



# George Landis Arboretum NEWSLETTER

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## In Memoriam

It is said that St. Francis of Assisi, when he was asked the question: "What would you do if you knew that you were going to die tomorrow?", replied: "First, I would finish hoeing my garden."

Ah, to live each day doing just what you would do if you knew the following day was your last!

On September 4, 1993, the Arboretum lost one of its most precious friends when Elizabeth P. Corning gently passed away. If she herself were relaying the story, her charming term would be: "has been gathered".

A celebration brunch had been planned for September 12, 1993 at the Glen Sanders Mansion. It was to be an opportunity for all of us to honor Mrs. Corning and to show our appreciation for her outstanding achievements at the Arboretum. The brunch was canceled. Many people who had not been able to attend the brunch had sent in contributions to the Endowment Fund in honor of Mrs. Corning. Many people had reserved a place at the brunch, and many of them generously transferred their reservations to this same Endowment Fund when the event was canceled. I am sure that Mrs. Corning would have appreciated these donations which will form a lasting base of support for the garden that she cared for so dearly.

Betty's passing is a tragedy for us all, because her delightful and unique personality is gone from us forever. Her life, however, in our recollection, is a source of much joy and celebration. It is rare for a person to live life to its fullest. Betty did. Her positivism, willingness and creativity was an inspiration to all of us. She exhibited an inborn sense of wonder about all life--a trait everyone should strive to nurture in himself. Betty had strong beliefs. One of the things that she believed in strongly was public gardens and in their value as a spiritual and educational resource. She stood behind her beliefs 100 percent. As a



**Elizabeth Corning  
1912 - 1993**

result, during her lifetime, she provided a number of gardens coast to coast with intellectual and financial support, serving as trustee and sometimes as a patron.

Betty served the George Landis Arboretum for 20 years as a Trustee and as President of the Board from 1985 until June of this year. Her strong, capable confidence and horticultural acumen served as a rallying point for Trustees and members. As President, she guided the Arboretum through the immensely difficult transition period following the death of founder Fred Lape to the present day. Many wonderful changes occurred during these years. Her first achievements in 1985 were to have the gardens professionally evaluated and to oversee the completion of a new public Meeting House facility. The momentum never stopped. Under her leadership, the Board of Trustees was reorganized; by-laws

rewritten; committees formed; and permanent professional staff, plus a large complement of volunteers, firmly established. During her tenure, a greenhouse and propagation facility was built; the library/herbarium finished; gardens extensively restored; collections enlarged, labeled and documented; and an increasing number of programs for children, adults and families were established, offering opportunities to learn about nature and horticulture. Her Arboretum career was very satisfying to her.

Following her passing, Mrs. Corning's family made a number of generous gestures in support of their mother's extensive commitment. First, they requested that a Memorial Fund be established at the Arboretum in honor of Elizabeth P. Corning. They then requested that people contribute to this fund in lieu of sending flowers. The outpouring of contributions and heartfelt notes we have received has been, and is continuing to be, gratifying. Secondly, all who knew Mrs. Corning are well aware of the particular fondness that she had for *Clematis*. As many know, there is even a stunning cultivar named for her: *Clematis* x 'Betty Corning'. The family has offered her collection of *Clematis* to the Arboretum. We are thrilled. The collection is being moved this fall and will be named in her honor. It may take a few years to re-establish, but it is a memorial that I am sure would have pleased her greatly. On behalf of the George Landis Arboretum, I would like to extend our thanks to the family.

It has been my pleasure and great good fortune to have known Betty, first in a professional capacity, and later as a cherished friend. She touched so many, many people with her accomplishments, her nobility of spirit, her inspiration--and her charm.

We are all better for having known her.

Pamela H. Rowling

# At The Garden

## Director's Report

September has arrived and with it, the beginning of the Fall rains. The parched earth greedily soaks in the water. Lawns are greening up, and the trees and shrubs are refreshed. The Fall-blooming crocus and colchicum in the garden bewitch visitors.

