



THE NEWSLETTER LANDIS ARBORETUM

Esperance, New York

WINTER 2002

VOLUME 21, NO.

Landis Arboretum Named Old Growth Forest Headquarters

By Fred Breglia and Dave Yarrow

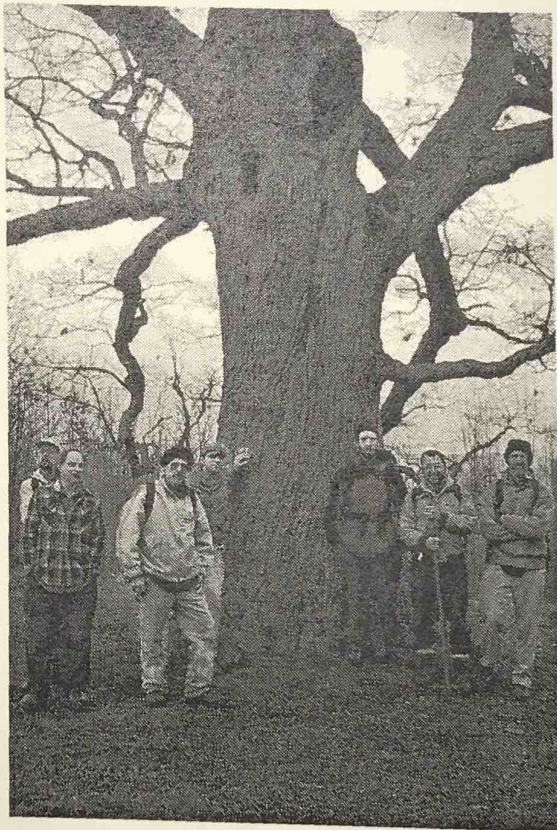
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The Arboretum's Great Oak and members of the Eastern New York Old Growth Survey Team pose for a portrait.

Photo by Dave Yarrow

A new survey team has been formed to investigate old growth forests in the Hudson-Mohawk Valley, Schoharie Valley, and Catskills. Led by arborist Fred Breglia and naturalist Dave Yarrow, with headquarters based at the Landis Arboretum, the new team will explore and evaluate potential old growth sites in 2002.

On Sunday, December 2, the Eastern New York Old Growth Survey Team searched for ancient trees on 20 acres on the crown of the hill above the Landis Arboretum farmhouse, and west of the Great Oak. The team concluded that

there is significant old growth on the site, but it has been disturbed and damaged in the 200-year history of European settlement. However, enough original forest and ancient trees remain to begin regenerating an exemplary old-growth forest. The forest consists of approximately 30% hemlock with ages of these trees exceeding 250–300 years or more, 20% red oak, with individual trees exceeding 200 years of age, and 10% white oak, with some trees over the 250–300 year range. Our Great Oak was estimated to be 400 years of age, making this the oldest tree on the Arboretum grounds. However, the team discovered an old stump that is in the 500-year old range. Other species that reach old growth status include black birch, basswood, sugar maple, beech, big tooth aspen, and ironwood.

When Christopher Columbus arrived in the Western Hemisphere, America, east of the Mississippi was sheltered by a thick cover of tall, majestic trees—an ancient forest of grandiose dimensions that had persisted for uncounted centuries. European settlers quickly cut the trees down to clear the land and convert that magnificent forest into farms, timber, charcoal, and potash. Now, in the 21st Century, only a tiny remnant of virgin forest—less than .25 percent—survives. Many more acres have re-grown with secondary stands of mature trees that often approximate the once great Eastern forests. Most of these ancient forest remnants and secondary old growth are in national and state forest preserves, with smaller tracts owned by environmental organizations, private citizens and timber companies.

Recently, efforts were begun to systematically locate, document and inventory remaining Eastern old growth forests. Surprising

Continued on page 2

THE LANDIS ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER is published quarterly for its members. The Arboretum's mission is to provide natural history and horticultural education through its programs and through its plant collection.

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FROM THE Garden

Winter is always a good time to visit the Arboretum and take a leisurely hike around the grounds. The winter landscape is stunning and the hawks and songbirds have been quite active.



Photo by Fred Breglia

We recently were awarded a \$1,500 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Regrant Program for a series of workshops with the theme of Art and Plants. Each workshop explores a different medium. Check the Calendar of Events for the Art and Plants programs.

