



George Landis Arboretum NEWSLETTER

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Editor

Kathie Lippitt

A GRIM FINANCIAL DEFICIT was faced by the Arboretum this spring. We simply didn't have the money we needed to keep operations going for the year. It was not for fertilizers, peat moss or plants. It was even more basic than that: it was lack of money for salaries. The news leaked out, we were all saddened. Then, the miracle happened. A most generous, most anonymous, most kind donor gave a one time sizeable amount to the Arboretum to tide us over this year. Our deepest thanks to you, whoever you are.

MOUTON PEONY GARDEN

A garden of tree peonies in scintillating bloom has just arrived at the George Landis Arboretum, a gift from member, supporter, Mrs. Kay MacArthur, who donated them in memory of her late husband, John MacArthur. An equally avid supporter of the arboretum he served as legal counsel and as a Friend. Thankyou for your generosity. (See page 4)

1st prize MY FAVORITE TREE

PINE TREE

MIKE RUGONE

I love the sound of pine trees. Oh, how they whistle and whisper in their dark places! It seems that they all have their little hiding spots. When it snows it looks like they have their own hula skirts. It looks beautiful. And in lightning storms they look haunted but don't be afraid. In 50 minutes you'll see

sunny hands and arms on the trees. They look like they are alive. Oh, just listen how they whisper in a wind storm and turn and twist in that wonderful wind storm! My favorite tree is right in front of my house. In a few weeks it will be time for summer. I climb my tree and read and think my tree is beautiful.

Mrs. Parry's class Glenmont School

2nd prize

MY FAVORITE TREE

BECKY RICHMOND

My favorite tree is a white birch tree. I like the white birch tree because I like it when the moonlight shows up on it and all the other trees stay dark, especially when the stars are out. I also like the white birch tree because my aunt has one in her back yard. And I like to sit at the bottom of it and read a book or sometimes I climb up in it and watch the birds sit and chirp in other trees around my favorite tree and me. What I really like about my favorite tree is that I can talk to it when I have a problem, and when I get mad it won't get mad back. But my most favorite thing that I like about it is that it's my very best friend. And it's so nice to see it glow like a star at night in the moonlight. And that's all about my favorite tree and also it's my best friend.

Elmer Avenue School Schenestady

Margaret Law enjoys reading the essays, contacting the schools, as much as she enjoys trees and children. Each school that entered the contest (continued on page 3)

GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM
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From the President  
FAREWELL AND WELCOME

It is with much regret that we accept the resignation of Margaret Law as editor of this sheet. For many years she has diligently and faithfully pried out and reported our news and kept us all in touch with the affairs of the Arboretum. This bulletin is truly the glue that holds us all together. Margaret has done a wonderful job for which we all owe her a great debt of gratitude.

We are most fortunate to have such a capable and experienced successor right on our board in the person of Kathie Lippitt. We welcome her to this new post and assure her of one hundred per cent support and cooperation, knowing she will follow in Margaret's footsteps with great success.

We are very happy to be forming a friendly relationship with our neighbors the Charleston Historical society. Their interesting and informative calendar of events offers a diverse program all summer long right up to Christmas. It is posted in the meeting house and we urge all our members to avail themselves of these fine events, just as we hope to welcome their members to our programs all year long.

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from the DIRECTOR  
Pamela H. Rowling

GREENHOUSE and \$5,000 towards the erection of it, have both been donated by Dr. and Mrs. Raymond in memory of their son. Their generous donation will allow the foundation to be installed beginning July 1, 1989, if the ground is dried up sufficiently. Time is needed to coordinate volunteers and get all the framing members cleaned up and oiled and ready for use. Goal is for a dedication date the end of September.

There is a strong possibility of additional funding through the Power Authority via Gail Schaffer. I am trying to get Adirondack Alternate Energy Company involved in the finished design of the work space i.e. designing this area to be heated by solar energy. Their design work would no doubt give us more credence with our Power Authority application.

HORTICULTURE: The garden is truly coming back to life. Many donations have been made this year.

1. The Friends of the George Landis Arboretum have donated for planting on the grounds, plants left over from the plant sale. Approximately 25 plants will be planted.

2. Dr. John Abbuhl has made many large donations of plant materials both for planting on the grounds and for sale in future plant sales. Some plants will be installed on the Arboretum grounds as part of permanent planting.

3. I have donated two pine groupings and a trio of lilacs to be noted.

LILACS Mr. John Carvill, Vice President of the International Lilac Society is arranging for the donation of many lilac cultivars, both to replace plants we have lost over the years and new additions.

