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The Newsletter

Fall, 2013

Volume 31, No. 3

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Dear Anne

The leaves are turning, and the land prepares for a winter snooze. It is so very lovely here at Landis, whether from the steps of the Farm House, the gorgeous new deck on the Meeting House, beneath the Great Oak, or in a field or on a trail.

There are Fall activities at Landis (check the link to the left), and of course, our grounds are open every day from dawn to dusk. If you drop by and take a picture, we'd love it if you uploaded to our [Flickr page](#) - and why not enter our [photo contest](#)?

Whether you find the time to leaf-peep at Landis, or just enjoy the arb vicariously through our new website and Facebook page, we are thinking about you, and hope you have a wonderful, colorful autumn.

Landis Introduces New Website: *LandisLive!*

-- Ambika Sambasivan

It was a good year at Landis. We had a variety of well-attended programs, classes, and events, capped off by the successful debut of the "Live at Landis" concert series. The Meeting House was renovated as a venue for workshops, events, and performances. The Native Plant Trail is now interactive with QR codes that stream curator Ed Miller's commentary to your phone. And we hosted two fantastic plant

sales, bringing in visitors from near and far.

With so much going on -- and much more to come in 2014 -- we wanted our website to be our on-line focal point. Information about the Arboretum's botanical collections, its annual calendar of events, its program of nature education, and expert advice . . . Now all this and more is available online 24/7.

We are excited to announce LandisLive, our new interactive website. Loaded with stunning images of the Arboretum, notes about our collections and history, and regularly updated articles from the newsletter, LandisLive is a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in the Arboretum.

Some of the highlights are:

- The **Visit** section of the website includes short introductory write-ups about our botanical collections. Here, you can read about the unique lilac collection at Landis, including Lape's own beautiful late blooming white lilac 'Summer White' or delve into research being done on Tough Trees for Tough Sites. Visitors can listen to audio guides narrated by Ed Miller, explaining the highlights of the Native Plant trail, a special treat! You can also download and print detailed trail guides before your visit.
- We have reworked the events calendar to make it as easy to use as possible. By splitting our annual calendar into four types of Activities - **Live Performances, Arts & Classes, Nature Education & Gardening,** and **Fundraising Events** - members can find events that interest them quickly without having to scroll through a long list. If you prefer a chronological list, activities are also categorized month-by-month.
- Our most exciting features are to be found in the **Interact** section. Landis volunteers regularly post articles, news, and other announcements on our new blog, News & Notes. Fred Breglia, our executive director, is moderating a members-only **Ask Fred Forum**, where our supporters can ask for horticulture advice any time of the year. Have questions about preparing your garden for winter or caring for a fussy indoor plant? Don't hesitate to join in!
- Finally, we have made it simple to **Support Us** in a number of ways. A Membership Form is now on-line, and you are just a couple of clicks away from enjoying VIP privileges at the Arb. If you would like to contribute your skills and time to helping Landis, consider signing up on-line under the **Volunteer** section. More information about monetary support can be found under **Donations, Memorials and Sponsorships**. You can make a PayPal contribution with ease.



To access the new LandisLive website, go to www.landisarboretum.org and 'Click

Here to Enter', or go directly to <http://landislive.weebly.com/>. We invite all our members to visit the new website and send us your comments or suggestions. Please write to us by filling in the online Contact form. Coming soon - a fully on-line Acorn Shop and a dedicated Weddings & Rentals section. Stay tuned!

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Love is in the House!

-- Louise Polli

For months we've been telling you about the new place to be at Landis - the beautifully renovated Meeting House.



Looking up at the Meeting House

Even the view has had a facelift, inside and out, with glass everywhere and a spacious deck that beckons you outside. There's not a bad seat in the house either, as many music lovers discovered during our "Live at Landis" concert series. And for at least two couples and their guests this summer, love was in the Meeting House, or the air, or all over Landis.

Weddings are not new to Landis.

Fred Breglia, our executive director, and his wife, Arboretum gardener Erin Breglia, were married at the Great Oak. Enthusiastic runners Ed and Roxanne Gillen took to the hills, literally, as they became husband and wife at the Arboretum they had grown to love.

But this summer's couples had the opportunity to choose the Meeting House to celebrate their marriage. The building has retained the rustic charm that is so much a part of Landis, but with "amenities." And the price of a wedding at Landis, view included, is still one of the Capital region's best bargains.



Erin and Fred

If you are planning a wedding, any celebratory event, or even a business meeting or retreat, please consider the Landis Arboretum. Additional information is available on our website (www.landisarboretum.org) or by phoning (518) 875-6935. Personal consultations are strongly encouraged. We can customize your arrangements and work cooperatively with you on the details so important to the success of your event.

