A New Relevancy
Robert E. Cook, Director

The Historical Challenge
More than a century ago, a new institution was born through the vision of three men. Frederick Law Olmsted, newly appointed architect of Boston’s park system, designed an extraordinary plan for the land. Charles Sprague Sargent, newly appointed head of the Arnold Arboretum, directed the assemblage of a magnificent collection of trees for scientific research. Charles William Eliot, newly appointed president of the Harvard Corporation, declared this Arboretum to be an essential part of a great educational enterprise, Harvard University.

Fifty-four years after its founding, the Arboretum faced a grave challenge upon the death of Sargent, its first and only director. How would this vision, nurtured by his leadership and supported by the annual generosity of his close associates, survive the financial storms ahead without the living spirit of its leader? Only a strong investment in the future, through the creation of an endowment fund in his memory, would secure the measure of financial stability needed to sustain its mission to collect and study the trees of the world. A goal of $1,000,000 was set, and a campaign was launched.

A loyal group of Sargent’s friends from across the country rose to meet this challenge. And what friends they were. In New York alone, the Charles Sprague Sargent Memorial Fund was chaired by Henry James with J. P. Morgan serving as treasurer. They

Arboretum education initiatives aim to make children partners in science learning.
raised $1,021,884. Today, the Arnold Arboretum is known the world over for its leadership in the study of trees, especially those of the Asian continent.

A New Relevancy

It has been sixty-six years since that great campaign on behalf of the Arboretum. Today the institution faces a new challenge. Our world has grown very small in the last half century. The common environment that sustains our daily existence is under increasing assault. Where once Sargent would have traveled thousands of miles to collect the seeds of exotic Chinese trees, today those rich forests of temperate Asia have been decimated by the axe. Over the past several decades, the accelerating loss of forests in tropical Asia has contributed to irreversible changes in the very climate that surrounds us all.

Closer to home, the next generation of children, who will inherit this altered world, are leaving our school system unprepared for the future. We are failing to educate all Americans in the basic understanding of science and technology that permits them to evaluate critical environmental issues and execute the obligations of responsible citizenship.

It is no surprise that all of our institutions are being called upon to transcend their traditional mission of scholarship. Much more than in the past, their resources are being asked to address urgent social, economic, and international issues through direct service to society.

The Arboretum has heard this call, and we are in a unique position to respond. On the one hand, as part of Harvard University, we curate the collections and cultivate the knowledge that will be required for the resolution of pressing problems. (See box below on the upcoming expedition to China.) On the other hand, as part of the urban fabric of Boston, we experience an added obligation to transform this knowledge into service for the community around us. Consequently, we have begun to answer this call.

With the support of international agencies such as the World Bank, we are bringing the expertise of our staff to collaborate directly with the governments of Asian nations. Working closely with country scientists, we are providing assistance for the conservation of their critical biological resources through botanical exploration and inventory, the identification of promising medicinal plants, and the generation of forest management policies that can enhance sustainable development.

Here in our own community, the Arboretum has become a center for science learning among the schoolchildren of Boston. Each year we bring hundreds of classrooms to experience our landscapes, and we work directly with elementary teachers to enhance their knowledge of basic biology and support their instruction of science in the classroom. Through the use of telecommunications technology, we will soon link neighboring schools in Boston and Brookline directly with each other and with the educational resources of the Arboretum. This electronic community will reinforce the development of a social community for science learning through our collaborative work with families, teachers, and their students.

Because this service to society is an amplification of our historic mission, it places new demands on our financial resources. We must continue our traditional role of curating our collections and fostering scholarship. At the same time we must confront a challenge today that parallels that confronted by Sargent’s associates sixty-six years ago. How can we ensure that our present commit-

The Arboretum is pleased to announce its participation in a plant-collecting expedition to Wudang Shan Mountains in Hubei Province, China, planned for Fall 1994. As a member of the North American China Plant Exploration Consortium (NACPEC), which will cooperate with the Nanjing Botanical Garden in this venture, the Arboretum will be represented by Peter Del Tredici, Assistant Director for Living Collections. Other members of the Consortium who will be participating in the trip include Longwood Gardens, Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. National Arboretum.
ment to apply our knowledge to urgent societal problems will not erode in the face of future financial pressures?