MEMBERS of the West Hills Garden Club held a successful work day here on May 1.

LEGISLATIVE GRANT ITEM: We were not allotted any money due to the extreme budgetary shortfall. IMS MAP I: We were offered two choices of museum reviewer. I have selected Dr. Donald Pfister from Harvard University both for climatic reasons and because it gives us the possibility of a connection with the Arnold Arboretum.

CAMP SUMMITT: Mr. Floyd Guernsey referred me to the new supervisor Rosetta Y. Burke. There appears to be the strong possibility of considerable heavy work aid from Camp Summitt.

PHYSICAL PLANT: Roadside drainage ditches and culverts are being cleaned and reset by town crews.

The donation 'box' has been installed in the information shed and is collecting money. The box is a steel cylinder that has been sunk into the ground. The shed is being redone inside, signs, etc.

OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE the collapsing sunpit will be rebuilt.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Weekend series attendance is up considerably.

Birdwalk- 19 people (6 in '88)

Nature Photography- 14 people attended, \$18.00 collected in donations.

Rambles- a new and promising program.

We have had reservation bristlecone pine. The prizes were all announced on Rare Plant Sale Day, Arbor Day this year. Three cheers for the students, their teachers and Mrs. Law!!!

s from two schools, Schalmont and Cobleskill. Mary Ann Finley is coordinating these events.

Anne Jaster, having just taught a course in botanical art for ECDS, has agreed to teach at the arboretum. This is a point of interest to a great many people and should be a successful offering.

MEMBERSHIPS Judging from the response to our membership letter and remittance envelope and from the number of new members, confidence in our arboretum is growing and will continue to do so!

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#### VERSATILE PERENNIAL GARDENERS

Pam Yourno speaks with pride about the Albany County Master Gardener Project for the George Landis Arboretum. Asked to come over by Pam Rowling, the group undertook the remaking of the first three long flower beds along the driveway, in front of the Lape Homestead to the barn, the Van Loveland garden area. "We started weeding, found plants, put them in the holding bed behind the barn," said Chairperson Pam Yourno, "Then we divided the beds into three parts: low key bed near the house, beds two and three, in the middle, where we developed a cottage garden look." It's been 9 months of work-- 100 hours credit for several of the eleven Master Gardeners. "They have been coming every week since the first of April, whether it was snowing, raining, blowing cold, or bugs biting and 90 degrees. They have been working!" said Pam Rowling. Phyllis Schilling, Andrea Modney and Pam

Yourno have spent last winter working on the plan for these beds, and contacting several donors, one of whom gave named daylilies, and ordering other plants which they wished to place in the beds. They began working May '88 and will finish June '89. "Our deep concern is to hand them over to a new volunteer group who will take responsibility for up keep of them," said Pam Yourno, thinking of all the work that had gone in to remaking the garden and how very quickly nature reclaim them. Donna Moore, Agriculture Agent for Albany County, was at the Arboretum June 10 to hear Pam Yourno and Andrea Modney present their talk "The Versatile Perennial", done complete with accoutrements of hat, boots, and plenty of gusto.

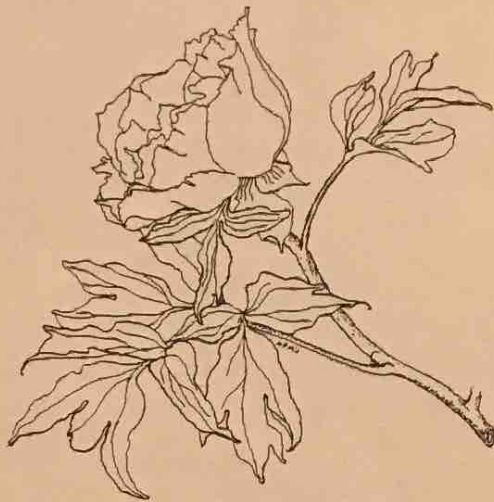
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to care for three beautifully completed long flower beds along the drive way, in front of the Lape Homestead to the barn, the Van Loveland garden area at the George Landis Arboretum. They need your attention, your refusal to let weeds grow among their roots, your admiration in exchange for which you will come away knowing more about each of the plants, when it blooms, what it looks like as it loses its petals, what kind of seed pod it has-- its name and you will be one of the first to see each new leaf, each new bloom.

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(FAVORITE TREE continued from page 1) was awarded a bristlecone pine. The prizes were all announced on Rare Plant Sale Day, Arbor Day this year. Three cheers for the students, their teachers and Mrs. Law!!!