We haven't booked a snowshoe wedding yet, but who knows what the future holds?

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LANDIS PORTRAITS:

A SERIES ABOUT THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLANTS AT THE ARBORETUM

-- Nolan Marciniac

Louis Suarato is a man who is taken by the wonders of nature, be they light-years away or right in his backyard.



Lou relocated to the Capital District in 1995, leaving behind a Wall Street career. Working in financial services in the Albany area in the late '90s and attending Russell Sage, he needed a few science credits to complete a degree in business administration. His childhood interest in the stars led him to take an astronomy course with Dr. George Tucker, whom Lou credits with opening his eyes to the wonders of the natural world.

His passion for astronomy only increased when his sister gave him a subscription to [SLOOH](#), an astronomy website that allows subscribers to use the site's professional telescopes to view celestial events. Lou went on to be the developmental director for another astronomy website, Astronomy FM. He considered the service so valuable that under a blue moon on a bitterly cold New Year's Eve in Saratoga Springs, Lou and his wife, Ann Marie, held a bake sale to raise money for the website.

Lou bought his first "real" telescope in 2009. In conjunction with the Dudley Observatory, he set it up at SPAC during the Philadelphia Orchestra's performance of Gustav Holtz's "The Planets." More than 300 concertgoers lined up to look at the planet Jupiter. To prepare for the Saratoga event, he attended the Albany Area Amateur Astronomer's Public Star Party at the Landis Arboretum. He arrived early, hiking some of the trails, and marveled at the views of the Schoharie Valley.



One of Lou's favorite Landis night
skyscapes

He continued to attend the star parties at Landis as a member of AAAA. The association encourages its members to give back to the Arboretum, and Lou became a volunteer at plant sales, his wife at the bake sales. His commitment was such that, when Anne Donnelly, then interim director, approached him about joining the Board, he agreed, taking office in 2011.

At this point, Lou has retired from financial services to focus his attention on non-profit organizations that advocate the preservation of the natural world. He served for two years on the Board of the Dudley Observatory. He currently serves not only on the Arboretum's Board, but also the Board of the Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy.

There are many "cosmic" moments in the dark skies of Landis that Lou treasures: showing his sister from the NYC region the Milky Way; last year's Geminids, at which he counted 75 meteorites in a two-hour period; and a Perseids shower to the accompaniment of a chorus of coyotes.

Lou's other avocation is photography - often stunning photos of celestial events, but also photos celebrating the beauty of nature closer to home, frequently taken at Landis. Lou's photos can be viewed at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lsuarto/>. Shared on social media sites, Lou's photos have been very popular, but he believes that they are no substitute for the real thing. "A lot of people don't have access to the outdoors . . . The Arboretum is a great place to experience nature. Right now, I'm looking at a hummingbird in the roses," he said during our interview. "I didn't have to work at that." More than 500 people have "liked" our Facebook page; Lou would like them to visit in person. "But not too many people," he added. "The peacefulness is nice too."

But he would encourage people to attend a Star Party. Or to hike the trails. Or to attend a plant sale. Or to volunteer. "Every time you volunteer, you help people appreciate nature," he said. And nature, both far away or close at hand, calls out to be noticed, protected, and cherished.

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CONNECTING TREES AND PEOPLE AT THE LANDIS ARBORETUM

-- Fred Breglia, Executive Director

Landis means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. It is the old growth forest and the collections of trees. It is the events and classes held throughout the year. It is also possibly the best venue to hear the greatest music in the area - in one of the most attractive settings. To sum up: Landis is a renaissance man's dream.

Landis founder Fred Lape was himself a renaissance man. He was a writer, a linguist, a botanist, and a musician. Lape had a love affair with the arts. He welcomed artists to what was then his home and is now the Farmhouse. And today? Arboreta were originally established to showcase groupings of plants in a museum-like setting. Although this is still true today, the trend is for arboreta to diversify their offerings in order to attract more people and, of course, more revenue. This trend has enabled Landis not only to survive hard economic times but also to thrive.

After a long hard day of planning and planting at what would become the Arboretum, Lape was known for playing the piano for friends and neighbors, often at the local "honky-tonks." He was also a serious musician, and fellow musicians played chamber works in the Farmhouse.

Today, these musical events are held in the newly renovated Meeting House, thanks to an Arts and Entertainment Committee headed by Sam and Noel Bates and Jim Paley and his wife, Wendy Kass. This double-couple powerhouse has been instrumental in bringing contemporary musicians and groups to Landis.



