



LANDIS ARBORETUM

THE NEWSLETTER

Esperance, New York

FALL 2005

VOLUME 24, NO. 4

Ancient Forest of Landis Arboretum

Fred Breglia, Head of Horticulture and Operations

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The Landis Arboretum's most recent land acquisition, which more than doubled the size of the Arboretum, contains a horticultural treasure.

One parcel of land near the Montgomery County line contains one of the oldest forests in the area. This ancient forest is approximately 30 acres in size and is located in the northeast corner of the Arboretum.

On August 20, a team of old growth forest experts surveyed the site and found various species of trees ranging from 150 to 350 years in age. "This is a forest that has been untouched since the Revolutionary War," said Bruce Kershner, an ancient forest authority and author of *The Sierra Club Guide to Ancient Forests of the Northeast*.

A fairly diverse range of species comprises the old growth forest. The dominant trees are American beech, sugar maple, hemlock, yellow birch, black birch, and red oak.

Other species include striped maple, basswood, black cherry, paper birch, bitternut hickory, American elm, and a few massive grape vines that are hundreds of years old and over 85 feet tall.

Several stands of large American beech make this forest

even more unique. Big beech trees growing in the wild are uncommon today due to a fungus disease known as the beech bark complex, which often kills off beech trees before they can attain their mature size.

Why has this forest been overlooked by loggers and developers over the years? The main reason is that topography—the trees are growing on a very steep hillside—helped to protect the site over the past 250 years.

A new trail overlooking the ravine will give visitors a chance to see what our forests looked like hundreds of years ago. The old growth forest is accessible to patrons by walking the Great Oak/Woodland Trail, starting in the corner of the field behind the greenhouse to the Great Oak. From there follow the Acorn Trail until you come to the bottom of the hill. You will take a left at the T-intersection and follow the signs to the Ancient Forest Overlook Trail. It is approximately three miles round trip from the parking lot to the old growth and back.

The newly acquired ancient forest and the smaller stand of old growth located near the Great Oak make Landis Arboretum an old growth forest headquarters. According to Mr. Kershner, Landis Arboretum has now become one of three arboreta in eastern North America that have old growth forests. The other two are the New York Botanical Garden and Rutgers University.

Why has this forest been overlooked by loggers and developers over the years? The main reason is that topography—the trees are growing on a very steep hillside—helped to protect the site over the past 250 years.



Dan Carpin measures a big one—a red maple.

Photo by Fred Breglia

Holiday Luncheon at suny

We are proud to announce our 3rd annual Holiday Luncheon, held jointly with SUNY's Division of Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Tourism. Chefs Keith Buerker, JoAnne Cloughly, and Bob Miller and their students will prepare an epicurean luncheon. Additional assistance for the event will be provided by the Advanced Food Production class of Cheryl Adams and Bob Sielaff.

Bruce Kershner, who will be featured as guest speaker at the luncheon, is an award-winning naturalist and an authority on America's old-growth forests. He is the author of ten previous books, including four on ancient forests.

Cofounder of the New York Old Growth Association, Kershner has discovered more than 150 ancient forest sites, including many of the tallest and oldest trees in the Northeast.

In addition to fabulous food, captivating conversation, and a dynamic speaker, we will again present some outstanding auction items. This event is a fundraiser for Landis, so be prepared to bid high and often.

Logistics: Friday, December 2. Doors open at 11:15 am and speaker at 1 pm. Location: SUNY Cobleskill, Champlin Lounge, Cobleskill, NY.

THE LANDIS ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER is published quarterly for its members. The Arboretum's mission is to foster the appreciation of trees and other plants and their importance in our environment.

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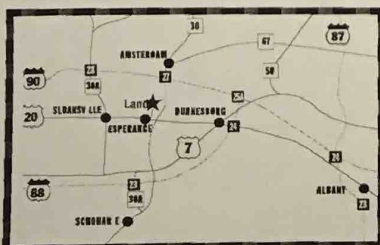
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The Arboretum is located one and one-half miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road. The Arboretum is one-quarter mile straight ahead. Visit our website for more information and directions.



FROM THE GARDEN

Gloria Van Duyne, Executive Director

Usually the weekend after our fall plant sale is a quiet one at Landis, but this year it was humming with the sound of trucks and slish-sloshing of tires landing with exuberant force in truck beds. A dozen volunteers pulled nearly a thousand decades-old tires from our newly acquired property.

The tires were taken by Roadside Tire and Auto to a facil-



Lawson Harris does tires.

ity in Fultonville, where they will be burned for energy.

We originally thought there were a few thousand tires. The more we pulled from the weeds, however, the more we found. Our new estimate is that there are at least several thousand left. Our next tire cleanup day will be scheduled for the Fall of 2006. All are welcome to join in some hard work and good food.