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With unsolicited coatings of sweat or rain and biting insects and poison ivy to name just a few of the freebies of arboretum work, come heaps of praise from Pam for each and every one of the volunteers at the arboretum: Florence Grimm, Beverly Waite, Gil O'Brien, Sam Jackson, Dick Law, Lucinda Willemain, Anne Jaster, Mary Ann Finley, and if I didn't mention your name, you be sure to call (Kathie, 399-4544).. Without you and Pam there would be nothing but weeds at the arboretum, no reason for Donald Rexford to make beautiful labels, for Jack Middleton to build bridges, or for the Friends or the Trustees to meet.



*Paeonia suffruticosa*  
'Tama-Fuyū'

## THE MOUTON OR TREE PEONY

*Paeonia suffruticosa*

Pamela H. Rowling

The family of the Buttercups, the *Ranunculaceae*, reaches its highest degree of effulgence in the group known as the tree peony.

Native to the mountainous regions of China and Tibet, there are three major species of tree peonies. All are small woody shrubs ranging in height from two to six feet with equal or broader spread. All have pinnately compound leaves, some of which display lovely fall colors. *Paeonia suffruticosa* is the most familiar species, in cultivation in China and Japan since ancient times. Although variable in flower this species typically bears huge (6" or more across) white blooms having a maroon blotch on the inside of each petal.

*Paeonia Delavayi*, a lesser known species introduced in 1908 differs in the glaucous quality of its foliage, the smaller size of the overall plant (it reaches only 3 feet compared to the 6' or the preceding species), and its smaller (2"-4" across) flowers typically maroon in color. *P. Delavayi* is stoloniferous and so forms clumps.

*Paeonia lutea*, similar in stature to the preceding species also has glaucous leaves. The flowers of this species are golden

yellow, fragrant and range from 2"-5" across.

Since time immemorial the tree or Mouton peony has been the subject of admiration, poetry and painting in its native Orient. To the Chinese it symbolizes springtime, so was always given a place of honor in the garden.

Sometime between the 5th and 8th century Buddhist monks introduced the tree peony to Japan. Here again it was planted for special display, being consistently connected in art with the peacock.

In 1787 it was exported to England, later to France and then on to the United States.

Tree peonies are surprisingly undemanding in cultivation. Though native to mountain areas, in the garden they seem to appreciate some protection from severe winds. The new growth of cultivated material is typically brittle and easily broken by strong gusts.

Tree peonies may be damaged in this area if they begin growth too early and then are hit by a late freeze. Due to this fact, a northern exposure to help delay the breaking of dormancy and light winter shelter is advisable.

Like their herbaceous kin, the tree peonies prefer a rich, deep well drained loam. At the Arboretum we amend our heavy clay soil with compost, peat, limestone and bonemeal at planting time. *P. suffruticosa* is said to require a pH of around 7 and may benefit from additional limestone.

Propagation of the tree peonies may be carried out in a number of ways. Species can be raised from seed which germinate readily if collected just as the seeds begin to turn brown in the capsule but before the capsule has fully ripened and split open. If fully ripe the seeds often have already entered dormancy and will take quite a bit longer to germinate (1--2 years).

Hybrids or particular variants of species may be propagated vegetatively in order to produce plants identical to the stock plant. Two methods most commonly used are layering and grafting. *P. Delavayi* with its unusual stoloniferous growth habit may be divided. Most commercially available plants are grafted on the fleshy root of either *Paeonia lactiflora* or *P. officinalis*, both of which are (continued on page 6)

## BOTANICAL ART

Art was one of Fred Lape's many fields of interest and achievement. Another, of course, was horticulture. The combination of the two, botanical art, is a subject which seems in recent years to be enjoying increasing popularity.

A botanical drawing or painting is primarily produced to record the distinguishing characteristics of a plant—its growth habit, its flower structure, even the appearance of its pollen grains! For clarity, such illustrations beat photographs. Their function, like that of medical illustration, is to teach. The best "botanicals" transcend this scientific purpose and stand on their own as art. The forms, textures and colors of plants are a varied and challenging subject for the artist. Rendered with accuracy and arranged with sensitivity, the result both informs and delights.

Fred would be pleased could he know that the upper room of the barn is being converted into an art room for those who would like to pursue art inspired by the wild and cultivated plants of the Arboretum. We will meet there on Tuesdays to sharpen our eyes, improve our skills, and enjoy the company of others who love plants and art. Whatever your experience is, join us.