In addition to the "Live at Landis" music series, the renovated Meeting House has been the site for several weddings and conferences. Next year's plans include reclaiming the Meeting House pond, landscaping, and adding a gazebo. Landis also hopes to expand its work force beyond the formidable group of Arboretum volunteers in order to maintain our existing collections and buildings - and to add new trails to our current 8-mile system.

Always a site for inspiration, Landis, rooted in the past, continues to grow into the future.

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Putting Your Garden to Bed: Make It Pay Dividends

-- Erin Breglia, Landis Gardener



Autumn is perhaps my favorite time in the garden, especially in the Arboretum's VanLoveland Perennial Garden. The heat of the day is less aggressive, and there seems to be more time to appreciate the blooms of Anemone 'Honorine Jobert,' or the asters or the colchicums. Monarch butterflies frequently pass through en route to winter in Mexico, pausing to feast on the nectar of late-blooming perennials, fluttering their wings. Sun and clouds seem balanced, as do wind and rain and, of course, the colors of the palette of changing leaves at our Arboretum are captivating.

In fall, the perennial beds show signs of "dying back," turning yellow from green as nutrients are pulled down into the plants' root systems for storage over the winter. Eventually, the leaves will turn a crispy brown and die. All of this plant material can safely be cut back at the yellowing stage, but make sure to leave about 4 to 6 inches of "live growth" above the ground. Any weeds or leaves in the crown of the plant should be removed in order to prevent rotting.

This time of year gives gardeners an opportunity to really get ahead on weeding the garden. Weeds become less vigorous and much easier to control. Pull as many

weeds as you can, so when spring and summer come, you can enjoy your garden blooms without weeds to distract you! Using a trowel or similar tool to dig out the weed with its roots intact is the best way to eradicate it. If the soil is too dense and the roots keep breaking off, you need to add compost and amend it in layers. I like to add a layer of basic compost and then cover that completely with straw. By next spring, the soil will be noticeably easier to work and will have more aeration and drainage.

Many gardeners like to put leaves in their gardens and let them break down over the winter. Instead, I would encourage you to put your leaves in the compost pile and allow them to break down first: this is a safer gardening practice. Compost piles heat up naturally and "cook" most pathogens in the plant material. Leaves and plant materials for roses, peonies, and tomatoes should be thrown out rather than composted because their diseases are readily reintroduced - and can spread to other plants in your garden.

Fall is also an opportunity to plant bulbs. My husband is fond of tossing the bulbs and planting them wherever they land, creating a naturalistic effect. Of course, we always forget where we plant them. When they come up in the spring, we welcome both their beauty and their unexpectedness.

Another bulb-planting tip is one that I've been implementing at Landis. I plant a circle of the same flowering bulb at the end of the mulch ring around a tree. Then, in front of it, a second ring of a smaller flower. For example, a ring of yellow daffodils with a ring of miniature purple hyacinth in front of it. Planting one color per variety doubles the effect.

If you avoid planting bulbs because animals dig them up, sprinkle cayenne pepper on the surface of the ground. Any spicy pepper seems to work: I've tried Cajun rub and Mexican seasoning too. Just make sure you can see it on the surface and reapply it right after it rains!

Invest the time in your garden during this most lovely time of year, and it'll pay dividends in the spring!

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Erin's Echinacea Tincture

Now that the cold season is on its way, it's an opportune time to make an immune-boosting tincture using *Echinacea purpurea*, or purple coneflower. This tincture is not a cure, but rather a support for the immune system at the onset of the cold and flu season.

You will have the best success by digging out an established plant - at least three years old - that has already begun the dying back process. The natural cycle of dying back indicates that the nutrient and medicinal benefits are gathering in the plant's root system.

Under warm running water, rinse the soil off the roots. Make sure that all the nooks and crannies are clean.

Chop the roots into small pieces.

Fill a sterile glass jar halfway with chopped Echinacea root. Then fill the jar with 100-proof (or higher) vodka. Make sure to leave about an inch of space at the top.

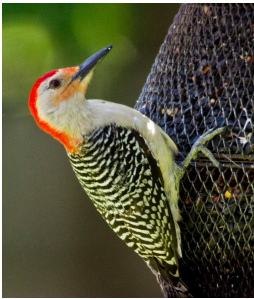
Seal the jar and place it in a dark place. Shake the jar every day for about four weeks. Use a clean cheesecloth and strain the liquid.

Take one teaspoon a day for no longer than two weeks. You may resume the dosage after two weeks.

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It's For the Birds

-- Lee Lattimer



Autumn begins, and our thoughts turn to getting the snow blower serviced or sharpening the skates. High on many people's list is cleaning the bird feeder and laying up supplies. Much joy can be had by watching birds at the feeder in winter. As you benefit the birds, you benefit yourself.