Photos by Gloria Van Duyne

Director to Leave Landis for DEC

An interview with Gloria Van Duyne
Nolan Marciniac

You never know where things will take you in life," Gloria Van Duyne said, looking back on her years at the Arboretum and anticipating the new direction her life will be taking her.

Van Duyne's new job will take her to the Urban and Community Forest Program at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

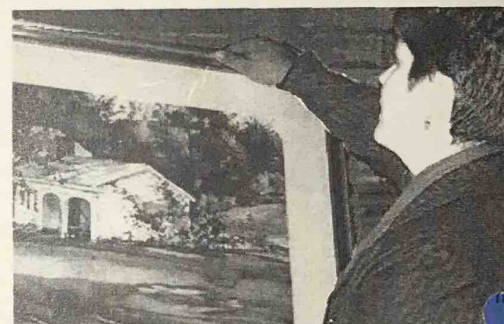
She has served—twice—as the executive director of the Landis Arboretum, from 1996 to 1997 and again from May 2001 through October 2005. During the interim, she and her husband John lived in Australia, where he established and managed a Borders Bookstore in Melbourne. From that assignment in Australia, Van Duyne and her husband had the chance to travel, not only to places "Down Under," but also to Fiji, Thailand, Ireland, and New Zealand.

After returning to the States, they settled in the Portland, Maine, area, and Van Duyne rediscovered a longstanding interest in Nature by serving as volunteer coordinator for the Maine Audubon Society.

Eventually, she and her husband were drawn back to Schoharie County, where she admits she feels a "connection" to the quality of life and the quality of the people. That "connection" brought her to accept the directorship for a second time.

She is most enthusiastic about the community of "plant people" at Landis. "I never met so many wonderful people," she said, "and that's what I'll miss most, the people." The plant sales seem "like family reunions" to her.

She admits that she'll also miss those spring mornings at Landis, the cars singing, the bluebirds in the crab apple blossoms, the scent of the lilacs. She will miss as well the opportunity to be part of an organization in which "every staff member, every volunteer, every visitor matters—a lot."



At a luncheon to recognize her contribution to the Arboretum, friends, staff and trustees presented Gloria Van Duyn with a watercolor of the Farmhouse. Attending were Paul Blair, Susan Carver, Herm and Fran Finkbeiner, Jack Fritz, Ken Hotopp, Anne Jaster, Sonja Javarone, Bonnie Keller, Dolores Kloczko, Jeff Schworm, Carol Wock, and Nick Zabawsky.

Photos by Marian Hotopp

She regards herself as fortunate to have been executive director during a critical phase of the evolution of the Arboretum, which she believes is entering its mature stage as an institution. She sees a long future for Landis—a future of change. Van Duyne said that the Arboretum has recently received "incredible press," which she credits with making the public increasingly more aware of the importance of Landis as a unique regional resource. She suggested that the recent land acquisition, bringing Landis' holdings to 548 acres, signals a new phase in Arboretum's development. And during her last week as executive director, she received the Arboretum's very first corporate sponsorship.

A seasoned traveler, Van Duyne journeyed back to Landis from half-way around the world. She referred to her years as executive director as "exploration." In her new position with DEC, she will continue to explore yet another territory. And she is certain to return to Landis yet again—this time as a volunteer.

Survivor

Quercus rubra

by Sonja Javarone

The turkeys and gray squirrels at Landis eagerly consume the large shallow-cupped acorns of the northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*). A turkey can consume 220 acorns in one meal. Blue jays are given credit for helping to reforest after the last ice age by flying up to three miles carrying acorns. The squirrels supposedly favor northern red oak acorns, which take two years to mature, over the acorns of all other oaks. Birds, deer, moose, mice, bears and domestic hogs all eat the acorns. Native Americans used the acorns for food and the leaves and bark for medicinal purposes. The acorns have to be leached to remove the bitter tannins, a time-consuming process that has discouraged others from experiencing acorn foodstuffs.

This tree species, however, is not to be overlooked in the landscape. It is a favorite shade, lawn, park, and street tree. It is a favorite oak in Europe since it was first planted in the seventeenth century in Bishop Compton's garden near Fulham. It grows fast, is tolerant of urban life, and has many attractive features.

Landis is privileged to have northern red oak in our native woodlands, both in the newly acquired old growth forest and in the oak collection created by Fred Lape over fifty years ago. This species and others in the red oak group are native to eastern and central North America. Northern red oak is the most northerly of the eastern oaks, reaching into southeast Canada.