I'd like say a special thank you to Gill O'Brien, an active member and very generous contributor for the maintenance of our equipment. (It's difficult to maintain the grounds

—Old Growth, continued from page 1

amounts of old growth were discovered—much more than expected or predicted—and a reassessment of forest policy and practices is resulting. Scientific research to study the dynamics that sustain these ancient forest communities is providing principles to foster an enlightened and sustainable forestry.

Old growth forests are valuable because they provide habitat for a maximum diversity of biological life, including many rare, endangered and threatened species. Because of their complexity and maturity, and their minimal disturbance by humans, ancient forests are crucial as controls to scientific studies of forest dynamics. Some believe ancient forests are treasuries of genetics. Certainly these magnificent stands of ancient trees provide experiences of appreciation and inspiration for a public seeking relief from crowded metropolitan areas. Studies also demonstrate old growth forests are the best, most efficient systems to remove carbon from the atmosphere in the effort to mitigate global climate change from greenhouse gases.

According to forest botanists and ecologists, old growth is defined by ten characteris-

grounds if we can't maintain the equipment.) He has replaced practically all of the hand tools that were stolen from the barn this past fall. Many of the tools had originally been donated by Gill. We thank you for seeing the need and helping to fill it.

The Landis is *your* arboretum. I don't get to talk to many members as often as I'd like, and I want to know how you feel about your arboretum.

- What is your favorite part of the grounds, your favorite class?
- What new programming would you like to see at Landis?
- How have you incorporated something you've learned at Landis in your gardens and on your property?

Email or write to me at landised@midtel.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

tics that describe the trees, understory and terrain. One key criterion is that at least six large trees per acre are at least 150 years old. Trees must be of a mixed variety of all age ranges, from young saplings to mature trees. The forest must have a well-developed canopy, with a significant number of snags, downed trees and woody debris. There should be an understory of small trees, shrubs, herbs, mosses, and lichens that indicate a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. Human disturbances should be absent or minimal. Human disturbances should be absent or minimal.

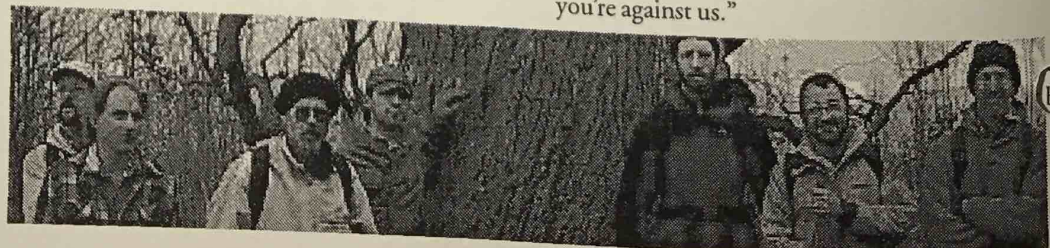
Other sites investigated by the Old Growth Survey Team include the Lisha Kill and the Albany Pine Bush, both owned by The Nature Conservancy, and Old Maid's Woods which is owned by the City of Schenectady.

Many more exciting events are planned for the year 2002. Call the Arboretum at 875-6935, or check out The Champion Tree website at <http://www.championtrees.org/index.htm> to find out ways you can help be a part of this effort, for more information on old growth forests and a calendar of events for future trips.

Remember, "If you're not forest then you're against us."

The Guys, from left: Jerry Horowitz, Daniel Karpen, Lou Sebesta, Ben Larsen, the Great Oak, Fred Breglia, Bruce Kershner, Peter Hirsch

