Stephen A. Spongberg, Arboretum horticultural taxonomist, recently traveled to London to receive the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal, one of the foremost honors of the horticultural world. Recipients of the medal are selected by England’s Royal Horticultural Society for their outstanding contributions to the field and are deemed “persons who have helped the advancement of the science and practice of horticulture.” Presented annually since 1873, the medal commemorates James Veitch (1792–1869) of the famous and influential family of British nurserymen.

By all accounts, the man who inspired the award was not only a skilled plantsman and accomplished cultivator but a generous supporter of horticultural charities. In fact, a medal was selected

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as a suitable memorial to Veitch only after the Society's subscribers had considered—and subsequently rejected—the establishment of a club, an almshouse, and pensions for either disabled plant collectors or for aged gardeners. However, James Veitch was also an astute and venturesome businessman. Fiercely competitive in the arena of plant introduction, under his aegis the nursery of Messrs. James Veitch & Sons rose to prominence by being one of the first commercial enterprises to compete with royalty and learned societies in the sponsorship of far-off plant-hunting expeditions.

While the Veitch medal is the highest accolade that the Royal Horticultural Society bestows on a foreign national, half a century would elapse after its inception before the medal would first cross the Atlantic. With Steve's recent honor he has joined a very exclusive group—to date only fifteen medals have gone to North Americans with Steve being the fourth member of the Arboretum staff to be so honored.

In 1926, the Arboretum's famous plant explorer Ernest Henry "Chinese" Wilson, then a British subject, received the Veitch medal inscribed for "his introductions to gardens and his books." On that occasion, newspaper accounts exclaimed, "British Award Won by Boston Horticulturist . . . This medal has never before been given to any person in America!" Almost twenty years later, when the second Arboretum recipient William H. Judd, born in England but a naturalized American citizen, received the medal for "exceptional work in propagation," he wrote in his journal, "I believe that this is the first time by any man other than English to receive it." Donald Wyman, horticulturist extraordinaire, but with no obvious British ties, accepted the coveted award "for his contribution to the science, to the practice, and to the literature of horticulture" upon his retirement from the Arboretum in 1969.

While Steve has won the medal for his "major contribution to horticultural taxonomy at an international level," he could have easily been recognized, like Wilson, for his plant exploration in China. Steve has participated in several plant-collecting expeditions to eastern Asia and was a member of the U.S. team of botanists who took part in the 1980 Sino-American Botanical Expedition to western Hubei Province in the People's Republic of China, the first cooperative venture between Chinese and American scientists after China opened its doors to the West in the late 1970s. The Arboretum's collections and American gardens have been made richer through the introduction of Magnolia xeni, Heptacodium miconoide, and Sorbus yuiana, among other new plants collected during the 1980 expedition. Or like Wilson and Wyman, Steve might have been recognized for his contributions to the field of horticultural and botanical literature. He has written many articles both popular and scientific on north temperate woody plants, and his acclaimed book on the introduction of ornamental plants into North American and European landscapes, _A Reunion of Trees_, has become the standard on the history of plant exploration. On a more personal level, Steve is valued by his colleagues here at the Arboretum for the scholarship, dedication, and love he brings to the herbarium, library, and living collections. We join in congratulations with Roy Lancaster who has written to Steve, "Welcome to the club, one of the horticultural world's most exclusive. I'm sure E. H. Wilson and all those other luminaries will be smiling up there."

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**Living Collections Apprentice Arrives**

Alistair Yeomans has joined the staff as Arboretum apprentice. A native of western Scotland with a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Strathclyde University, Alistair specializes in pathology. In research on Botrytis cinerea, a common mold that is destructive to plants, he tested the effectiveness of Dichlofluanid, an ingredient in various commercial treatments for the disease.

Alistair will be working with all the units of the living collections department for a well-rounded view of the maintenance of a scientific collection of woody plants. During his year here he'll study the broad range of host-pathogen interactions that a collection like the Arboretum's can provide.
IMLS Conservation Grant for Shrub and Vine Review

With the recent award of an Institute of Museum and Library Services conservation grant, the Arboretum began the first step in a long-range plan to develop a special, synoptic shrub and vine collection to be located near the Dana Greenhouses. The IMLS, a federal agency that strengthens museums to benefit the public, has provided funding for a complete curatorial review of the Arboretum’s shrub and woody vine collections over the course of calendar year 1997. Under the supervision of horticultural taxonomist Stephen Spongberg, each shrub and woody vine accession in the Arboretum’s living collections will be individually inspected and evaluated, and observations will be recorded in the Arboretum’s living collections database (BG-BASE).

For verification of each accession’s identity, existing voucher specimens will be located in the herbarium and, if necessary, added to the curatorial database; missing herbarium specimens will be made as required. Lists of species needed for the collections will also be developed, map locations verified for accuracy, and candidates for repropagation identified. In the long term, the results of this survey will ensure that the Arboretum’s collections of shrubs and woody climbers will both be accurately identified and comprehensive and that attention will be given to the cultural requirements of these accessions.