The Challenge for a New Generation

We must look once again to our friends for help. Our goal is $8,000,000, to be secured in an endowment for the service of a new relevancy in our mission. This goal matches, in today’s dollars, the aspirations of the Sargent Memorial Fund sixty-six years ago. As part of The University Campaign, it reaffirms the vision of our founders and the commitment of Harvard to it. The Arboretum Campaign calls forth the confidence and support of our friends to invest in the future of our augmented mission. At a time when our children and our world look to us for leadership, the challenge is clear and our obligation unambiguous. With this help, we shall meet this challenge again.

Adapted from the May 13 Supplement to the Harvard University Gazette.

First Impressions of the Arnold Arboretum from a Winter Transplant

Kim E. Tripp

The very first impression was of snow—deep in spots, and cold down my boots—but definitely not too deep to keep me from trampling (and sliding, slipping, and bumping) along a slick conifer path to the firs—firs with whom I had been greatly looking forward to renewing a friendship. That was on the first day, and I finally stood below one of the Abies x umbellata, whose limbs were bowed ever so slightly with that same snow. Snow that, while less than thrilling down my boots, was perfect garb for the striking dimplecone fir. Snow that seemed to somehow stay miraculously new and fresh for weeks (because, in reality, it actually did—I’m certain it snowed at least once a day during my first weeks here). Snow that, after seven years in snowless climes, was nothing less than sheer pleasure to me, even as it hung on in stubborn, dirty lumps, melting into April’s mud. The snow was an old friend made new again for me by the trees at the Arnold—a kind of arboreal renewal I keep finding around every bend in the living collections.

The Arnold Arboretum has a long history of plants and plantspeople, a history that is

Kim Tripp arrived at the Arboretum in February as a Putnam Fellow with a two-year appointment to do research, teaching, and writing focused on the Arnold’s living collections. Kim comes to us from the North Carolina State University Arboretum where she worked with Dr. J. C. Raulston as a postdoctoral research associate. She acquired her Ph.D. in Horticultural Science from North Carolina State and an M.S. in Vegetable Crops from Cornell University. She is a researcher with many skills and an impressive list of publications. At the Arnold she will be engaged in the evaluation and propagation of selected collections (including Alnus and Cephalotaxus), and in basic plant physiology research. She’s seen above with Cephalotaxus sinensis.
never far from any endeavor here. The historical legacy of over 120 years of dedicated work by many individuals naturally runs the human gamut from bungling to brilliance, but it is apparent to any newcomer that brilliance has more often than not won out. As a result, the living collections at the Arnold are one of the great gifts of that historical legacy to the world.

But the Arnold’s living collections are much more than a living legacy. As I go off in search of each day’s elusive treasure (I know that last Cephalotaxus must be down this path somewhere . . . ), I am struck by the sense of newness and ongoing evolution in these 265 rolling acres of woody plants. It is a sense that comes with the new growth on venerable Picea wilsonii, with freshly dug nursery trees stacked ready for planting, with the flats of rare young seedlings growing on in the greenhouse, with each unexpected encounter of the plant kind (Oh! Here’s Styrax obassia!), or with the late evening light glowing through the grove of American beeches. After only a few weeks of exploring the grounds, I have already found favorite plants and places but, all of my efforts to the contrary, I have only begun to scratch the surface of the mind-boggling wealth of plants here.

It is that mind-boggling wealth of plants that brings someone like myself to the Arnold. My efforts to understand the growth and “behavior” of plants in horticultural environments, especially as relates to their roots, has often left me scratching my head over the unexpected differences between very closely related plants grown in the same environment. The environments we create for landscape plants generally bear little relationship to the environments in which those plants originally evolved and, therefore, can be far more stressful because of those disparities. Simple differences, like a plant’s genetic disposition to invest more growth in roots than shoot, can allow it to thrive in environments fatal to other plants. The living collections of the Arnold offer an unparalleled opportunity to explore such differences in growth across an astounding breadth of plants, both between and within botanical families and genera, from an impressive range of native environments. I will be exploring such differences in growth in search of patterns that relate to their performance in different environments. By increasing our understanding of how woody plants survive and prosper in managed environments, we improve our chances of carrying a strong diversity of trees into the increasingly stressful and urbanized environs of the future.

