A Wetland Restoration

Robert E. Cook, Director

The spring of 1996 will mark another milestone in the evolution of the landscape of the Arnold Arboretum. A 24-acre parcel of land known as the Stony Brook Marsh will be formally added to the grounds and incorporated into the park system of the City of Boston. It has been a century and a year since such an action was last taken. In 1895 the Peters Hill tract was placed under the original 1882 agreement whereby the Arboretum land was given to the City for parks and leased back to Harvard University as a center for the scientific study of trees.

The Stony Brook Marsh is a low-lying area of wetland vegetation marking the merger of Bussey Brook into Stony Brook. It separates the south flanks of Hemlock Hill and Bussey Hill from the Forest Hills subway station and rail tracks leading to Dedham. Originally part of the Bussey Institution of Harvard University—one of the first agricultural colleges in the country—the land has been abused and has fallen into decay over the past half-century. It became a dumping ground for refuse, and its higher ridges were invaded by a heavy growth of weedy shrubs and trees.

A decade ago, local friends of the Arboretum formed the Arboretum Park Conservancy and took on the goal of incorporating this urban wild into the lease agreement with the City as part of the Boston park system. After years of political and legal maneuvering, they have succeeded in reaching a mutually beneficial arrangement between the City and the Arboretum.

In taking responsibility for the management of the Stony Brook Marsh, the Arboretum will commit itself to restoring the habitat to a more natural wetland condition. It will become an immensely valuable part of our educational efforts—for casual visitors and adults, but especially for our children’s educational program with local schools. In this special sense, it will be symbolic of the vision that led Charles Sprague Sargent and the City fathers to form the original partnership for the people of Boston over a century ago.

Native People, Native Trees

As part of a new Arboretum field study, Boston-area children will soon explore the meadows and conifers of Bussey Brook valley to discover how Native Americans derived vital sustenance from the northern forest. The program, “Native People, Native Trees,” began in 1994 when Arboretum field study coordinator Annette Huddle set out to create field activities for grades three through five that would encourage children’s interest in both trees and Native American culture.

Developed in collaboration with local schoolteachers, the program shares much of what we know about the relationships that once existed between Native Americans and the land known today as the Arnold Arboretum. Thanks to a field reconnaissance survey conducted by Boston city archaeologist Steve Pendery, we know that Native American occu-
pation of a site near the Arboretum’s Bussey Brook began nearly 8,000 years ago and continued sporadically up until the time of European colonization. “Native People, Native Trees” revisits this era and enables children to consider the challenges faced by the Arboretum’s earliest inhabitants through a search for white cedar, white birch, and other species that were critical to human comfort and survival.

With pilot testing of the program now complete, we look forward to introducing the study to schools later this year. We thank the Massachusetts Cultural Council for their support of the project.

New Staff

Carol Mita has joined the Botany Libraries staff as Serials Manager. She is responsible for all incoming serials, bindery operations, and the serials exchange program. Carol has held other serials and cataloging positions in the Memorial Library and the Middleton Health Sciences Library of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She received the B.A. in zoology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and is currently enrolled in the M.S.L.I.S. program at the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

Elizabeth Kolster joined the Arboretum in December as an information systems project manager working with the biodiversity conservation project in Southeast Asia. Liz will be developing a national biodiversity database system for the Government of Indonesia, and she brings extensive experience with computers to the project. She has worked as director of information systems at Boston University and for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. She is particularly interested in geographical information systems that combine map-based information with data on critical natural resources, such as the biodiversity of developing countries in tropical Asia. Liz is also an avid sailor.

Error Noted: In last issue’s “Cork Tree’s Last Hurrah Provides a Science Lesson on Leverage,” the Resistance Force should have read as 7,763 pounds (or 3.9 tons).
1996 American Landscape Lecture Series

This winter marks the fourth year of collaboration among the Arnold Arboretum, Olmsted National Historic Site, the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and a number of other sponsors to present a lecture series exploring our changing relationship with the American landscape. This year’s series, Memory in Place, examines landscapes, museums, and literature that seek to commemorate and encourage reflection about the places, figures, and events of our collective past. The Arboretum extends its thanks to the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities for its special support of the series.

All lectures are free and begin at 6:30 pm in the Piper Auditorium of the Harvard Graduate School of Design at 48 Quincy Street, Cambridge. For information, call the National Park Service at 617/566-1689 x 220.