Joining Steve Spongberg in this team effort are Andrew C. Bell, curatorial associate; Susan Kelley, curatorial associate for mapping and labeling; Kyle Port, curatorial assistant for plant records; and Patrick Willoughby, grounds superintendent. Additional support will be provided by volunteers Sheila Magulhon and Robert Reynolds and this summer’s horticultural interns.

Curatorial Associate Rejoins Staff

Andrew C. Bell has returned to the Arnold Arboretum for a third time to join the curatorial staff in its IMLS-supported survey of the shrub and vine collections. Andy served his first stint as a horticultural intern in 1994, helping with mapping and labeling in the curatorial office. Following graduation with a bachelor’s degree in ornamental horticulture and botany from the University of Tennessee in 1995, he returned for another summer, as a Putnam Fellow assisting Stephen Spongberg in his taxonomic research.

This time Andy returns after having completed a one-year program for the master’s degree in science at the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. While his plans for the future after this year at the Arboretum are yet to be finalized, they do focus on plants (particularly woody plants) and either further graduate study or work at a botanical institution.

Arboretum Collaborations

Peter Del Tredici, director of the living collections, recently presented a program at the Boston Museum of Science on Leonardo Da Vinci’s contributions to botany. His lecture was part of a series presented to the docents who will be interpreting the museum’s new exhibit on Leonardo Da Vinci to visitors. Peter pointed out that Leonardo was interested in more than just the accurate depiction of nature—he was concerned with how structure and function were interrelated, and he was a master of deducing function from careful observation of structure.

The Arboretum was a co-sponsor of this year’s New England Grows, the Northeast’s largest green industry trade show, which brings together thousands of participants from the nursery, landscape, and garden design professions. Staff members Peter Del Tredici and Tom Ward, greenhouse manager, presented programs on plant collecting in China and viburnums, respectively. During the course of the event...
show the Arboretum distributed more than 1,000 complimentary back issues of *Arnoldia* and answered numerous questions about Arboretum projects and programs.

Stephen Spongberg, Arboretum horticultural taxonomist, hosted a mini-symposium on taxonomic problems in the Maloideae, a subfamily of the Rosaceae. It was held at the Harvard University Herbaria in conjunction with the *Flora of China* translation project, which operates out of the Missouri Botanical Garden. HUH houses one of the *Flora's* editorial centers, which is coordinated by David E. Boufford, assistant director for herbaria collections. The project will publish the first modern English-language account of the vascular plants of China, based on the Chinese language *Flora Republicae Popularis Sinicae*.

For a more complete account, visit HUH’s *Flora of China* web site (http://flora.harvard.edu/china/).

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### 1997 American Landscape Lecture Series

**READING THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE**

*Lectures in memory of John Brinckerhoff Jackson*

This fifth year of the American Landscape Lecture Series is dedicated to the memory of the late John Brinckerhoff Jackson, pioneer in the cultural interpretation of landscapes. Each speaker will offer a unique reading of the American landscape. The series is a collaboration among the Arnold Arboretum, Olmsted National Historic Site, the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and other landscape-oriented sponsors. We thank the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities for its support.

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

**Thursday, February 13:** Social Connections as Clues to Cultural Landscape Health  
Paul Groth, Associate Professor of Architecture and Geography, University of California, Berkeley

**Thursday, February 27:** Prospects Aplenty: Scale, Identity, and Change in Regional Landscapes of America  
Michael P. Conzen, Professor of Geography, University of Chicago

**Thursday, March 13:** The Midwest: America's Homegrown Utopia  
Pearce Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Geography, Pennsylvania State University

**Thursday, April 3:** Reinventing Eden: Landscape as Narrative  
Carolyn Merchant, Professor of Environmental History, Philosophy and Ethics, University of California, Berkeley

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### 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 courses is shown here. For a complete catalogue of programs and events at the Arboretum, please call 617/524-1718 x 162. Note that fees shown in boldface are for Arboretum members. For information about becoming a member, call 617/524-1718 x 165.

**ART 120 Botanical Perceptions: Drawing from Plants**  
Jan Arabas, Artist and Art Instructor

What do the artists Leonardo DaVinci, Claude Monet, and Georgia O’Keeffe have in common? They all turned to the botanical realm for instruction and inspiration. In this course we will emulate these artists and observe plants carefully, working toward good technical skills in a variety of art media, aiming to draw clearly what we see, and to learn about plant structure in so doing.

Fee: $93, $112  
6 Mondays, April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12/ 10:00–noon (DG)

**BOT 343 Reading the Forested Landscape: Making Sense of Place**  
Tom Wessels, Director, Environmental Biology Program, Antioch New England Graduate School

You may know how to identify your neighborhood trees but not know why pines are dominant in one place and maples in another. You may notice fungus growing on a beech trunk but not know the devastating impact of the blights on our forests over the centuries. Unlock the mysteries of the forest in this slide-illustrated lecture by the author of *Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England*.  

Fee: $12, $15  
Tuesday, April 29/ 7:00–8:30 pm (WCC)