



George Landis Arboretum NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by the Friends of the Arboretum

Volume 6, Number 3

July, August, September 1987

The rain these past few weeks has been almost as annoying as the dry "spell" beforehand. On one of the few nice days, the Horticulture Advisory Committee met with John Abbuhl and members of his G.L.A. Horticulture Committee. Dr. Theodore Dudley from the National Arboretum in Washington attended and gave much needed advice on pruning, thinning, and removal of trees for the ultimate good of the Arboretum. These difficult decisions are always hard to make and the worth of one tree must be weighed against the worth of another when plantings have been too close. Dr. Dudley was the expert who was invited several years ago to assess the value of the George Landis Arboretum as a whole. He pronounced it a "sleeping giant" with much much work to be done. Having viewed the Arboretum in September 1987, he was quick to praise the improvement and its rebirth.

All Arboretum members should take a walk through the pineum and other specialized areas to see how different the Arboretum looks this year. The improvement is due primarily to the hard work of Pamela Rowling, our full time horticulturist. We are delighted that she has agreed to stay on, working at labels and seed exchange, part time this winter and full time when weather permits next spring.

It was good to see again Beth Seme and Dave Linehan, two other members of the Horticulture Advisory Committee. We are lucky to have these two professionals in the field of horticulture sharing their expertise with us. Beth is with Albany County Extension Service and writes a gardening advice column for the Albany Times Union. Dave is a leading figure in the North East Nurserymen's Association.

President of the Arboretum, Elizabeth Corning, received an honorary degree of humane letters at Russell Sage College on September 3rd at its opening convocation. Mrs. Corning has dedicated most of her adult life to the beautification of many public parks and gardens and to the conservation of our natural resources through her leadership on the boards of many active groups. She has served as president and director of the Garden Club of America and presently serves as director of the American Horticulture Society and the New York Botanical Garden. On the printed convocation program, Mrs. Corning listed her presidency of the George Landis Arboretum first among her activities.

If some of our visitors have been disappointed in not seeing so many annuals and perennials in flower this year, Pam promises more next year. (Ed note: We must remember we are first of all an Arboretum, not a public or botanical garden. Our collection of trees and shrubs is truly noteworthy and must always be our principal focus.)

The lovely Beal Peony Garden was a delight this past summer. Mr. and Mrs. Beal visited it and have made another contribution for additional plants. Thanks to them we will have a fine collection of herbaceous peonies. Another contribution will allow us to add some elegant tree peonies, the Saunder's hybrids.

In dividing the big collection of daylilies, Pam Rowling set aside some of the tubers for our plant sale next Spring. These will all be named varieties or at least color identified. Daylilies are becoming more and more popular due to their rewarding blooms in spite of low maintenance demands.

Our flower show was held on September 12th. The entries all done with fresh flowers and interesting designs, were beautiful. Our thanks to those arrangers and the Chairman of the event, Evelyn Sturdevan. The photo contest winners were announced and prizes awarded - again a highly successful venture. Mrs. Grace Mead took first prize for her interesting photo of our old oak. Mrs. Madelyn Econome won second prize for a striking picture of a cleome (which grew to immense size in front of the library this year). Third prize was awarded to Robert Mead for his picture of a lupine with a hovering bee!

Many of you have seen Pat Daly working on the grounds of the Arboretum this summer. He has been so conscientious and so helpful that we want to take this opportunity to acknowledge our appreciation.

The Arboretum is delighted to announce that they will sponsor a luncheon with C.Z.Guest as speaker. This well-known horticulturist, columnist, flower arranger, and author will show slides and answer your gardening questions on November 20th at the Desmond Americana. The event will start at noon and is sure to attract a wide audience so make your reservations soon. (\$20.00 per person, checks payable to the George Landis Arboretum. Send your name and check to Mrs. Evelyn Sturdevan, 64 Harris Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12208) The Capital Newspapers who publish the Times Union where C.Z.Guest's column appears will underwrite the cost of bringing this important speaker to Albany. We are all very grateful for their support and willingness to be co-sponsors.

We've talked of it in the past and now it will actually happen. We're trying to work out the details for sponsoring a two week botanical tour of Scotland. The proposed date of departure would be May 23, 1988. Much more will be reported in the next newsletter but if you are interested, remember it will be limited to 26 travelers and early reservations will be essential. Call Margaret Law at 463-5256 for more details and to sign-up?.