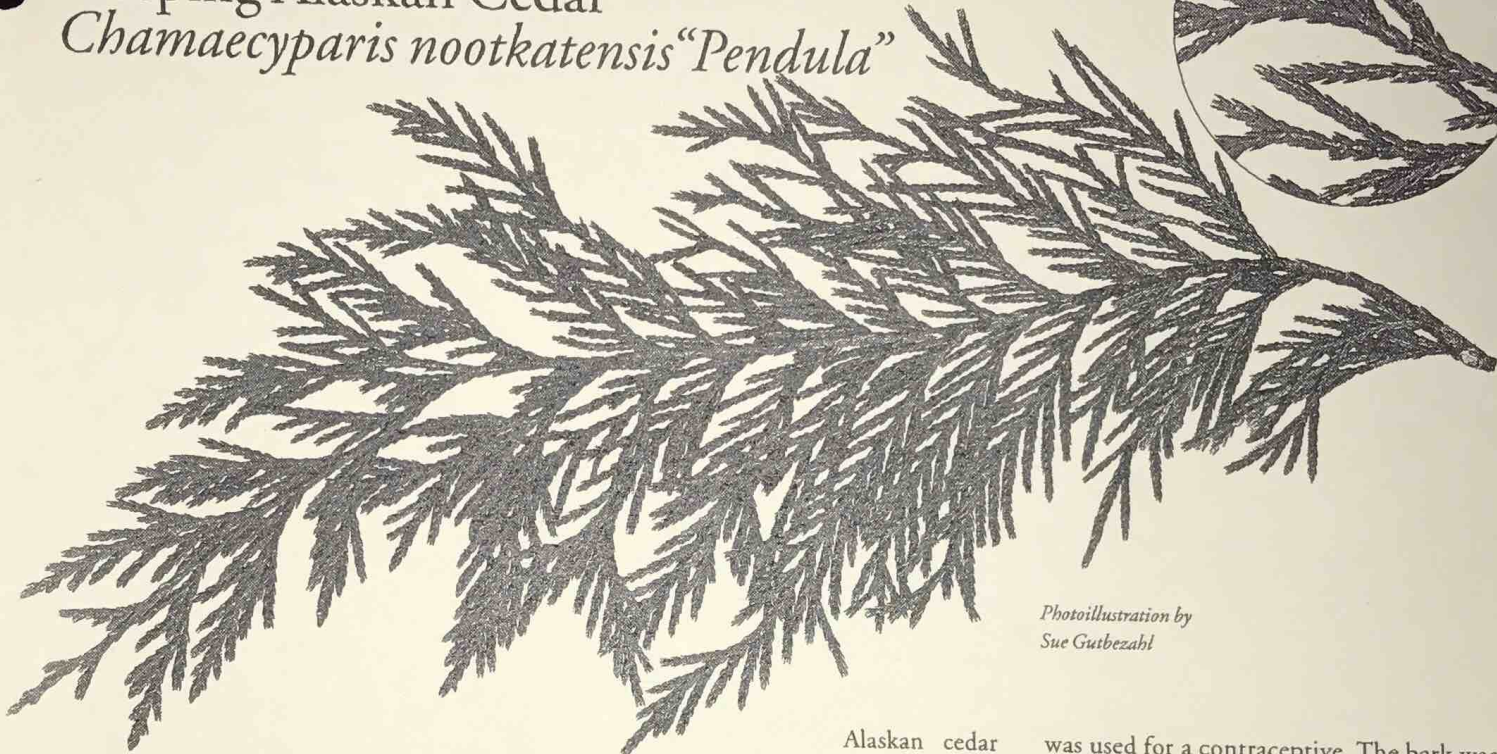
Photo by Dave Yarrow



A Most Graceful Conifer

● Weeping Alaskan Cedar

Chamaecyparis nootkatensis "Pendula"



Photoillustration by
Sue Gutbezahl

● In August 1982, a nursery plant purchased from Crailo Gardens in Ancram, New York, came to the Landis Arboretum. It was planted on the slope above the lower parking lot. After twenty years, it is doing just fine. "Pendula" is the cultivar of Alaskan cedar most cultivated in the eastern United States.

The species is native to the cooler, wetter regions of the Northwest from northern California to Alaska. Its name refers to Nootka Sound on the west side of Vancouver Island where it was first identified. In the northern part of the range, it is found at sea level. In the southern regions, it is found in mountain and subalpine forests in the coastal ranges up to 7500 feet. Pure stands are located in some areas, but usually the species is associated with other conifers in mixed forests. An old growth stand is featured in Mt. Rainier National Park. It is a very adaptable species and often succeeds in harsher sights and in boggy situations where other species tend to succumb to the elements. It is often one of few species to survive in avalanche-chutes—not only beautiful, but also tough. According to Dirr the species is, "...more cold hardy and adaptable than given credit." It is rated USDA hardiness zone 4 to 8A.