The red oak group includes species having bristle-tipped leaves and a more porous wood than the white oak group. Red oaks are not used for wine casks and liquid storage. They leak. The white oak group including (*Q. alba*) our Landis icon, has rounded lobed leaves, finer grained wood, and acorns that mature in one year. Storage containers made from white oak do not leak. The northern red oak has seven-inch leaves with seven to eleven bristle-tipped lobes. The leaves are generally widest above the middle of the leaf and have hairy tufts in the axils of the veins on the bottom side. The northern red oak has late developing russet-red autumn foliage, and the leaves tend to be retained on the tree for a long time. Both red and white groups are used to make excellent furniture. The northern red oak has reddish-brown wood that is hard, heavy, and strong. It is one of our best hardwoods.

Although northern red oak is monocious, having both male and female flowers on the same tree, it does hybridize with many other oaks in the red oak group. Taxonomists have differed on the scientific

Drawing of quercus rubra: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (dnr.wi.gov)

name (*Q. borealis*, *Q. maxima*), but in 1950 the name was restored to the original name given by Linnaeus (*Q. rubra*).

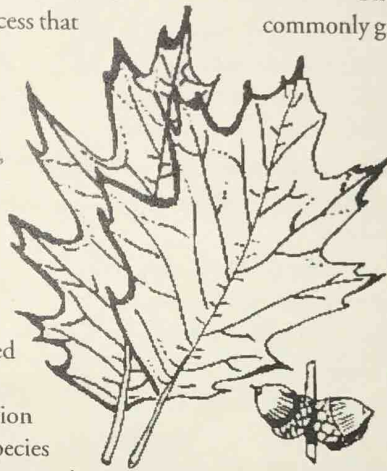
The northern red oak is established in many tree associations throughout its range. At Landis it is found with maple, beech, basswood, hemlock, and black cherry. It is not shade tolerant and does not produce offspring in the dense forest, a clue that it is a long-lived subdominant in the mature forests in this region. In other associations with pines and red cedar, the northern red oak is dominant, although the population may be maintained by fire, as the tree is fire resistant.

The species is the tallest and most rapidly growing of the oaks, commonly growing to 100 feet in height and three feet in diameter. On favorable sites, it may grow to 160 feet in height and eight feet in diameter. It approaches its potential in the bottomlands of the Ohio valley and the floodplains of Illinois. The plant is easily transplanted or grown from seed. After repeated fire in the native environment, buds are retained in callus tissue filled with dormant buds, and stump sprouting is common. It tolerates a wide range of soil conditions and is ozone resistant. Survival of the fittest aptly describes the qualities of this tree that may live 300 years or more. The tree is hardy to USDA Zone 3 (minus 40 degrees F).

Can you resist having this gem of the forest living near you? Give it room. It is a big, handsome tree with a wide-spreading rounded crown.

By the way, there is a southern red oak (*Q. falcata*), also known as Spanish oak. Since it is native to the southeastern United States, do not look for it growing around here.

One caution, however: do not take shelter under any oak tree in a thunderstorm. Oaks are the trees most often struck by lightning. Don't say I didn't tell you.



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www.plantscapesflorists.com

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WISH LIST

Equipment Wish List

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

- Bird feeders and seed
- 20 pairs of snowshoes
- Projector for PowerPoint presentations
- Newish laptop computer
- Picnic tables and benches (\$250)
- Hardback rakes, shovels, loppers, and mulch fork (\$200)
- Trowels and other small gardening tools
- Troy Built hand cart
- And always, the large tractor—
- Used tractor (Ford or equal quality) with front-end loader (\$7000)
- Snow blower

Project Wish List

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

- Plumber for odds and ends (\$300)
- Mechanic to work on our pickup trucks
- Stone walls around the greenhouse and walls around perennial garden need rebuilding. (\$800)
- Someone to work on or donate a quilt to raffle next year (2006).

Donations

- \$1000 (ea.) for printing new and updated brochures

Education Wish List

- Snowshoes
- Animal skins in good condition
- Wildlife guides
- Insect collections
- Local rocks and fossils
- Tree identification books
- Leaf identification books
- White enamel pans
- Tall rubber boots
- Magnifying glasses
- Walkie-talkies
- Environmental science tools

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are precious resources at Landis. They donate their time indoors and out; in groups or as individuals; on a regular basis or a special basis—and have fun doing it. You can join this valuable group of supporters in any of the areas described below. Please contact Landis at 518-875-6935 or landis@midtel.net for additional information.

Behind the Scenes

Office Assistant. Assist with general office duties including mailings, filing, and data entry.

Training provided. Commitment: ½ day per week.

A Landis member or volunteer who is also an employee of Niagara Mohawk to assist in the submission of a grant application.

