Preservation in a Dynamic Landscape

Robert E. Cook, Director

The Arnold Arboretum was the first part of Boston’s Emerald Necklace, the system of parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, father of American landscape architecture. It is, therefore, a landscape of considerable historical importance. Together with his student Charles Eliot, Olmsted worked with Charles Sprague Sargent, the first director, to develop a precise planting scheme that served the educational purpose of instructing visitors about the evolutionary history of woody plants.

Today, through our commitment to preserve Olmsted’s legacy, there is a temptation to adhere strictly to the final planting design created in his office. Yet I believe that Olmsted would have found this foolish, given the scientific mission of the Arboretum. A scientifically useful collection, especially one growing outdoors in the climate of Boston, must be dynamic and continually changing with the death of old or sick trees and the planting of new ones.

The dynamic nature of the collection has never been more evident than in the past year. Twenty-five inches of wet snow in April damaged more than a thousand trees; hundreds will have to be removed. The past summer was one of the driest on record, and we will lose many specimens over the next several years due to this drought.

At the same time, two separate expeditions to China this summer secured large collections of living plant cuttings and seeds, many new to the Arboretum and to this country. Stephen Spongberg traveled to the higher elevations of western Sichuan while Peter Del Tredici collected plants in Jilin Province, along the border with Korea in northwestern China. They returned with many rare and interesting species such as Chosenia arbutifolia, Acer pseudosteboldianum (the Korean maple), Thuja koraisensis (the Korean arborvitae), Carpinus fangir, and Pterostyrax pisophylla. Over the next decade, these collections will be integrated into the landscape of the Arboretum in ways consistent with our original mission to grow all the plants hardy in the Boston area.

I believe that the dynamic process of collections management—the acquiring of documented material, its propagation and establishment, its care for a century or more if necessary, and its removal after death—this process should be the true object of our preservation efforts, not the precise design Olmsted created to guide the process. In this way, we acknowledge that the Arboretum is a working landscape designed to serve both a research and an educational mission. Olmsted would surely have understood the need for this dynamic management. In adhering to this process for over a century, we fully honor and preserve the legacy of his accomplishment at the Arboretum.
Arboretum Council

This fall, the Arnold Arboretum initiated a new volunteer organization known as the Arboretum Council. Conceived by the Director’s Advisory Board, this group is intended to create a closer link between the Arboretum and its most dedicated supporters. It reflects the desire to benefit from the involvement and expertise of individuals who believe in the Arboretum’s work and who are willing to promote the programs and initiatives of the institution among a broader constituency than we now reach.

Semi-annual gatherings of the Council will give participants the opportunity to hear, first hand, the plans, achievements, and challenges of the Arboretum, to advise the director in specialized areas of expertise, and most of all, to serve as advocates for the Arboretum within the various communities we serve. As the organization develops, the Board anticipates the beginning of a lively dialogue among a group of friends who share a special interest in the programs, research, and mission of the Arboretum. Peg Hedstrom will be the staff member coordinating the events and ongoing activities of the Council.

A Brisk and Sunny Plant Sale

On Sunday, September 21, more than a thousand Arboretum members and friends gathered at the Case Estates in Weston for a full morning of activities at the 17th Annual Fall Plant Sale. Drawn by sunny, early autumn weather and an exceptional array of plants for sale, crowds began gathering at the barn before 8:00 am for the Preview, open only to members at the Sustaining Level and above. According to greenhouse manager and propagator Tom Ward, seven thousand plants were sold in the barn alone.

In the display gardens, Richard Stomberg, Arboretum member and glasshouse manager at Harvard’s Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, taught two well-attended education sessions on dividing perennials and planting new plants. As in years past, more than a dozen plant societies and horticultural organizations participated in Society Row. Up on the hill, a wide selection of donated plants was available for sale in the live and silent auctions and the straight sales area, with all proceeds supporting the living collections at the Arboretum.

If you are interested in volunteering for next year’s plant sale, call Kara Stepanian at 617/524-1718 x 129.
On the Grounds

Julie Coop has been promoted to Superintendent of Grounds. She has been with the Arboretum since 1988, initially in charge of maintenance at the Case Estates, and for the past six years as Assistant Superintendent in Jamaica Plain.