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Your Arboretum President, Betty Corning, and your Newsletter Editor, Margaret Law, had an extraordinarily interesting trip this past summer: a botanical tour in the USSR. It began actually in Finland where we arrived in Helsinki on July 24. We had the opportunity to visit open air markets where, amid stands of all kinds of well displayed fresh vegetables, mushrooms, strawberries and other kinds of berries, there were cut flowers and potted plants for sale. The cut flowers included unusual large-flowered blue salvias, showy dahlias, and many other varieties rarely seen here. In Moscow a few days later we visited a Botanical Garden where we were received royally. Bob Hebb, former director of the Cary Arboretum and new director at the Louis Ginter Arboretum in Richmond, Virginia was a member of our group. He was acquainted with several of the staff at the Moscow Garden and they became our escorts. We first visited the wooded area which led to a large area devoted to all kinds of herbs - medicinal, culinary, dyeing, and strewing. We were led then to an area of regional plantings showing typical plants of the areas in the USSR, a small preview of what was to come. A man-made hill contained rock garden plants, and the tour ended at the beautiful rosarium where roses and sculpture were harmoniously blended. All the plants were labeled in both Russian and Latin.

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Next we flew east to Irkutsk which has a twelve hour time difference from Esperance and a pleasantly cool temperature. We had a delightful boat ride on Lake Baikal, but managed to see only a small fraction of this immense lake. We had the opportunity to walk around some of the rural villages composed of small, old wooden houses where every bit of arable land is put to use growing mostly potatoes and cabbages, but also some hay. As we watched, an elderly woman gathered some hay that she had previously cut with a scythe. Stacking it in a mound, she lifted that loose mass to her shoulders and carried it off. Each small age-darkened house has a window full of healthy house plants.

Our chance to see wild flowers in their natural habitat came when we drove into the Taiga forest. En route we stopped to explore and were immediately rewarded. I will name only a few we saw: *Achillea roseum*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *campanula glamerata*, *geranium sylvatica*, *delphinium elatum* (deep deep blue), gentians burnet, monkshood, dianthus, and a very interesting two colored, yellow and purple wildflower called "Ivan and Marie". We were on our way for a picnic in the Taiga which was in fact, a complete meal with much vodka and champagne at a long table in a log building. Afterwards we were able to walk around that area finding more interesting plants: Siberian Iris and wild forget-me-nots among others. A small boy in the nearby village gave me some fresh cones of the *Pinus Sibericus* which contain edible seeds. The cones themselves are brownish-purple and have a pleasant fragrance. The forests are thick with *Pinus sylvestris* (Scotch Pine), *Betula pendula* (Weeping Birch) and *Larix* (Larch) - a handsome combination.

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Our next stop was Alma Alta, the capital of Kazakstan, which is surrounded on three sides by high mountains. On leaving the terminal at the airport, our first view was an impressive planting

of roses. There were roses everywhere; along the streets, in small parks, and in front of public buildings. Our local guide told us that there are a million roses for the million people who inhabit the city. It is also well planted with trees which, the guide told us, are necessary as air conditioners and purifiers to counteract the otherwise stagnant air which results from the city's location. We visited Alma Alta's Botanical Garden which was far less well groomed than Moscow's Garden. There were many varieties of shrubs and trees, honeysuckles, willows, and fruiting native cherries and apricots, both small in size but sweet. (Unfortunately, it was a hot day for a long walk and one of the less botanically enthusiastic members of our group concluded that we'd seen "Shrubus toomuchus".)

Tbilisi, our next city, is the capital of the Georgia Republic. Again the temperatures were around 90 F but low humidity kept it from being too oppressive. When we visited the large Botanical Garden there, we received the red carpet treatment. Since the garden is located on a steep incline and walking would have proved tiring, we were invited to ride up the hill in the Staff bus and van. The Staff showed us their Alpine area and then proudly led us to their American area with our own familiar plants. We walked back down through a wooded area to their offices and were invited to rest and have a cool carbonated drink of pear flavor. It was most refreshing. We visited open air markets in Alma Alta and Tbilisi and found them fascinating. The golden melons we bought were delicious. The rows of clean vegetables: carrots, green beans, onions, garlic, etc. on display made a feast for the eyes. Herbs of all kinds were available and also dried peppers and other spices. Your editor was presented with a bunch of purple basil by one of the women stall keepers who refused monetary payment but accepted bubble gum, a popular American exchange. Flowers were present in abundance in the markets: roses of all shades, carnations, scabiosas, and dahlias stand out in one's mind.