I have been delighted to discover that the chance to work here offers me excellent access not only to the living collections themselves, but also to the experienced and insightful staff of the living collections—a unique opportunity that has already led to rewarding exchanges of ideas and information. In addition, the libraries are a world-class resource, where one can easily and happily lose entire days without realizing they have gone by and where I have found time to begin research for some of my writing projects.

But my first impressions of the Arnold Arboretum invariably come back to the plants, the trees, the thousands of wonderful woodies spread across Olmsted’s lovely landscape through which one can wander again and again, from winter through fall, and continue to learn for a lifetime. Old giants and young saplings, fond familiares and exciting unknowns, native groves and exotic specimens, are all growing together to continually re-create this arboretum. This is a place of great complexity, a place of rich tradition and significant history, of modern challenge and new opportunity, of disciplined research and pure silvan magic—an unforgettable place I am coming to know as the Arnold.

Spring Planting

Peter Del Tredici

Julie Coop and Susan Kelley.

After the unforgettable winter of 1993–94, the staff and grounds crew of the Arnold Arboretum were particularly anxious to start the year’s spring planting. As of this writing, seventy-five new trees have been planted on the grounds with an equal number yet to go in. We are most excited about the dozen new birches that have been set out, especially in view of the tremendous losses we have experienced in that genus over the last two years (seventy-plus trees removed). In terms of impact on the collections, devastation of the birches by the bronze birch borer
has been equal to or greater than that of the elms by Dutch elm disease. We wish the new birches a long and fruitful life.

Other notable additions to the collections are a small group of tupelos (*Nyssa sylvatica*) along the southern edge of Dawson Pond, including a rare specimen of *Nyssa sylvatica* ‘Pendula’. We’ve also planted two new hardy pecans (*Carya illinoensis*) as companions to our one lone specimen. Come around in ten or fifteen years, and we’ll have our own sweet pecans to brag about.

John Olmsted and John DelRosso pruning a honey locust on Peters Hill.

Jim Nickerson with the debris from the clean-up of the Lilac Collection.

Steve Spongberg, Peter DelTredici, and a newly planted *Aesculus x carnea* ‘Briotii’.

From left in front: John Olmsted, Jim Papagiris, Mark Walkama, Julie Coop, Joan Mullins; in the rear, John DelRosso, Karl Holmes, Pat Willoughby, Bruce Munch, Dennis Harris, Luis Colon, Bob Famiglietti (standing), and Don Garrick. Kenny Clarke, Jim Nickerson, and Maurice Sheehan are missing from the picture.
During the summer, the Arnold Arboretum Education Department offers garden visits and tours, short courses in horticulture, and talks on many aspects of gardening. A selection of summer courses is shown here. For a complete catalogue of programs and events at the Arboretum, please call (617) 524-1718, ext. 162. Please note that fees shown in boldface are for members of the Arboretum. For information about becoming a member, please call (617) 524-1718, ext. 165.

**HOR 330 Perennial Combinations for Summer**  
*Elise Laurenzz, Garden Designer*

Learn how to combine perennials for complementary texture and color whether you garden in full sun or partial shade. Participants will see how to combine native plants with exotics, select plants for foliage as well as flowers, and choose plants appropriate for a variety of sites. Cultural practices and design techniques for low maintenance will be discussed.  
**Fee:** $16.00, $19.00  
**Monday, June 20/ 10:00–noon (Case Estates)**

**WAL 133 Private Gardens by the Sea**  
*Katherine Alexander Field, Landscape Architect*

Newport, Rhode Island, has a long and romantic garden history. The former estate gardens, with their staffs of gardeners, are largely a thing of the past, but the Newport tradition of gracious gardening remains. Smaller gardens flourish now in the benign Newport climate. In a full day of garden visits, we will be escorted by Newport-area landscape architect Kate Field, who will show us lovely private gardens, and discuss the gardening traditions of Newport, past and present.  