Alaskan cedar may reach 120 feet in its native habitat, but is one-half or less in height in cultivation. It is an extremely slow growing tree with grayish-brown, fissured, and scaly bark. The wood is pale yellow, straight-grained, hard, and very resistant to decay. Twigs tend to be 4-angled. The male cones are yellow and very small; whereas, the female cones are one-half inch in diameter, green, tinged purple with scales having a sharp triangular projection. Cones mature in two years. The species has drooping branches and the cultivar "Pendula" has dramatically drooping branches. (This growth habit is great for shedding heavy snow loads.) The evergreen, scale-like needles differ from other *chamaecyparis* in having no white Xs on the underside of the scales. The foliage also has a rank odor described as that of raw potatoes or juniper. Details like this give taxonomists something to think about: this species is not a typical example of the genus—no white Xs and it smells.

According to the Washington State ethnobotany publication on Alaskan cedar, Native Americans were intimately involved with this tree. They used it for bows, paddles, carved masks, dishes, fishing net hoops, and adze handles. One tribe made tea of the branches to treat insanity. Chewing the green cones and swallowing the juice

was used for a contraceptive. The bark was processed with duck down or wool into clothes and blankets. Shredded bark became bandages. Root bark was split for weaving baskets. Folklore claims the tree once had human form.

Now our best logs are sent to Japan because they love this wood. The wood is used for boat building, utility poles, flooring, decking, furniture, doors, paneling, toys, musical instruments, and carving. Horticultural uses include bonsai, street plantings, and landscape specimens. It can handle shade, part sun, and full sun. It tolerates a variety of soils, provided they are acidic and well-drained. It poses few problems for the home gardener. This is an outstanding ornamental, especially the "Pendula" cultivar.

The species can be reproduced from cuttings treated with indolebutyric acid and grown in a greenhouse for one year.

The oldest known specimens include one dated at 1834 years located in the Caren Range in British Columbia and another at 1636 years from Vancouver Island.

View the Arboretum's specimen and call up the images of its origins—mountains, water, islands, forests, and Native Americans. Plant one yourself. It may still be here 2000 years from now.

WELCOME New Members

Alyce Lyons
Stephen Sabo
Robert Fritz Jr.
Mark Braun

COLLECTIONS News

by Fred Breglia, Head of Horticulture and Operations

Winter's solstice has passed which means colder temperatures and longer days. The structure of the trees is very beautiful this time of year. One can see textures and colors in the branches, twigs, and bark far better than any other time of year. Their shadows leave intricate patterns on the ground below. The evergreens are absolutely striking against the blue sky. The Great Oak stands guard on the hilltop where it has been for the past 400 years. Turkey tracks near the winterberry holly indicate that their bright orange berries are a welcome treat. Deer tracks are visible everywhere.

Friends have asked me what I do here in the winter when things slow down. When I look back at my work log for the past few months the word "slow" doesn't really fit winter activities here at Landis. This winter in particular has been filled with activity.

- The New York State Department of Corrections has provided us another work crew this winter; we have the Camp Summit crew for 1000 hours. They are back in action clearing more brush and invasive aliens near the Lape Memorial and on the hillside near the lower parking lot. Honeysuckle, black locust, and buckthorn are the primary targets for the Summit work crew.

- The acreage that we obtained from Sam Bass is being cleaned up and brush piled into neat little mounds for animal habitat. Trails are being cleared and made more usable.

- The Arboretum's newly-formed Native Plant Committee is developing a plan to encourage more observation and study of our native plants. In addition to the many wonderful native species we already have, we are working on ways to add many more to our already diverse site.

- The bluebird houses that were installed a few years ago have been very successful. Visitors can come and see our New York State bird, even in the winter. Bluebirds migrate to warmer climates but will sometimes overwinter right here in the cold of the Northeast. This year I have seen more bluebirds than ever before. With over 20 fledglings surviving each year, more and more birds are staying during the cold weather. Views of the Schoharie Valley are great with all the leaves off the trees, and even better when a bluebird flies right in front of you!



Among the native trees at the Landis Arboretum: *Acer pennsylvanicum*, also known by other names such as moosewood or striped maple.


