

2008 Weather at the Arboretum

The autumn of 2007 was so dry that fall transplanting had to be postponed, so moisture was a major concern as 2008 arrived. Fortunately, the year brought greater than normal rainfall which provided optimum conditions for our moisture-starved collections.

January was marked by warmer than normal temperatures, including a balmy 65°F on the 8th, and only one snowstorm (on the 14th and 15th) which produced 6 inches of snow, the total for the month. • February was mild and wet with over 8.5 inches of total precipitation including 15 inches of snow. • Only 2 inches of snow were recorded in March, well below normal, but rainfall added up to nearly 6 inches. • April started warm, with some rain, but became dry as the month progressed, causing concern for the imminent spring transplanting season. Our concerns diminished as we received 2 inches of rain toward the end of the month. • May was quite dry with only 1.5 inches of rain, and irrigating our new plantings was a priority as we feared a repeat of the dry summer of 2007. Though May's total rainfall was low, a string of days with brief late afternoon or evening showers (which left foliage wet overnight) led to ideal

Arnold Arboretum Weather Station Data • 2008

	Avg. Max. (°F)	Avg. Min. (°F)	Avg. Temp. (°F)	Max. Temp. (°F)	Min. Temp. (°F)	Precipitation (inches)	Snowfall (inches)
JAN	38.4	22.3	30.4	65	4	3.23	6
FEB	39.6	23.5	31.6	62	9	8.53	14.7
MAR	44.2	30	37.1	60	11	5.65	2
APR	58.7	37.9	48.3	72	28	3.78	
MAY	65.8	46.8	56.3	83	31	1.59	
JUN	78.4	59.8	69.1	99	51	3.97	
JUL	84.2	65.7	75	94	61	7.65	
AUG	75.6	60.8	68.2	87	53	5.25	
SEP	69.2	55.5	62.4	87	42	7.24	
OCT	60.3	40.9	50.6	74	26	1.82	
NOV	59	33.2	41.1	69	19	4.38	
DEC	42.3	24.6	33.5	63	8	7.84	15

Average Maximum Temperature	59.6°
Average Minimum Temperature	41.8°
Average Temperature	50.7°
Total Precipitation	60.93"
Total Snowfall	37.7"
Warmest Temperature	99° on June 11
Coldest Temperature	4° on January 4
Last Frost Date	32° on May 1
First Frost Date	32° on October 24
Growing Season	176 days



Putnam Fellow Abby Hird installs one of eighteen weather recording units that were placed on the grounds in 2008. Data from these units will be used to create maps of the microclimates within the Arboretum.



2008 was an excellent year for fall color. The foliage of this 105-year-old sweet birch (*Betula lenta* 17679-A) was in full golden glory on October 29th.



Anthrachnose, a fungal disease, was common on the foliage of *Fraxinus* (seen here), *Cornus*, *Platanus*, and *Quercus* in spring 2008.



Heavy rain on frozen ground led to flooding along Willow Path in December 2008.

conditions for several fungal diseases including anthracnose. • Fears of drought subsided as June was on the wet side with about 4 inches of rain. The temperature on June 11th reached 99°F, our high for the year. • July was wet and warm, with rainfall and mean temperature above normal. • August ended wet and cool with no readings over 90°F. These two summer months brought many thunderstorms and buckets of rain—an astonishing total of 12.9 inches for July-August. Flooded roads and streams (and clouds of mosquitoes) were common at the Arboretum and throughout the region. The moist summer allowed us to concentrate on watering only new plantings and not the entire collection, and we did very little supplementary watering overall. • September continued our “above average rainfall” theme as we transitioned into fall. Heavy rains occurred at the end of the month, totaling

about 4 inches in four days. • October was sunny, cool, and dry with less than 2 inches of rain—a perfect fall month. The fall foliage display was one of the best the region had seen in many years. • The first half of November was mild, but a cold and wet second half transitioned us to what would lie ahead. • December was slightly warmer than normal but several major storms piled up a total of 15 inches of snow. Heavy rain (over 2 inches) on the 11th and 12th fell on frozen ground, causing stream flooding and some damage to Arboretum paths; fortunately, no collections plants were damaged.

Bob Famiglietti, Horticultural Technologist, compiled the 2008 weather data and wrote the month-by-month weather summary. Additional weather-related information was provided by Stephen Schneider, Manager of Horticulture, and Julie Coop, Manager of Plant Health.