Thursday, February 22
The Power of Place. Urban Landscapes as Public History
Dolores Hayden, Professor of Architecture, Urbanism, and American Studies, Yale University

Wednesday, March 6
Preserving Memory: The Making of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Edward T. Lenzenthal, Professor of Religion and American Culture, University of Wisconsin

Thursday, March 14
The Invention of Place: Environmental Perceptions in American Literature
Lawrence Buell, Professor of English, Harvard University

Tuesday, April 2
The Garden as Narrative: Lawrence Halprin’s Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
Reuben M. Razney, Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Virginia

Monday, April 8
Memory Gardens: The Poetry and Gardens of Ian Hamilton Finlay
Alec Finlay, Poet, Edinburgh, Scotland

Free Tours at the Arnold Arboretum
Willows, cherries, magnolias, dogwoods, crabapples, lilacs, roses, mock oranges, hydrangeas, and many, many more plants will be highlighted on free monthly walking tours at the Arnold Arboretum. These tours will be offered March through September, on the fourth Saturday of each month, beginning at 10:30 am on the front steps of the Hunnewell Building and lasting approximately an hour. For further information, or to find out if a tour has been canceled due to weather, call our general information message at 617/524-1718 x 773.

date    highlight
March 23  witch hazels and willows
April 27  Arbor Day: great trees of the Arnold Arboretum
May 25   dogwoods and lilacs
June 22  roses and mock oranges
July 27  bottlebrush buckeye
August 24  oakleaf hydrangea and scholar trees
September 28  franklinia and witch hazels
1995–1996 Annual Appeal
Lisa Hastings, Senior Development Officer

Arnold Arboretum members and friends are responding generously to the 1995–1996 Annual Appeal, with a total of $54,159.91 in gifts received to date.

In his letter seeking annual support, Director Bob Cook reflected on the recent passing of the 125-year-old Amur cork tree. The tree died when a group of local schoolchildren climbed onto a low-lying limb for a photograph. Over time, the cork tree had come to symbolize in a unique way the many facets of the Arnold Arboretum—as scientific institution, public park, and historic landscape. As one of the Arboretum’s oldest trees, its accession number was recorded by Charles Sprague Sargent in 1874 when it arrived in the form of dry seed from the Ruusan Imperial Garden of St. Petersburg. During its long life, the tree came to be loved by children of all ages.

“The generous support received from our members is most appreciated,” says Bob Cook. “The Arboretum has always meant different things to different people. Gifts to the annual appeal represent a strong vote of confidence in our commitment to grow and curate an exceptional collection of trees.”

**PROGRAMS & EVENTS**

The Arboretum’s Education Department offers a wide variety of courses, programs, and lectures in horticulture, botany, and landscape design. A selection of spring and summer courses is shown here. For a complete catalog of programs and events at the Arboretum, please call 617/524-1718 x 162. Note that fees shown in **boldface** are for members of the Arboretum. For information about becoming a member, call 617/524-1718 x 165.

**HOR 498 The Collector’s Garden:**
*Designing with Extraordinary Plants*
*Ken Druse, Author and Photographer*

In this slide-illustrated lecture, Ken Druse will take us on a journey to memorable gardens and introduce some of the people and plants that will be shaping the direction of gardening in the 21st century.

Fee: $15, $18
Friday, April 12/ 7:30–8:30 pm
(State Laboratories)

**WAL 168 Private Gardens of England and Wales**
*Daphne Foulsham, Chair, National Gardens Scheme*

Sit back and enjoy an armchair tour of rarely seen private gardens in England and Wales. Mrs. Foulsham’s slides capture a diversity of gardens, ranging from cottage and country gardens to historical landscapes and sophisticated town gardens.

Fee: $12, $15
Tuesday, April 23/ 7:00–8:00 pm (HB)

**Lilac Sunday, May 19, 1996**

There are thousands of flowering plants to admire in the Arboretum, but only one, the lilac, is singled out each year for a daylong celebration. On Lilac Sunday garden enthusiasts from all over New England gather at the Arboretum to enjoy picnicking, watch Morris dancing (English folk dancing), take tours, and purchase lilacs. On the day of the event the Arboretum will be open from dawn to dusk with lilac plants and refreshments available for purchase from 10 am to 4 pm. For information, call the Arnold Arboretum at 617/524-1718 x 100.