Photo by Sonja Javarone

- I have recently applied to have our oak collection registered with the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA). The Landis Arboretum will be the official holder for oaks for this region of our country. Our oak collection is currently at 16 species, all in good health, and over 50 years old. Many of our oaks were started from seed collected by Fred Lape. In addition, we have many oaks that are in the old growth status, being over 150 years old. See the old growth article on page 1 for more information.

Trees and shrubs experience a period of dormancy during the winter months. Staff, volunteers, and trustees don't. I'll leave you with this wintry quote:

"I frequently tramped eight to ten miles though the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines."

Henry David Thoreau, 1817-1862



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WISH LIST

We are looking for the following items (or estimated dollar amount to purchase items).

Books

The Ortho Problem Solver, edited by Michael Smith (\$200)

Manual of Herbaceous Ornamental Plants, Steven M. Still. (\$55)

Equipment

- Picnic tables and benches. (\$250)
- Small chainsaw (\$150)
- Small hand mower (\$150)
- Large commercial mower (\$4000)
- D.R. brush mower (\$2500)
- Hardback rakes, shovels, loppers, and mulch fork (\$200)
- Four-wheel drive pickup in good shape
- Troy Built hand cart

And always, the large tractor—

- A John Deere 790 (or machine of equal quality) 4wd, 30hp, with backhoe and loader. (\$20,000)

Acorn Shop

- clear plastic containers for storage:
Three 6" deep x 11" high x 26" long
Ten 9" deep x 11" high x 15-18" long
- 10 x 12 foot jute carpet in cream, tan or light beige color
- A few good painters. Call the office for more information

Project Wish List

We are looking for volunteers familiar with the following tasks (or equivalent dollar amount to complete these projects).

- Stone walkways to and from the farmhouse need rebuilding. (\$1000)
- Stone walls around the greenhouse and walls around perennial garden need rebuilding. (\$800)
- Machinery maintenance volunteer to do oil changes, tune-ups, etc., on our equipment. (\$500)

COMMITTEE News

The Native Connection

by Sonja Javarone

Where can we find the native plants at our Landis Arboretum? There are species in the Arboretum's developed areas that have their origins in temperate deciduous forests, mixed hardwoods, and conifer forests from around the world. Among those specimens, we have species native to the Northeast. Our oak collection has an especially complete group of natives. The most complete native collection is along the woodland trail, past the Great Oak, along the slopes behind the library, and ending at Willow Pond.

A group of volunteers, led by Ed Miller, is involved with presenting this resource in an organized fashion. Ed and his committee have been working since last spring. Their activities have included taking a census of species growing along the trails, planning displays of native plants—a bog garden is one example, obtaining and planting species to increase diversity—black maple, black gum, and others, and improving public visibility with signage, brochures, and educational materials.

We have a very favorable site for developing the appreciation of native plants. Within a short distance, one can move from mature forest, to old growth forest, meadow, softwoods, dry regions and wetlands. Each area supports a unique plant and animal community. It is one thing to see a native plant like hemlock in a landscape setting, and quite another to see hemlock in a mature old growth community.

Miller's group is a subcommittee of the Arboretum's horticulture committee. A development plan has been presented and accepted by the committee. The horticulture committee, previously lead by Chris Cash, is now chaired by Ken Carnes.

The work on native plants is concentrating on woody plants—trees, and shrubs. As the program progresses, herbaceous species will be studied and promoted. Volunteers and funding sources are being sought to support the native plant initiative. For more information, contact the Arboretum at 875-6935 or landis@midtel.net.

Promoting Perennials: The Landis Garden Volunteers

by Sonja Javarone

The Master Gardeners of Albany have been maintaining the Van Loveland garden since it was refurbished by the group many years ago after the death of Fred Lape. Now the Master Gardeners will be joined with a new group. Paul Blair, trustee and horticulture committee member, is presently organizing a committee to promote, expand, and develop garden displays. Paul's expertise and enthusiasm has generated the interest of many talented people willing to invest time and energy in this endeavor. One of the first goals is to rejuvenate the Beal Peony Garden. Other projects may include a clematis collection, alpine garden display, and a festival of blossoms.

Blair's group has had three organization and development meetings since last fall. More than forty persons have joined the group, now referred to as the Landis Garden Volunteers. Their vision is to have the Arboretum be recognized and respected within our community and among our peers for horticultural and educational garden displays.

