Dr. Robert E. Cook Is New Director of the Arnold Arboretum

Dr. Robert Edward Cook, a biologist with a special interest in plant population biology, has been appointed Director of the Arnold Arboretum. Dr. Cook is currently Associate Professor of Ecology and Systematics at Cornell Plantations, the university's arboretum and botanic garden.

"We were delighted to recruit someone of Bob Cook's caliber who combines outstanding managerial and leadership skills with a strong scientific background," said Sally Zeckhauser, Harvard University's Vice President for Administration and chair of the search committee.

Cornell Plantations receives about twenty percent of its operating budget from Cornell; the remainder must be raised from private and public sources. Under Dr. Cook's direction, Plantations has undergone a five-year period of growth, doubling its budget, its permanent staff, and its supporting membership. A successful fundraising program implemented among alumni and friends resulted in increased unrestricted giving to Cornell Plantations and a sixty percent rise in special gifts for capital projects.

Major capital projects undertaken during Dr. Cook's tenure included garden, trail, and landscape renovations as well as the acquisition of more than two hundred fifty acres of ecologically important land. A new service building was designed, funded, and constructed.

Dr. Cook also initiated a series of research projects at Plantations with funding from outside organizations. Ecological research on endangered plant species and a review of national recovery plans, for example, were funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, New York State, and the World Wildlife Fund. The National Science Foundation (NSF) is supporting ecological research on grasses, trees, fire, and grazing in the Kenyan savannah. Research on curriculum development for elementary-level science education (Project Leap—Learning About Plants) is being jointly funded by NSF and New York State.

Dr. Cook's own research interests are in plant propagation biology in general and in the biology of clonal plants in particular. A native of Warwick, Rhode Island, and a 1968 graduate of Harvard College, he received his doctorate from Yale in 1973. He was a Cabot Fellow at Harvard in 1974 and 1975 and served as assistant professor in the Department of Biology from 1975 to 1980 and as associate professor from 1980 to 1982. Dr. has also been as program director in population biology and physiological ecology at NSF.