This summer there have been many changes at the Arboretum. Among the most significant was the retiring of Elizabeth Corning as the President of our Board of Trustees in June. (See cover story.) In addition, a number of Trustees have completed their terms of office and are taking a well deserved break. Those Trustees leaving the Board are: Lou Moravec, Kathie Lippitt

### The George Landis Arboretum Newsletter

is published quarterly for members of the Arboretum. The GLA's mission is to provide natural history and horticultural education through programs and through its plant collections.

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## Pamela H. Rowling

and Ernest Walk. Their many years of service and hard work have helped to make the Arboretum a success, and they certainly deserve our deepest gratitude. Five new Trustees have joined the Board to fill these and other vacancies. They are Freeman T. Putney, Lucinda Willemain, Thomas Burbine, Dave Vermilyea and Richard J. Charles. I look forward to working with this dynamic group in the coming years. The composition of the Executive Committee has also changed. President now is Anne Jaster; Vice-Presidents are Florence Grimm and Dale Morgan. Phyllis Rosenblum is the Treasurer and the Secretary is Steve Young.

This summer we have had the good fortune to be the recipient of two major donations of books. Mr. James VanEtten of Brooklyn, N.Y. donated a wonderful collection of over 300 books and numerous periodicals to our library. This gift was the private collection of his late wife Joyce VanEtten. (See below.) The second collection of books was the generous donation of retiring Trustee Lou Moravec. Both library collections are composed of horticultural and botanical books and periodicals. They are being evaluated, catalogued and integrated into our existing collection. Two volunteers along with the staff have been working on this project: Barbara Beverley of the Special Libraries Association has been our guide and

consultant in developing a cataloguing strategy which will make the books accessible to the public; Tressa Vellozzi of Keyserkill Studios is developing specialized computer programs to manage this information.

Our end-of-season clearance plant sale was a great success. We reduced our nursery load and sent many people home happy with their new garden treasures.

A great deal of interest has been shown in our educational programs. The volunteer program presenters are to be thanked for their outstanding efforts on behalf of the Arboretum.

A regular contributor to the Arboretum, the GE Corporate R&D Division, has recently answered a longfelt need with the donation of a New Hermes computer-driven engraving machine. This fantastic machine will allow the timely production of interpretive signs and directional markers. Most importantly, it will make possible the manufacture of durable, easy-to-read labels for our plant specimens. This donation coupled with the ongoing grounds survey and mapping project should enable staff and volunteers to label many of the plants in our garden by next season.

Our thanks to Mr. Peter Irwin. Once again he has aided the Acorn Shop through the production of three directional signs. These signs will direct people to the shop from Route 20 and the base of Lape Road. The installation of these signs is temporarily stalled by construction on Route 20, but they should be up by next season.

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## Joyce Van Etten

October 31, 1943 - February 27, 1993

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Joyce had a lifelong interest in gardening that amounted to a passion. She attended Brooklyn College received a degree in English Literature, then began a career as a social worker with a backyard garden in brownstone Brooklyn.

In her thirties, she attended SUNY Farmingdale, where she graduated with honors and a degree in ornamental horticulture. She worked her way into the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, first as an instructor, then as curator of the Fragrance Garden (a sensory garden) and the Shakespeare Garden (plants mentioned in Shakespeare's writings).

As curator of Ericaceae, she completely reworked the area around the South Gate, planting a whole new collection of *Pieris* and incorporating heather and heath garden areas and many rhododendrons and azaleas.

Later she started a garden writing career and had two articles published in *Fine Gardening*. She was halfway through a book on the BBG, *Through the Seasons*, when she died.

She was an active member of many societies, attended conferences and had many garden friends all over the country. Her consuming interest in horticulture was manifest in her extensive library. Her books reflected her life's vocation. In the Arboretum's Library, they will serve as an introduction to Joyce Van Etten for those who never knew her personally, and as an enduring memorial of her life and work.