Some of you may remember the gardens in the 1950s and 1960s when Fred Lape's friend Van Loveland developed the original gardens. He planted beds of iris, roses, gladiolus, and dahlias. It has been said that he would remind Fred of the importance of the flower gardens by saying:

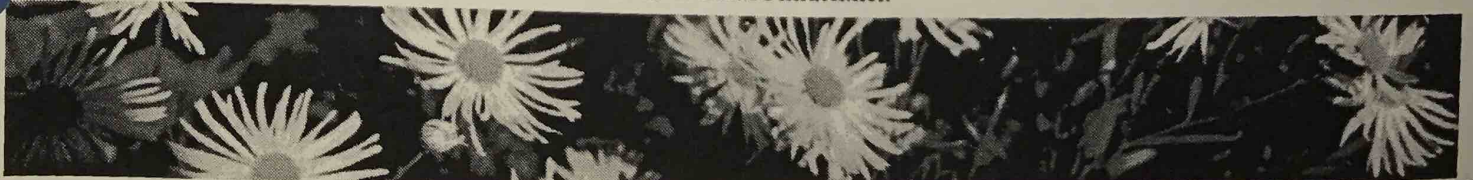
"Fred, you may have created an arboretum, but it is my flower gardens, that the public comes to see."

The tentative plans for developing the gardens will be reviewed in the near future by the horticulture committee. More exciting news will be forthcoming in future newsletters. As with all projects, volunteers and funding will be sought to support the Landis gardens.

For more information, contact the Arboretum at 875-6935 or landis@midtel.net.

Below: *Boltonia asteroides*

Photo by Sonja Javarone



MANY THANKS SPECIAL EVENTS & Classes

to the following people
for their generous gifts
and continuing support.

In no particular order...

Sam and Buster Bass for all the help
in posting the Arboretum's
property

Jackie Tomlinson for the lawnmower

Carol Wock for paint for the
Acorn Shop

Ron Needle for picking up and
repairing equipment

Leila and Carl Salmon
for generous donations of
various items including lawn
and garden equipment.

Gill O'Brien for replacing the stolen
hand tools.

Terry Staley and Sonja Javarone —
ongoing contributions of
beautiful photos of Landis
flora, fauna, events, and
buildings

Paul Blair, for leading an initiative
to increase the volunteer pool

All the volunteers who spent pre-
cious time and contributed
expertise, equipment, and
money to help maintain and
further the mission of the
Landis Arboretum.

The Horticulture Certificate Program continues
this spring with four exciting courses.

On March 5 is Fred Breglia's very popular
course on caring for the trees and shrubs. We
invest a great deal of time and money in these
plants as we improve the landscaping around our
homes. You will learn when to prune for the best
health of your trees and shrubs, rhododendrons,
for example. You'll also learn about soil structure
and how to deal effectively with the kind of soil
you have in your own yard.

And, again in your own yard...

Sandra Walck will teach another course
starting on Tuesday, April 2 that will introduce the
first steps in designing your landscape. Sandra
owns and operates her own garden design business
in Delmar and she'll have practical advice for stu-
dents in this four-week course.

For more experienced gardeners, there
is a marvelous opportunity to learn from Jason
Stone about gardening in containers. Stone has
worked for the Clark Foundation in Coopers-
town. If you've ever been to Cooperstown in the
summer months, you will have seen the wide use
of containers throughout the town. These "gar-
dens" welcome each season with exuberance and
you can do the same in your own yard or in public
spaces.

Heritage Gardening, scheduled to begin
on Wednesday, April 3 is being modified. Contact
the Landis Arboretum for information about this
course.

Please call the Arboretum at 875-6935
for more information about these courses and
how to register. Our instructors are experienced
professionals, and these courses offer a unique
opportunity to gardeners of all levels and ages.



NEW! From the Acorn Shop

The Acorn Shop will be opening on
Saturday, May 4, 2002. The shop will be
open on Monday through Friday, from
9am-4pm; Saturday, from 12-5pm and Sunday,
from 1-5. During the Spring Plant Sale, the
Acorn Shop will be open for the sale hours
(10am-4pm). Volunteers have been busy redeco-
rating and making the shop brighter and cheerier.

