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Arboretum Embarks on Strategic Planning Process

Robert E. Cook, Director

At the millenium, the Arnold Arboretum finds itself at an unusual place in its history. Over the past decade, great improvements have been made in the curation of the living collections and the care of the grounds. The Hunnewell Visitor Center, our main administrative building, has been fully renovated and our other facilities and equipment have been brought to a high state of maintenance. Our staff has grown in size with new programs in education and cultural landscapes, and we continue to mount international expeditions for botanical exploration and collecting. We are about to begin construction on three major landscape projects, the largest of which will create a new collection of sun-loving shrubs and vines in a four-acre garden. Finally, we have successfully completed a fundraising campaign that garnered nearly ten million dollars. This, combined with the remarkable performance of the Harvard Management Company over the past several years, has more than doubled the value of our endowment.

It is, therefore, an ideal time to stop, take a breath, and decide where we would like to go in the next two decades. Several years ago our staff assessed our programs as part of a long-range planning effort. Many of the ideas that surfaced during this process have taken programmatic form. Some have been more successful than others, and many have broadened the activities of the Arboretum staff beyond a narrow focus on woody plant research and education.

Because of our strong financial and administrative position, it is appropriate that a strategic planning process examine a wide range of options while bringing a critical perspective to the assumptions and constraints that have traditionally governed the operations of the Arboretum. We should determine what our core values are and how these might fuel a set of ambitious goals for the coming quarter century.

We have concluded that this will require external assistance, and we have identified a consultant, the Technical Development Corporation of Boston, with excellent experience in facilitating critical self-examination and providing guidance on developing long-range plans for nonprofit organizations. We anticipate a process that will begin this fall and yield a final document by May of 2001.

I thank all the friends of the Arboretum whose loyal support and generous contributions have given us this wonderful opportunity.

A Visit to Cuba’s Cienfuegos Botanical Garden

Peter Del Tredici, Director of Living Collections

It was my unbelievably good fortune to spend eight days this August at the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden in Cuba. My trip was sponsored by Harvard University’s David Rockefeller Center of Latin American Studies, which asked me to evaluate the current condition of the garden and to provide the staff with technical assistance in garden maintenance and plant propagation.

The garden, which in Harvard circles is known as the Atkins Garden, was founded in 1899 as a partnership between a Boston-based sugarmill owner, Edwin F. Atkins, and Harvard University, in particular, professors George L. Goodale and Oakes Ames. In its early days, the garden was chiefly devoted to studying plants of economic importance (especially sugar cane) and was funded entirely by Atkins. In 1920, he arranged for a long-term lease of the garden to Harvard and established an endowment to fund research in tropical economic botany by Harvard professors and students. As well as being inter-
ested in economic plants, Atkins was deeply interested in trees and personally supported the development of an arboretum by sending many trees to the garden from nurseries in Florida. At the time of his death in 1926, the arboretum was a well-established part of the garden.

When the garden was founded, it was only eleven acres in size. It grew steadily in size in direct proportion to the Atkins family interest in the project, eventually reaching a maximum of 221 acres in 1938. A small laboratory facility was built in 1924 (which also housed the library) to facilitate the research use of the collections. Harvard continued to operate the garden until 1961, when the Cuban government nationalized the Atkins sugar plantation and mill and took control of the garden. They renamed it the "Cienfuegos Botanical Garden" and placed it under the administration of the Cuban Academy of Sciences.

The first official post-1961 contact between the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden and Harvard University occurred in November of last year, thanks to the concerted efforts of the David Rockefeller Center and members of the Atkins family. Around the time of my visit this past summer, a strong e-mail communication channel made preparations for the trip relatively easy. The current director, Dr Lazaro Ojeda, was extremely helpful, and the lateness of the hour notwithstanding, was at the garden to greet my wife Susan (who acted as my translator) and me. We lodged in the immaculately maintained "Casa Catalina," a dormitory built in 1938 to house visiting scholars. Planting season was in full swing while we were there, so we got to see the garden in all-out operation, including nursery, curatorial, and maintenance functions. Despite a scarcity of resources (especially gasoline), the garden is maintained to a high level, and new plants are being added continuously. The palm collection is particularly impressive with about 267 species in 66 genera growing on the grounds. Also noteworthy are the collections of bamboo, figs, and legumes.

