, Alaska to New Mexico; *A. nobilis*-- Noble Fir, Washington to northern California; *A. amabilis*-- B.C. and Alberta to Oregon; *A. balsamea*-- Balsam Fir, northern North America; *A. nephrolepis*-- Korea, northern China; *A. Ernestii*-- Ernest Fir, eastern China; *A. holophylla*-- Needle Fir, Korea; *A. Nordmanniana*-- Nordmann Fir, Caucasus to Asia Minor; *A. homolepis*-- Nikko Fir, Japan; *A. alba*-- Silver Fir, mountains of central and southern Europe. These specimens are to be found throughout the grounds but are most highly concentrated in the pinetum area and the rare conifer area.

The conifer most frequently confused with the firs are the spruces. There are a few clues that will aid in easily distinguishing between them. First is the foliage: both have needles borne singly along the stem, however the attachment to the stem differs. If you pull a living needle from a twig and see a round dent you have a fir. If a piece of bark comes with the needle, leaving a torn scar, it is a spruce. When boughs are dried needles will remain on the fir, but they will fall from the spruce leaving their peg-like points of attachment. Second, the cones are quite dissimilar. Cones of firs are borne upright on the tips of branches. When mature these deceptively solid-looking cones fall apart to shed their seeds, leaving only a central axis through the winter. Spruce cones are woody and persistent, seeds are shed by opening of the cone scales which remain attached after maturation. (cont.p.7)

BOOK REVIEW by Shirley Redington  
PERENNIALS FOR AMERICAN GARDENS by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nicolas Ekstrom,  
Published by Random House 1989 \$35. Hard cover. Darrel Apps began a week-  
long course on perennials at Longwood Gardens in 1986 by recommending four  
books: PERENNIALS FOR YOUR GARDEN, by Alan Bloom; PERENNIALS: HOW TO SELECT,  
GROW, AND ENJOY, by Pamela Harper and Fred McGourty; TAYLOR'S GUIDE TO  
PERENNIALS; and PERENNIAL GARDEN PLANTS, by Graham S. Thomas. I suspect  
today he would recommend Clausen and Ekstrom. The others would be nice to  
have but not necessary.

This book is eminently authoritative, written by two  
horticulturists-botanists-garden designers affiliated with the New York  
Botanical Garden. It is more comprehensive than previously published  
treatments; it includes several thousand species; and it is American. With  
its encyclopedic format, one may easily determine at a glance flower color  
and height, general cultural requirements, hardiness, commercial availability  
and suggested propagation techniques.

Though the book does not pretend to be 'fully illustrated' there are superb  
color photographs on almost every page. A succinct chapter on planting and  
maintenance is added in the appendix as well as sources for plant material  
and a list of famous display gardens.

If a person were to have only one book on the subject of perennials,  
Clausen's and Ekstrom's PERENNIALS FOR AMERICAN GARDENS should be it.

GREENHOUSE PROJECT (cont. from p.1) standstill. We are currently seeking more  
donations. In addition to member contributions we are broadening our search  
to include foundations and private corporations, and are hoping to complete  
our project in Spring 1990.

The greenhouse facility is of utmost importance for us to truly function  
as an arboretum and educational facility. With it, we can expand and restore  
our plantings economically by handling our own propagations, we can offer  
excess plants at the annual plant sales, and we can offer rare plants to  
members as a benefit of membership.

APPLETASTING (cont. from p.1) Smokehouse originated with William Gibbons,  
Lancaster County PA about 1837, taking its name from the spot where the  
original tree grew, Gibbons' smokehouse. Fruit is uniform in size and  
symmetrical, but its color lacks character, being neither distinctly red or  
green. It's a very pleasant flavored apple but too low in acid for most  
culinary uses. An annual bearer it has a long storage life.

Sheepnose is a name that has been applied to several different varieties of  
apples having a pronounced conical shape. This particular variety is also  
known as Black Gilliflower. An old apple of unknown origin it has a  
surprisingly dry flesh and a rough skin with dark purple color over green.  
It's only good attribute is that it is a shy bearer.

Spitzenburg originated at Esopus, Ulster County in the 18th century and was  
a favorite of Thomas Jefferson. A choice dessert apple slightly conical in  
shape and developing a reddish orange hue when coloring conditions are  
optimal. It is an average bearer and quite susceptible to disease.

Empire was developed at the Experiment Station at Geneva, NY in the 1960's  
as a cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious. A deep red round apple, a  
little on the small side but destined to be one of the most popular eating  
apples in the state due to its excellent flavor and texture as well as long  
storage life.

Mutsu, also known as Crispin in Europe, is a cross between Golden  
Delicious and a large Japanese apple known as Indo. Developed in Japan in the  
1940's, its large size and green to yellow color set it apart from the  
typical apple, but it's the balance of sweetness and acid together with a  
very crisp flesh that makes eating this apple a memorable experience.