# Volunteers

## Volunteer Notes

by Florence Grimm

Fall cleanup and preparation for Winter is keeping a group of volunteers very busy. I cannot believe another season has gone by, and it is time to put wire caging around the rhododendrons. The September 11th Workday kept five of us busy with that project. Another group moved 3 1/2 tons of stones from the perennial beds so that the area paths can finally be mowed. What an improvement!

The August Workday had volunteers helping with the Plant Sale, mailing 500 pieces of mail, taking inventory of donated books, pruning, and planting crabapple trees.

The Volunteer Recognition Barbecue highlighted volunteer activities in July. The dinner honored all volunteers who had served 10 or more hours in the previous year. Over 70 volunteers and Arboretum Board members attended this event. Certificates of recognition were awarded to volunteers who served over 100 hours each in the 1992-1993 year. They include David Vermilyea, Beverly Waite, Marlene Taylor, Richard Downs, Charles Huppert, Florence Grimm and Natalie Dinsmore.

Statistics have been compiled for the first six months of 1993 for volunteer participation at the Arboretum. Four people working six hours a week for the season have accumulated 672 hours. Hours of volunteer time in other areas

include Work Days, 270; cleanup, 300; telethon, 25; Education, 118; Acorn Shop, 109; plant sales, 112; mailings, 23; miscellaneous displays, art work, signs, etc., 548; computer, 192; and clerical, 317. This comes to a total of over 2100 hours. Your Volunteer Director has put in 1000 hours of her time also, bringing the total volunteer hours for 1992-1993 to well over 3000 hours.

The need for volunteers never ceases. With the preparation for the 1994 season, volunteers will be needed for the March Flower Show, the Spring Benefit in April, plant sales in May and June and much more! In addition, the Board of Trustees is recruiting Arboretum members to serve on Standing Committees (see below). Volunteering is a lot of fun at the Arboretum, so call the office at (518) 875-6935 and get involved!

### Standing Committee Opportunities

**HORTICULTURE:** Oversees maintenance and labeling of collections, sets policy for acquisitions, advises on greenhouse operations.

**EDUCATION:** Plans educational programs; sets up lectures, workshops, classes, courses, family & community events; manages the Herbarium and Library.

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:** Oversees maintenance of buildings & grounds and maintenance of grounds equipment.

**MEMBERSHIP & FUND-RAISING:** Promotes membership, manages benefits, appeals, sales, bus trips and special events.



The George Landis Arboretum has the great pleasure of having Joe Eck of North Hill Garden Design Associates as the featured speaker for the Spring Benefit Fund Raiser.

"A Walk Around North Hill" will describe this lovely three-acre garden in south-central Vermont which contains a comprehensive collection of plants hardy in zones 5 and 4. *Horticulture* magazine has featured North Hill in the November 1989 and December 1990 issues. Articles on North Hill also appeared in the October and November 1991 issues of *The Journal Of The Royal Horticulture Society*.

Joe Eck has written articles for many books and magazines, but he is best known for his work in *Horticulture*, where his column "Gardening by Design" appears monthly.

Mr. Eck's column makes excellent Winter reading and will prepare all of us to be better listeners. Watch for more details about the Spring Benefit and about this exciting speaker and his program in the next Newsletter.



Mark April 10 on your calendar !!!

## Membership Form — George Landis Arboretum

Yes I would like to become a member:

New Member   
Renewal

Senior/Student  \$15  
Individual  \$25  
Family  \$35  
Contributor  \$50  
Supporter  \$75  
Patron  \$125+

Organizations and Businesses:

Group  \$35  
Contributor  \$50  
Supporter  \$75  
Patron  \$125+

Please mail to:

Director  
George Landis Arboretum  
P.O. Box 186  
Esperance, NY 12066

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Landis Arboretum. The Arboretum is a non-profit organization. Membership fees above \$15 and donations are tax deductible.

Donation to the  
Arboretum Endowment Fund:

In addition to membership, I would like to contribute to the endowment fund.  I don't want to join at this time but would like to contribute to the endowment fund.