Just as interesting as the collections was our dialogue with the staff on a wide variety of issues that affect botanical gardens—conservation and education as well as the more traditional topics of maintenance and propagation. My wife and I came away with deep respect for the staff's dedication to their work and with the knowledge that the garden's future will be bright. Indeed, this coming November (perhaps as you are reading this article) the Cienfuegos Garden, in honor of its hundredth anniversary, will be hosting a special international symposium on "Challenges Facing Botanical Gardens in the Twenty-First Century."
Arboretum Holds Oldest Franklinias

Pamela Thompson, Adult Education Coordinator

A survey conducted by Historic Bartram’s Garden and the John Bartram Association reveals that the two oldest documented franklinia trees in the world, dating from 1905, are growing at the Arnold Arboretum. These trees, known botanically as *Franklinia alatamaha*, are descendants of a tree of Bartram’s original collection at Historic Bartram’s Garden in Philadelphia, which was given to the Arboretum in 1884 by Philadelphia city councilman Thomas Meehan, a former gardener at Bartram’s Garden. Both trees can be found on Chinese Path on Bussey Hill.

In 1998, as part of a tricentennial celebration of botanist and explorer John Bartram, the John Bartram Association launched an international franklinia census to determine how many are growing and where, as well as to locate the oldest specimens. By May of this year, 2,046 franklinias were reported from 35 states and the District of Columbia and 8 foreign countries. In New England, Massachusetts reported 92 specimens; Connecticut has 56; Rhode Island, 15; New Hampshire, 3; Vermont, 2; and Maine, 1.

Although several people reported franklinias thought to be about 100 years old (on New York’s Long Island, the Connecticut coastline, and in the Philadelphia area), the Arboretum was able to document the age of its specimens. That any of these trees exist today is due to John Bartram and his son William, who first discovered the plant in the wild in 1765 and had the foresight to propagate the plant for their garden and to distribute cuttings. The tree has not been found in the wild since 1803.

Beyond dates and locations of trees, the census data create a resource for those wishing to grow franklinia. To determine the optimum growing conditions, the survey requested information on soil, drainage, exposure, and more. The consensus is that franklinias favor a clay soil with excellent drainage, prefer to be situated among other plantings in south-facing locations, and thrive in sun to part shade. Most of the franklinias reported are six to ten feet in height with a trunk circumference of one to five inches. The majority range in age from one to ten years old. The Arboretum’s largest plant is 19.99 feet in height and spread and 10.78 inches in diameter at breast height.

To find out more about the history and availability of the franklinia, visit Historic Bartram’s Garden at www.libertynet.org/bartram.
New on the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies Website
www.icls.harvard.edu/current.htm

The Future of Farming on Protected Landscapes. This edited version of a roundtable held at the Arnold Arboretum profiles discussion participants and their farms, and focuses on preserving the complex social and economic processes that produce farm landscapes:

- **Land, the Most Visible Farm Asset**: Land Protection in a Changing Farm Economy, Preserving Farm Regions, Affordability & Property Rights
- **Farm Operations, the “Work” in “Working Landscapes”**: Farmer Recruitment & Farm Finances, New Farm Markets & Products (including environmental quality & education!)
- **Farmers & Nonfarmers**: Farm Neighbors, the Nonfarming Public

Natural Science and Cultural Landscapes. The Institute is looking for ways to tap into relevant work in the natural sciences, particularly ecology. The first items to be posted are talks by Arnold Arboretum director Robert E. Cook:

- Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?
- Do Landscapes Learn? Ecology’s “New Paradigm” and Design in Landscape Architecture