Pyatagorsk is further north, - a town having mineral springs and claims to cure almost everything. We had flown across the Caucasus Mountains whose snowy peaks are so high that they appear above the clouds. Then on a trip to Dombai, we had a chance to visit these mountains. It was cool and the air refreshing here and more wildflowers were found. By now we had ceased exclaiming over the roadside collection of lovely yellow hollyhocks, numerous campanulas and tiny convolvulus. We were used to seeing fields of flowering sunflowers grown for their oil and wheat, barley, and maize on large communes in the steppe land at the foot of the mountains. We saw dozens upon dozens of green houses, all connected for growing tomatoes and cucumbers.

Leningrad was pleasantly cool after the rain which had preceded us. While in this interesting city we visited the Exhibition Hall of Flowers where there were arrangements of cut flowers plus artistically arranged gardens with various flowers in bloom - all under glass. (This building reminded me of the Greenhouses at Longwood Gardens.) Another day we visited the

Leningrad Botanical Garden where the largest herbarium in the world is located. We visited some of their well laid out rock gardens which were designated by areas: American, Asiatic, European. There was a large lily garden in full bloom with clumps of 10 or more plants together to give an impressive display. One of the unusual plants which caught our eye was a variety of clematis, not at all pretty, but very strange with furry brown petals. We were then conducted through their extensive greenhouses to see tropical, semi-tropical, and even moderate temperature plants growing happily under glass. One section was devoted to orchids, water-lilies, and lotus. There were immense pads of the Amazonian lilies as well as the more usual size, many in bloom.

Our trip included city tours everywhere, folk and ethnic museums, the Hermitage art museum, and even the zoological museum to see the famous Siberian mammoth. We saw the Moyseyev dancers in Moscow, Georgia folk dancers in Tbilisi, the circus in Leningrad, magnificent churches and icons everywhere, an interesting yurt where we had lunch Kazak style, and the reknown Moscow subways. It was an unforgettable three weeks.

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Apples Apples Apples

What a lovely day to pick apples, or more easily, pick a bagful from the large crate! Peter TenEyck, one of our trustees, had invited us all to picnic at his Indian Ladder farms, gather apples, drink cider, and learn about new and old apple varieties. We hope he will ask us another year when more Arboretum members can be there.

As we look forward to the end of our active season at the Arboretum, we want to thank all those who gave programs and those who contributed so many volunteer hours gardening or doing assorted jobs like publicity, baking for special events, or serving food at the Rare Plant Sale.

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GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM Membership Application

Member		\$10-25
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Address	_____	
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	Zip _____	
Patron	\$100+	
	Phone _____	Renewal []
	Amount _____	New
THANK YOU	Enclosed _____	Member []

Members receive a quarterly newsletter and early admission to the annual rare plant sale.

LOST ANSWERS
In Memory of Fred Lape

Blear sun, and the wind
strumming dark notes
on cable wires.
November again-- a year
since you banked your house
knee-deep in leaves
and took off south.

Renegade.
Hidebound to hardscrabble hills,
yet winters you chose
blue beaches.
As foreign to your nature
as modern paintings
to your murky walls, stove-warmed.
I remember those brash paintings--
like flamingos let in the coop
with laying hens.

An original,
someone called you.
I'll say this: your bachelor house
had original dust.

Oh, it was sad out there
last spring,
crocuses setting up landing flares
looking to guide you in,
nuthatches at your feeders in vain,
I, as always, with questions--
about my rhubarb's sickening,
about a poem that wouldn't go.

Leaves swirl.
I draw my rake once for me,
once for you,
I breathe pine doubly,
stoop to a weed red-tinged,
feather-leaved, hairy-stemmed--
what's its name?

Wires sing in a windy grief,
they know:
answers are fewer now.
Answers have died in Mexico

Ina Jones



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