To get started, a simple feeder is all that is required. You can make one yourself using odds and ends, or buy one ready-made. Tubular feeders are popular, as they conserve seed, handle most types of weather, and come in small versions for thistle and larger ones for sunflower seeds or seed mix. Clear plastic feeders make it easy to determine when refilling is necessary. Whichever feeder you use, proper placement of the feeder is vital. To keep squirrels and chipmunks away, place the feeder on a metal pole at least 6 feet away from any trees or buildings. Try greasing the pole with petroleum jelly if the little critters still get at it. Inspect and clean the feeders often.

Choosing which type of feed to use depends on which types of birds you wish to attract. Thistle (also known as niger) seed attracts smaller birds such as goldfinches. It is, however, relatively expensive. Black oil sunflower seeds attract more species, and most can crack them open. If you use these seeds in quantity, you'll note large husk piles under the feeder in the spring. Clean up the piles and dispose of them in the garbage instead of your compost since they contain a substance that inhibits plant growth. Seed mix ingredients vary, but most contain some combination of millet, canary seed, rape seed, and sorghum. Read the ingredients before buying and avoid bags that contain such items as golden millet, red millet, and flax. These seeds are used as fillers, and most birds shun them. Suet cakes are easily found in stores (or make your own) and add the nutritional value of the solid fat. Cracked corn

is popular with the birds, but use it in small amounts during wet weather as it spoils easily. Since birds don't have teeth, grit aids digestion. Occasionally mix small amounts of coarse sand or crushed oyster shells into the feed for this purpose.

Once you have selected the feeder and seed type, hopefully you will soon notice results. If not, to attract birds to a new feeder, get their attention by putting out pieces of white bread. Don't use bread continually, however, since it's not as nutritious. Once you begin, be sure to keep the feeder filled throughout the winter season. Of course you could continue year round, but if you do stop, be sure to wait until 2 or 3 weeks after the usual time of the last snowfall.

Enjoy your new hobby. Perhaps keep a journal of what species are seen and when. But remember your primary purpose for setting up the feeder - it's for the birds!

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Fall Activities at Landis

For more information, check out our [website](#) or call the Arb at 518-875-6935.

October 12, Saturday, 2-3:30 p.m.

FALL FOLIAGE WALK

Members: \$5/person, \$15/family; Non-members: \$10/person, \$25/family

October 18, Friday, 8:30-10 p.m.

FULL MOON OWL PROWL

Members: \$5/person, \$15/family; Non-members: \$10/person, \$25/family

November 1 & 2, Friday & Saturday, 8 p.m.

PUBLIC STAR PARTY

Members and non-members FREE, but donations to the Arb to support activities like this are greatly appreciated!

November 3, Sunday, 12:30-4:30 p.m.

STARTING OUT WITH HONEYBEES

Members: \$35/person; Non-members: \$45/person

November 15, Friday, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

5TH ANNUAL WINE TASTING AT GRAPEVINE FARMS

Members: \$10/person; Non-members: \$15/person

November 30, Saturday, 9 a.m.-Noon

DECORATING WITH NATIVE GREENERY

Members: \$25/person; Non-members: \$35/person

December 6 & 7, Friday & Saturday, 8 p.m.

PUBLIC STAR PARTY

Members and non-members FREE, but donations to the Arb to support activities like this are greatly appreciated!

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About George Landis Arboretum

The Landis Arboretum is a public garden comprising hundreds of acres overlooking historic Schoharie Valley near Esperance, New York. Arboretum founder Fred Lape began the work of developing the Arboretum in the 1950's on Oak Nose Farm, his family homestead. With the support of a bequest from friend and colleague George Landis, Fred aimed to grow every species of woody plant from temperate regions around the world that would survive in the hills of Schoharie County.

Forty acres of the Arboretum are developed with plantings of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials from around the world. The remainder of the property consists of natural areas, woodlands, wetlands, more than 8 miles of trails, and open fields. Among the Arboretum's horticultural features are a labeled collection of nearly all the trees, shrubs and vines native to New York State, as well as collections of notable trees, flowering ornamental trees and shrubs, tough trees for tough sites, conifers, and oaks. Two old growth forests and additional natural areas representing various stages of succession await visitors. The Van Loveland Perennial Garden at the old farmhouse and the recently restored Quarry Garden are seasonal favorites. Interpretive signage aids visitors in their enjoyment and understanding of the collections and ecosystems of the Arboretum.

Now beginning its second 50 years, the Landis Arboretum is a "Garden of Trees and Shrubs" in New York's Capital region. The Landis Arboretum is a valuable cultural and scientific resource that increases each year in scope and community impact.

Fred Breglia, Director
George Landis Arboretum

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