--Anne Jaster

NATURE'S MIRROR 200 YEARS OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION, an exhibition of original drawings, watercolors, prints and books, drawn from the holdings of the New York Public Library, the New York Botanical Garden and the Royal Botanic Garden in Kew, England, is at the New York Public Library at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street. (A short walk from Grand Central Station) through September 2.

*Drawing opposite page*  
*Paeonia suffruticosa*  
*"Tama-Fuyo"*  
Anne Jaster



*Solomon's Seal*  
*Polygonatum biflorum*  
Molly Sargent



*False Solomon's Seal*  
*Smilacina stellata*  
Molly Sargent

(PEONY continued from page 4) herbaceous species. The grafting is done in August, the scion being placed on the rootstock, triangling is the grafting method used. following this procedure, the plants are potted and placed in a shaded, closed frame until the union 'takes'. Plants are then hardened off but left in the frame undisturbed but with ventilation until the following planting season.

Most of the disease problems of peonies are fungal in nature, botrytis being the most common, causing wilt and a grey cottony covering on affected plants. If certain cultural requirements are met, i.e. good soil drainage, and good air circulation coupled with meticulous garden sanitation (cleaning up all diseased and dead shoots and disposing of them), the development of disease problems will probably be prevented.

There are many selections of tree peonies available. Outstanding varieties of the species have been propagated and are in specialty nurseries. Hybrids between the species have broadened the range of both floral color and vegetative form. Some of the outstanding modern hybridizers are Victor Lemoine of France, Prof. A.P. Saunders of Clinton, NY, and William Gratwick and Nassos Daphnis of Pavilion, NY.

I have listed below the peonies that have just arrived, potted and blooming in their shipping boxes! We purchased the plants from Klehm Nurseries in Illinois and I praise highly the quality and care evident in the condition of these plants. If our monsoon slows down, the plants will be in the ground by midsummer

Hybrids of A.P.Saunders:

'Banquet' red semi-double  
 'Black Panther' dark red semi-double  
 'Canary' yellow single  
 'Savage Splendor' ivory blend single  
 'Thunderbolt' red single

Hybrids of Nassos Daphnis

'Kronos'(God of Time)  
 dark red semi-double  
 'Themis'(Goddess of Law,  
 Order,Justice pink semi-double  
 'Zephyrus' (God of the West Wind)  
 peach pink semi-double

Hybrids of William Gratwick

'Companion of Serenity' pink single  
 'Guardian of the Monastery' lavender single  
 Of Ancient Japanese Origin  
 'Domoto hybrids' pink single  
 Species  
 'Joseph Rock' white semi-double

We are also unusually fortunate to have close by, in Schenectady, on the grounds of Union College an outstanding collection of tree peonies in Jackson Garden which is open to the public.

For further information on tree peonies: THE MOUTAN OR TREE PEONY, by Michael Haworth-Booth, St. Martin's Press, 1963. PEONIES OUTDOORS AND IN, by Arno and Irene Nehrling, Hearthside Press, Inc., 1960.

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Heath (*Erica carnea*) is a dwarf shrub of the family Ericaceae, which grows in quite acid (ericaceous) soil. Coming from the Alps and mountains of central Europe, it is 6-10" tall, with deep rosy-red bloom in earliest spring. There are many named varieties with subtle differences in the flower and foliage color. The plant flourishes in poor soil, grows leggy in good soil. Shear it back after blooming to keep new growth coming from the base. Don't hesitate to shear back winter burning. If planting a number of plants at the same time, space them a foot apart for ease of care the first year and then take out the true dwarfs before they become overrun by the larger more exuberant growth. An annual dressing of sand and peat worked into the soil around them encourages layering. At the Arboretum we have *Erica carnea* and a very hardy relative, *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia* both species, both doing well. They are old standbys. In my own garden *Erica* x 'George Rendell' was filled with rose blooms the first time I looked at it in late March. Heather, (*Calluna vulgaris*), another heath relative, wants similar treatment, blooms July to fall. C. 'Gold', C. 'Crispa', C. 'Dainty Bess' all were in first class condition. All of these plants but the latter were new to my garden last year. Sources: ROCK GARDENING, Foster, TimberPress, 1982; DWARF SHRUBS, Wyman, Macmillan, 1974.

## FRIENDS OF THE ARBORETUM

Marcia Middleton

The Friends of the Arboretum have been busy these past several months, encouraging folks to come out and explore the treasures at the Arboretum.