The site will also explore the changing ways in which scientists have defined an “ecosystem,” the tangled history of the far newer term “ecosystem management,” and the broader history of connections (or the lack of them) between science and landscape management.

www.icls.harvard.edu/events.htm

Check this page for upcoming events sponsored by the Institute and others, as well as for readings and publications related to past and upcoming events. Fall 2000 Institute events have included:

- A session on farmland at the Massachusetts statewide historic preservation conference
- A series of field walks and talks called Reading the Landscape of New England
- A free public lecture, Open Space in Boston: Let’s Not Suburbanize From Within

To contact the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies, please leave a message at 617-524-1718 x175 or email icls@arnarb.harvard.edu.

Letters of Participation Awarded

The Arnold Arboretum offers three letters of participation through the adult education program. These letters provide students with a focus of study and documentation of courses taken at the Arboretum. More information about the letters of participation is located in the Arboretum’s catalog of programs and events. Since the fall 1997 issue of Arnoldia, a number of people have completed the requirements for letters of participation. Congratulations to each!

Letters of participation have been earned by:

**Woody Plant Propagation**
Paula Berardi  
Robert Cappuccio  
Miriam Hawkes  
Larry Lee Jones  
Susan Lemont

**Temperate Woody Plant Materials**
Paula Berardi  
Robert Cappuccio  
Dorick Corbo  
Laura Horky  
Larry Lee Jones

**Historic Landscape Preservation**
Linda DesRoches  
Terri Rochon  
Priscilla Williams  
Dale Wilson
New Staff

Michael Dosmann has joined the Arboretum as a Putnam Fellow in the living collections department. His primary responsibilities will be the planting design and selection for the new shrub and vine garden. He will also participate in various projects on the grounds as well as pursue his own research using the living collections.

Michael received his bachelor of science in public horticulture from Purdue University and his master of science in horticulture from Iowa State University (ISU) in 1996 and 1998, respectively. As the Garden Club of America’s Martin McLaren Fellow for 1998–1999, he worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and the school of plant science, University of Reading. He comes to us from ISU’s department of horticulture where he was employed as a research assistant. Michael’s interests in horticulture and botany span woody plant ecology and systematics, and ornamental plant selection and evaluation. And, like most plantsmen, he keeps his eyes open for the rare, unusual, and interesting.

Karen Pinto’s staff assistantship will be shared between the administration department and the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies. She comes to us with fourteen years’ experience at Harvard, in the Graduate School of Public Health and Medical School; she has also worked in the fields of law and human services.

Nancy Sableski, our new children’s education coordinator and a Jamaica Plain neighbor, has been visiting the Arboretum for over twenty years, often to paint landscapes. She holds a BFA with honors in painting from the Massachusetts College of Art and a master’s degree from Simmons College School of Social Work. Nancy became a volunteer school guide in the Arboretum’s field studies program in April, 1998; she was later hired as school programs assistant. Most recently, she coordinated the Boston Urban Gardeners’ education program. Her volunteer work now involves coordinating the fall “Artists in the Arboretum” show for Jamaica Plain Open Studios.

Steve Schneider is the Arboretum’s apprentice for 2000–2001. This year-long position allows him to rotate through the three areas of the living collections department: curation, greenhouses, and grounds. Originally from Quincy, Massachusetts, Steve earned his bachelor of science in biology from Northeastern University in May 2000. He is not, however, a new face at the Arboretum: he spent the summer of 1999 working as an intern in the Dana Greenhouses. Since graduation, he has served as adjunct curator of the Northeastern University Herbarium, where he also worked as a student. He aspires to a career in a botanical garden as horticultural therapist.

Two new faces are serving our visitors at the Arboretum’s front desk. Sonia Brenner and Sandra Morgan have joined Sheryl White as visitor services assistants in the education department.

Sonia earned her bachelor of arts degree in comparative literature from Oberlin College in May 2000. She spent her junior year at the Paris Center for Critical Studies and the University of Paris. Sonia has taught at a nature center in West Virginia, served