\$5  \$50  
 \$10  \$100  
 \$20  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer. My daytime phone number is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please circle type of work you are interested in, or write in your suggestions.)

Field work: mowing, weeding, pruning, etc. Acorn Shop: Weekdays/Weekends  
Office Work/Projects: word processing, writing (newsletter, etc.), fund-raising, herbarium/library, mailings  
Events/Programs: Tour guide, adult education, youth education, plant sales, special events  
Committees: Horticulture, Education, Buildings & Grounds, Membership & Fund-raising

# Gardener's Workshop

## Autumn Glory

by Anne Best

Quiet cold days when frost rims the leaves and glistens white on the woodland grasses, crisping the leaf litter...damp days when the patter of raindrops on the dying leaves masks all other sounds...windy days when the trees creak and groan...this is Autumn-easily my favorite time of year.

Now fully grown and confirmed in their dominance over the forest, the trees burst into glorious color before lapsing into the naked dormancy necessary for winter survival. The crowns cannot support the huge burden of leaves during the winter winds and the roots which are anchored in frozen ground cannot supply the water that the leaves would exhale. As Autumn approaches, the destruction of chlorophyll in the leaves quickens so that the green color is masked by the yellow, red and purple dyes that are manufactured from residual food in the leaves. The yellow, orange or scarlet colors are formed by pigments called carotins. The purple hues are caused by other pigments called xanthocyanins. At the same time the food reserves of the leaves are withdrawn into the tree's woody stem. After a brief display of brilliant color, each leaf is cut off from the twig by a thin layer of cork, which forms across the base of the stalk. It then falls, usually after a windy day or after a sharp night frost has caused ice to form at the point of attachment; the morning thaw snaps the link.

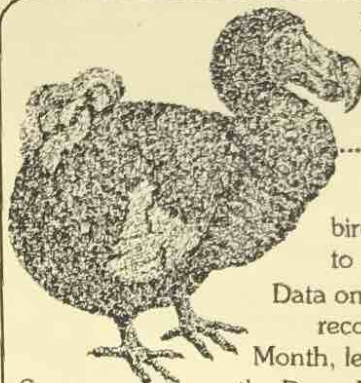
Temperature is the controlling factor that causes these leaves to be shed,

but it works in a curious way. The leaves can only function if they have a good supply of sap sent up by the roots, but the roots in turn can only draw water from the earth when the soil temperature is above 39 °F. If any ordinary broadleaf tree retained its leaves in the winter, it would quickly lose more water than it could replace, and it would die of drought. Evergreen broadleaf trees have special devices, including waxy surfaces and small breathing pores to limit transpiration, and these enable them to survive. In the forest, the fallen leaves enrich the leaf mold at ground level. The nutrients

they hold, chiefly mineral salts, are picked up by the tree's roots and recycled to the tree's crown.

These Autumn colors and their intensity vary from tree to tree and are most marked in the maples, whose leaves vary from lemon yellow to intense crimson, and in the beeches, which turn a deep red-brown. There is no more spectacular display of natural coloring than in the deciduous forests of eastern North America. Nature's overt work is done. The cycle of the seasons turns on.

Anne Best is owner of Greenspace Environmental Design in Albany.



Ready for some astounding discoveries?

### FIRST~OF~THE~MONTH BIRD WALKS

...we don't *think* anyone's seen a dodo yet, but you'd be surprised at what we *do* find!

Join us for easy early morning walks looking for birds at the Arboretum. This monthly event is open to anyone interested in birds--beginner to advanced.

Data on birds identified will be used to update Arboretum records. These walks start at 7 AM, the First of every Month, led by Arboretum Science Educator George Steele.

So come along on the Dawn Patrol!...**It's Free!** For more information, call 875-6935

Last chance to visit the shop before  
**Season Closing: October 31**

- Bring that holiday shopping list!
- Many items reduced 20% -50%

Help support the Arboretum while you treat yourself or that special person to any one of the shop's unique gifts!

Many thanks to all you supporters and volunteers worked in the Acorn Shop this season. See you next year!



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