Todd Burns has joined the grounds staff as arborist. A 1991 horticultural trainee at the Case Estates and a 1992 arborist intern in Jamaica Plain, Todd attended the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, University of Massachusetts, and has worked for commercial tree companies.

This Business Called Landscape

A Symposium Co-Sponsored by Radcliffe Seminars and the Arnold Arboretum

The expertise of designers, contractors, arborists, and horticulturists lies in their landscape work and not necessarily in business. However, success is measured not only by the service provided but also by how it is administered. In panel discussions and workshops, this symposium will bring together business and landscape professionals to discuss project management, decision-making, service coordination, and information technology—all areas that can make the difference between loss and profit, keep you on top of your business, and allow you to better serve your clients.

Topics for morning panel discussions
- Decision-making to save your sanity
- Locating your practice in the market spectrum
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

Afternoon workshops
- Accounting for your design: Running projects for profitability
- Computers in the office: Controlling work flow
- Insurance, taxes, certification, and the law: Know your options

Date: Friday, January 9, 1998. 8:30 am–3:30 pm
Fee: $80 (includes lunch)
Location: Cronkhite Graduate Center, Radcliffe College, 6 Ash Street, Cambridge

Advance registration required; deadline is January 2. Fee nonrefundable after the deadline; $10 cancellation fee prior to deadline. Register through the Arnold Arboretum at 617/524-1718 x 162.

Seldom Seen Treasures

During the Open House held on October 17 in celebration of the Arboretum’s 125th anniversary, Charles Sprague Sargent’s Civil War uniform stood front and center at the entrance to the reading room while staff and visitors examined a selection of other treasures from the Arboretum’s archives.
New Staff

Alice Ingerson has joined the Arboretum staff as Associate Director of the newly formed Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies. Alice comes to the Arboretum from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, where she led the publications staff in creating a distinctive series of reports, written by professional journalists but representing the views of both scholars and practitioners on current land use issues. From 1984 to 1991 Alice edited *Forest and Conservation History*, the quarterly journal of the Forest History Society (since merged into a new journal, *Environmental History*). Alice has a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from Johns Hopkins University. She will be working with Institute Director Phyllis Andersen to gather and distribute information about managing and interpreting cultural landscapes, using the Internet as well as traditional conferences and publications.

Peg Hedstrom brings over ten years of development experience to her new position as Membership Director and Development Officer. She served as Director of the Annual Fund at Bentley College, Associate Director of Annual Funds at Boston University, and Director of Reunion Giving, also at Boston University. Peg’s responsibilities include managing the membership program and the annual appeal, launching the new Arboretum Council (see related story), and working to increase support for the Campaign for the Arnold Arboretum.

Letters of Participation

The Arboretum began offering Letters of Participation in Temperate Woody Plant Materials and in Woody Plant Propagation in September 1993. This fall the Arboretum added a Letter of Participation in Historic Landscape Preservation. For more details, contact the Adult Education Department at 617/524-1718 x 162 or consult the current catalogue of adult education programs.

Since 1993, Letters of Participation have gone to:

**Temperate Woody Plant Materials**
Margaret Amdur,
Maureen Doherty

**Woody Plant Propagation**
Pat Beirne, David Brockway,
Liz Brown, Maureen Doherty,
George Hibben, Faye Lieb,
Anne Senning

Consider a Gift of Appreciated Securities

When you give appreciated securities to the Arboretum, you receive a double tax benefit: avoidance of all capital gains taxes and a charitable deduction for the full fair-market value of the stock given.

Alternatively, with a gift of appreciated securities to a life income plan, you can:

- Invest in the growth and future of the Arboretum
- Receive an income stream for life
- Realize an immediate federal income tax deduction
- Avoid capital gains tax
- Save on gift or estate taxes
- Provide income to a family member or friend
- Benefit from Harvard’s professional investment management at no cost to you

We are happy to help you explore the many mutually beneficial ways to make a meaningful gift to the Arnold Arboretum. To learn more about these creative opportunities, please contact:

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