Come and check out our new books,
jewelry, garden supplies, our very popular mud-
gloves, and many new things.

We need volunteers for the shop on
weekends—it is a fun place to work—ask any of
us. Warning! We find that we are our own best
customers. Please call the office at 875-6935,
Barbara Hunt at 762-8390, or Diane Jankowski at
864-5716 if you have a few hours on weekends to
work in the shop. The Acorn Shop is located in the
Farmhouse.

Spring Clean-Up Day

Join us at the Arboretum on Saturday, April 27
from 9am-until..., for Spring Clean-up Day.

Meet other volunteers and staff, help the
Arboretum and make a day of it with friends and
family. Bring your garden gloves and pruners.
Snacks will be provided.

For more information, call the Arboretum at 875-
6935 or landis@midtel.com

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CALENDAR Upcoming Events

For registration and information call 518-875-6935 or landis@middel.net.

All events take place at the Arboretum unless noted.

Concerts and performances are presented in the Meeting House. Advance registration is requested.

Pre-payment and registration is required for all general classes and workshops, trips and Horticulture Certificate classes. Call the Arboretum for workshop fees.

NEW! For your convenience, payment can be made via Visa or MasterCard.

Family workshops with nature educator George Steele begin at the Arboretum Meeting House. Programs are free and no registration is necessary. Donations are greatly appreciated. Programs are held rain or shine.

For a more complete description of course contents, see the "Coming Attractions" insert in the Newsletter or related articles in the Newsletter.

March 5-26 (4 Tuesdays) 6:30- 8:30 pm

HORTICULTURE CERTIFICATE CLASS:

Trees and Shrubs Health Care

Instructor: Fred Breglia

Registration and payment required two weeks before the first class. See article, page x for more information. \$80

March 6-27 (4 Wednesdays) 6:30-8:30 pm

HORTICULTURE CERTIFICATE CLASS:

Container Gardens for Public and Private Places

Instructor: Jason Stone

Registration and payment required two weeks before the first class. See article, page 6, for more information. \$80

March 9 (Saturday) 9am-noon

GENERAL CLASS:

Tree Identification

Instructor: Fred Breglia

Registration and payment required by Wednesday, March 6. \$20 members/\$25 non-members

April 2-23 (4 Tuesdays) 6:30- 8:30 pm

HORTICULTURE CERTIFICATE CLASS:

First Steps in Landscape Design

Instructor: Sandra Walck

Registration and payment required two weeks before the first class. See article, page 6, for more information. \$80

April 3-24 (4 Wednesdays) 6:30-8:30 pm

HORTICULTURE CERTIFICATE CLASS:

Heritage Gardening

Instructor: tba

Registration and payment required two weeks before the first class. Call the Arboretum for updated information. \$80

April 4 (Thursday) 7-9pm

GENERAL CLASS:

The Art of Fine Gardening

Instructor: Kerry Mendez

Registration and payment required by Monday, April 1. \$18 members/\$20 non-members

April 5 (Friday) 8pm

ASTRONOMERS: Star Party

April 27 (Saturday) 9am-as long as you can stay

SPRING WORKFEST

April 28 (Sunday) 9am-2pm

GENERAL CLASS:

Waterfalls & Early Wildflowers of Schoharie County

Instructor: Steve Young and Laura Lehtonen

Registration and payment required by Wednesday, April 24. Lunch is included. \$40 members/\$45 non-members

April 28 (Saturday) 9am-2pm

FAMILY PROGRAM:

Spring Hawk Watch; Hawk Identification at 2 pm

Instructor: George Steele

Free; no registration required.

May 3 (Friday) 9pm

ASTRONOMERS: Star Party

May 4 (Saturday) 7:30am

GENERAL CLASS:

Bird Walk

Instructor: Chris Keefer. Free

May 11 (Saturday) 6-9am

FAMILY PROGRAM:

Bird Walking

Instructor: George Steele

Free; no registration required.

May 14, 21, 18, June 4, 11 (Tuesdays) 4-7pm

GENERAL CLASS:

"In Olivia's Garden"

Instructor: Anne Jaster

Registration and payment required by Wednesday, May 8. Registration is limited. \$45 members/\$55 non-members