The gardens will be near the peak of bloom for roses as well as the classic palette of perennials. On one of our stops we will enjoy a picnic among the flowers, overlooking the sea. A special day for garden lovers.  
**Fee:** $110.00, $125.00. Fee includes transportation and lunch.  
**Friday, June 24/ 8:00 am–6:00 pm. Bus departs from the Arnold Arboretum Main Gates.**

**Rosa rugosa ‘Salt Spray’**

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**HOR 110 Fundamentals of Gardening**  
*Laura Eisener, Landscape Designer*

Whether you are a novice starting your first garden or an old hand looking for a firmer foundation, this practical course will satisfy your quest for basic gardening information. In the four sessions you will learn a variety of the basic principles essential to good gardening.  

This course will cover basic techniques of gardening, including: site analysis and soil preparation, irrigation, drainage, watering, plant selection, and horticultural requirements of plants.  

There will be some hands-on work at the site, in addition to lectures and demonstrations.  
**Fee:** $85.00, $100.00  
**4 Thursdays, July 7, 14, 21, 28/ 9:00–11:30 am (Case Estates)**

**WAL 110 The Blue Hills — An Author’s Perspective**  
*Thomas Palmer, Naturalist and Author of Landscape with Reptile: Rattlesnakes in an Urban World*

**Question:** What do rattlesnakes have in common with the Blue Hills?  
**Answer:** Both have been the objects of years of fascinated study by author Tom Palmer.
Explore the Blue Hills with this author and naturalist who has spent uncountable hours exploring the Hills in search of *Crotalus horridus*, the timber rattlesnake. Palmer will lead a walk up his favorite peak and share his knowledge of the region’s history, ecology, geology, and folklore and perhaps introduce some of its inhabitants. (Rattlesnake sightings, however, are not likely.)

The Blue Hills is a low range of hills just south of Boston. Participants should be prepared for a rigorous walk covering one to two miles of rugged terrain. Bring a snack and a beverage. Participants may also wish to bring a picnic supper to enjoy after the hike. Meet at Houghton’s Pond in Milton. Directions will be sent with registration confirmation.

Fee: $12.00, $15.00

**Sunday, July 10/ 3:00–6:30 pm (TBA)**

**HOR 134  Summer Flowering Shrubs**  
*Paul Martin Brown, Naturalist and Horticulturist*

The long hot, humid days of midsummer bring a wide variety of both color and texture to the shrub border. Many genera offer unusual species that deserve consideration in the design of the summer garden. This class will focus on the culture and habitat requirements of a range of mid- and late-summer flowering shrubs, including *Aesculus*, dwarf buckeye; *Vitex*, chaste-tree; *Buddleia*, butterfly bush; *Genista*, dyer’s greenweed; *Clethra*, summer-sweet; *Clerodendrum*, glorybower; *Calluna*, heather; and many others. This is an outdoor walking course held rain or shine.

Fee: $21.00, $25.00

**Friday, July 29/ 9:30–noon (Dana Greenhouses)**

**HOR 136 Ornamental Grasses**  
*Darrell R. Probst, Horticultural Consultant and Landscape Designer*

In the diverse world of ornamental grasses exist plants suitable for gardens of every size and for sunny, shady, wet, and dry locations. Some grasses are so large and dramatic that they can be used as shrubs or specimen plantings; others are miniatures, at home in the small-scale landscape. Their colors form a rainbow of greens, pinks, creams, blues, golds, and whites. This introduction to decorative grasses will focus on the culture, management, and design potential of these versatile perennials. Saturday’s field trip will be to the Quansett Nurseries in Westport, MA.

Fee: $48.00, $55.00

**Thursday, August 18/ 6:30–8:30 pm (CE) and 1 field trip, Saturday, August 20/ 11:30 am–3:30 pm (TBA)**