At the Garden Show in March, Peter Rumora and Pam Rowling were cheerfully assisted by several volunteers as they taught people about the oldest living tree, the bristlecone pine. Each new member received a bristlecone seedling, and the seedlings were also available for sale. The booth, designed by Peter Rumora attracted numerous people. Many were glad to learn about the Arboretum and expressed an interest in getting out to visit.

In April another enthusiastic group turned out to help at the Schenectady Museum Plant Show., where Mary Ann Finley engaged each of the children in conversation about bristlecone pines and climbing mountains, and any other topic they wanted to talk about.

The Rare Plant Sale, one of our most popular annual events, was held at the end of April. As a result of good planning and many willing hands, everything proceeded smoothly. Despite cold and windy weather, the sale was a success. The Rare Plant Sale is a major fund raiser for the Friends.

### New officers of the Friends

Chairman .....Chuck Weed      Secretary.....Kathy Johnson  
Chairman-Elect.....Peter Rumora      Treasurer.....Don Rexford

We've also been busy gearing up for an enthusiastic schedule of week end activities, coordinated by Pam Rowling. In addition to repeating some of the most popular events from previous years, many new programs have been added. These educational activities are a major component of the Friends' endeavors to promote and support the Arboretum.

So, what do you think? Would you like to become a Friend? Come and Explore the treasures at the Arboretum. Meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of each month. Meeting places vary, so write care of the Arboretum or call (518) 875-6935.

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### SCHOOL'S OUT! HAVE FUN! with Mary Ann Finley

1. If you like to draw:

A. Find a growing flower or other plant. Make a sketch of it every day and notice how it changes.

B. Look at a plant or an insect or other natural object through a hand lens or microscope and draw it the way it looks when enlarged.

C. Make a drawing (on paper) using only natural materials. Charcoal from an old fire gives different results than artists charcoal. Wet stones sometimes give nice shades of true earth colors.

Be careful not to use any rare flowers or plants for this!

2. If you like math:

A. Graph the number of different colors of flowers seen on a walk through a field or along a road. Repeat this several times during the summer. Do your results change?

B. Find the percent of flowers of one color in an area by counting all the flowers of that color and dividing that number by the total number of flowers in the area. Then multiply by 100.

C. Find the percentage of grass plants in a measured section of your lawn. Compare this with a similar section in a field or park. (Stay off newly seeded or newly "treated" lawns!)

3. If you like to write select a flower, tree, or other natural object and write about it in a poem, story, or a most careful description of it. Which kind of writing was easiest? Which most fun?

4. If you like to read try:

A. DO NOT DISTURB. This is a new book about sleep.

B. Ask your librarian about new books at your reading level.

C. Look for a book called BORN IN THE SPRING. This has very nice pictures of wild flowers.

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To become a member send \$15.00 to THE GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM, Esperance, N Y 12066.

The following word search puzzle contains some words associated with green plants. They may go in any direction but do not bend. Give yourself two points for each word you find and two points for knowing its meaning. (It's o.k. to look up the words in the dictionary.)

P L A N T S D O X Y G E N C  
 E H C R O P S B E G R E E N  
 A F O O D W N S F L O W E R  
 S N I T R O G E N S W A G S  
 T M O R O O T A I U S T E M  
 A U R O D S O I L N C E S E  
 R E A P G T Y R F L O R A E  
 C F D I C O T N A I T E L H  
 H L E S T A R X T G Y T N I  
 G E R M I N A T E H L E A F  
 G G S E E D P G L T E A N T  
 S U O X Y B E R G R D S W Z  
 N M I T R O G O F R O N I A  
 B E A N B C R W D I N C O S

## SCHOOL'S OUT! HAVE FUN!

with Mary Ann Finley

\_\_\_ bean  
 \_\_\_ crops  
 \_\_\_ flower  
 \_\_\_ grow  
 \_\_\_ leaf  
 \_\_\_ oxygen  
 \_\_\_ root  
 \_\_\_ starch  
 \_\_\_ soil  
 \_\_\_ water  
 \_\_\_ peas  
 \_\_\_ tropism  
 \_\_\_ flora

\_\_\_ cotyledon  
 \_\_\_ dicot  
 \_\_\_ green  
 \_\_\_ germinate  
 \_\_\_ nitrogen  
 \_\_\_ photosynthesis  
 \_\_\_ stem  
 \_\_\_ sunlight  
 \_\_\_ seed  
 \_\_\_ air  
 \_\_\_ legume  
 \_\_\_ food  
 \_\_\_ reap



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