For a number of years, the Arnold Arboretum has supplemented its ground maintenance staff in the summer with college students interested in botanical and horticultural careers who wished practical experience. Students have had the opportunity to work alongside veteran members of the grounds crew, learning the mechanics and techniques necessary to maintain and improve the living collection. A weekly rotation of duties exposed them to as many different maintenance jobs as was possible within the space of a summer. Fertilizing, spraying, pruning, weeding, mulching and transplanting have been but a few of the duties assigned. A week on the pick-up truck collecting trash has been considered a rite of passage for all; unglamorous though it is, it points out quite graphically that litter (and its effective control) are major problems in many arboreta that are heavily used by the public.

A series of Friday morning lecture/field trips soon became part of the program. Various staff members introduced facets of the Arnold Arboretum’s diversified activities, such as the research facilities in Cambridge, the collections at the Case Estates, the herbarium, the educational programs, the Friends, and the Arboretum’s publications. Field trips were taken to Mt. Auburn Cemetery, the Hunnewell Estate, the Suburban Experiment Station in Waltham, and the Franklin Park Zoo as well, to acquaint the students with other horticultural resources in the Greater Boston area. In 1975, these summer students were officially designated “horticultural trainees.”

Evaluation forms distributed to the students at the close of the 1976 summer session were encouragingly candid and characterized by a certain amount of constructive criticism. It was particularly heartening to see the care with which many of the trainees filled out the evaluations. Oftentimes, where merely a √ would do, students took the time to write lengthy explanatory remarks and comments.

As a result of last summer’s questionnaires, the goals and content of the existing program were re-examined and evaluated. Under the supervision of Drs. Spongberg and Weaver, the staff worked throughout the past year to produce an academically-oriented program that
would more realistically serve the needs of the students, nearly all of whom plan careers in botany and horticulture. As a result, this year’s summer program represented a change in format and content, adding a new dimension to the horticultural trainees’ preparation.

The program has continued to give students the practical experience in grounds maintenance work considered so valuable by future employers. In addition, students have met for four hours each Wednesday morning as participants in an academic course entitled “Botanical and Horticultural Practices at Arboreta.” Upon successful completion of the course, each trainee will receive four college credits through the Harvard University Commission on Extension Studies.

The course was designed to relate the botanical and horticultural knowledge of the students to its practical application in arboreta and botanical gardens. Topics considered included the principles of taxonomy and the classification of vascular plants, as well as special problems presented by plants in cultivation. A special section on woody ornamental plants in the landscape emphasized the application of botanical and ecological theory to the use of plants in the environment. The development and maintenance of living collections stressed horticultural practices and equipment.
As part of the course work, each student was expected to select, with instructor guidance, a research project to be conducted during the ten-week term. A written report on the investigation was required at the course’s conclusion. Among areas of student interest this summer were a phenological study of flowering in certain deciduous trees, studies of the genera *Indigofera* and *Physocarpus*, and a project on economic entomology. A number of students worked on the development of interpretive labels for various of our collections; still others studied weed identification, and edible trees and shrubs. For all, staff and students alike, it has proved to be an educational summer.

*Student Jerald Shing tackles the pruning of an overgrown juniper. Photo. M. Reynolds.*