Jonagold is another Geneva introduction resulting from a cross of Jonathan  
and Golden Delicious. Not planted by growers in the 1960's because of its  
lack of strong red color, the variety languished until rediscovered by the  
Europeans who eat with their tongues instead of their eyes. In Europe, it is  
now the most widely planted of all new apple varieties, leaving us in the US  
trying to play catch up ball.

"You should see what Marge is doing!"  
by Amy Lent

The botanic illustration class was gathered at the old oak, honing their skills with studies of the 500 year old tree. The object of excitement was the drawing flowing from the pen of Margaret Foster, a newcomer to the Tuesday gathering.

Ms. Foster earned two degrees at the University of Wisconsin and taught art for 20 years at colleges in Illinois, Kentucky and New York. Although she now works in a non-art capacity for the NYS Office of Higher Education, she is still an active artist. Her work has been exhibited widely in private and public collections and in competitions, and was exhibited most recently at the Unitarian Church in Albany.

You can see the result of her efforts that summer Tuesday, in miniature version, in this newsletter's masthead. Ms. Foster has graciously permitted us to make notecards of the oak which are available through the Arboretum office (10 cards and envelopes for \$3. ) Matted prints (8 1/2 x 11") will be available soon. Proceeds from the sale of cards and prints will go to the Arboretum.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Foster for the use of her fine drawing. It is a pleasure to have this professional artist's rendition of the Arboretum's "symbol" and very generous of her to let us use it.

TRUE FIRS (cont. from page 5) Firs are typically limited in distribution to cooler hills and mountain ranges preferring deep, moist (but not waterlogged) soil and full sunlight. All but a few are intolerant of drought and impure air. *Abies concolor*-- White Fir is one of the best for eastern planting, it withstands heat, drought and cold.

Propagation is most commonly by seed which requires 14--28 days of cool (34--41 degrees) moist stratification. Hybrids and rarer species may be increased by cuttings, taken in March, and by grafting.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (cont. from p. 3) this vital group will carry on under Peter Rumora's leadership.

Looking ahead an exciting program for our weekend lectures is in the planning stage. Pam has lined up so many fascinating talks you won't want to miss a single one. 1990 will be an extremely busy year as we have many events and benefits planned. SAVE THESE IMPORTANT DATES!!!:

March 23, 24, 25, WILDWOOD FLOWER SHOW. Our exhibit will be dwarf evergreens. March 31, 2pm DAVID J.A. SMITH, Director of Horticulture White Flower Farm will present a pictorial catalogue of all the best in plants followed by an auction of choice and rare material. Tickets \$15.00 will include tea and a wonderful afternoon. To be held at the Desmond Americana.

April 28, CELEBRATE THE OUTDOORS: Arbor Day. Earth Day. We will have Open House at the Arboretum and invite everyone to come tour the grounds with us, and hear the special talk by Don Falk, Director of the National Center for Plant Conservation.

May 5, ARBORETUM RARE PLANT SALE: a never-to-be-missed event and a great opportunity to find that special plant you crave.

Friend Sponsor	\$15-25	Membership Application
	\$25-50	
Supporting Patron	\$50-100	GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM Esperance NY 12066
	\$100+	

Please support the extensive work of the Arboretum and make a tax deductible contribution.

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
New Member \_\_\_\_\_  
THANKYOU

# FINLEY FUN

with  
Mary Ann Finley  
Here's a short one  
for a short month.  
A short quote  
from Shakespeare,  
four items of  
rough weather  
and a dozen ways  
plants and animals  
combat the enemy:

R H E R E S H A L L Y O U  
E L A D M I G R A T E A S E  
H O D N I W C K E N S A P E  
T S T H I C K E N S A P E  
A E S E I G N Y N R S N U N  
E L S E E D S A U B R P O  
W E E G A L L S F L E A E  
H A N S T U N Y R U B T N  
G V Y A W O R R S W H L M  
U E R T O B E R S W H L M  
O S D O F F O K C A L Y  
R D N A R E T N I W T U B

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THE FRIENDS OF THE ARBORETUM had two meetings to discuss their future role. At the first meeting in November, the summary of discussion was that the nature of the Friends and the requirements on them had perhaps changed, but they are a valuable asset to the Arboretum. They decided to return in a month to determine what would be done. The December meeting was small in number and that in itself indicated a lack of interest in continuing the Friends. In addition it was deemed to be less of a need because of the strong leadership of Director Pamela Rowling. The Friends of the Arboretum will still be available to help the Arboretum and will get together once or twice a year socially.

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ESSAY CONTEST FOR CHILDREN In celebration of Arbor Day elementary age children are invited to submit an essay on MY FAVORITE TREE. Prizes to be awarded at the Arboretum on April 28 (during Celebrate the Outdoors festivities) are First Prize, \$25.00; Second Prize, \$15.00; Third Prize, \$10.00. The winners will also participate in the planting of the Arbor Day tree. Essays should be submitted by April 1 to: Margaret Law, % George Landis Arboretum, P.O. Box 186, Esperance, NY 12066.



George Landis Arboretum  
Lape Road  
Esperance, NY 12066

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Organization  
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