Publications. Write an article on botanical or gardening subjects or a book review for the newsletter. Or help with the production of the many Landis publications. Commitment: variable.

Artwork. Share your plant illustrations, spot illustrations or help us create signs and posters. Commitment: variable.

Publicity. Assist with promotion events and programs via newsletters, brochures, and flyers. Help distribute promotional materials. Commitment: variable.

Gardeners. Maintain the perennial gardens through weeding, pruning, raking, transplanting, deer protection, mulching, etc. Help design new gardens or assist in the greenhouse. **Training provided.** Commitment: ½ day per week.

Pruning. Hone your pruning skills while helping Landis improve the tree and shrub collections. **Training provided.** Commitment: ½ day per week.

Curatorial Assistant. Help with mapping, plant collection, inventories, and plant label verifications. Need to be accurate, good with detail, and comfortable map reading. Commitment: ½ day per week.

Acorn Shop Management. Inventory control, merchandise ordering, and bookkeeping. Retail experience and computer familiarity a plus. Commitment: variable.

Work Fest Crew. Help with Landis' semi-annual workfests in April and October. **Training provided.** Commitment: ½ or full day.

Plant Sales. Pot, move, water, arrange, price, and label plants. Commitment: ½ or full day the week before the spring and fall plant sale and/or the Monday after the plant sale.

Citizen Scientist. Help monitor bluebird nest boxes, count winter birds at the feeders for Project Feederwatch, and other Landis field research projects. **Training provided.** Commitment: variable.

In the Public Eye

Hospitality. Plan, prepare and serve refreshment for special events. Commitment: variable.

Membership/Outreach. Assist with membership and outreach activities including setting-up, staffing, and breaking down a Landis booth at outreach events such as the Capital District Flower Show in March, garden tours, and Landis benefits. Must be comfortable answering a variety of questions about Landis. Commitment: variable.

Acorn Shop. Staff the Acorn Gift Shop on weekends from May through November and during special events on weekdays. Must be comfortable working with money and answering general questions about Landis. **Training provided.** Commitment: variable.

Tour Guides. Lead walks for school groups, garden clubs, seniors and others. **Training provided.** Commitment: variable.

Educational/Program Assistance. Assist with Landis program for families, adults, and school-children. Develop and teach programs. **Training provided.** Commitment: variable.

Plant Sales. Write up receipts, collect money, park cars, answer questions, assist buyers and more. Commitment: ½ day or full day either Saturday or Sunday during the Spring and Fall Plant Sale or Friday evening before Spring Plant Sale.

For more information about volunteering and offers of donations, please contact our office at 518-875-6935.

THANK YOU TO—

Wayne and Ann B'rells and Bob and Carol Olsen for the HP Laser Printers

Charlie Goddard for the DR brush mower

Smitty and Joy Smith for 3 boxes of office supplies

Durward DeGroff for making and donating 10 pressure treated benches for our woodland trail. (Take a hike and see these benches! Fantastic.)

Art Coleman for his skillful, consistent, and continued pruning work

Ken Nichols for his valuable tech support (even though he'd rather be pruning)

Because of a computer melt-down, we can only do general "thank yous" to volunteers of the Fall Plant Sale, Tire Cleanup Day and Fall Workfest.

We hope to have a list of names published in our Spring (!!!) issue of the newsletter.

LANDIS PORTRAITS

A series about the people behind the plants at the Landis Arboretum

Nolan Marciniac

Carol Loucks



Carol Loucks' gardening roots run deep: her great-grandfather studied landscape gardening at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England. She herself remembers learning to plant marigold seeds under her mother's tutelage when she was three years old.

Carol was first introduced to the Landis Arboretum through the Albany Master Gardeners in 1985, when the group undertook to restore the Van Loveland perennial garden. (photo above) Nearly every Wednesday morning since then, weather permitting, she's been tending the beds.

The perennial garden, she says, should encourage gardeners to expand their palettes by demonstrating what plants look like and how they perform in the garden. Her greatest wish is for a core group of dedicated gardeners to volunteer to work in the perennial garden. Gardening, she observed, is by its very nature something to be shared, gardener to gardener, through experience.

She regards the Landis Arboretum a resource for the community, a place of learning for all, children as well as adults

Carol has always found gardening to be beneficial to one's mental health. "The best thing you can do for yourself is to work in a garden," she noted from her "pausing place" in the Van Loveland garden. Most days, she says, just the view of the Schoharie Valley is enough to lift her spirits.

Ed Miller

He can help you understand the difference between a marsh and an ice meadow, between a bog and a fen, between rich fens and poor. His passion for native plants was the driving force behind the Arboretum's bog garden and the Willow Pond trail.

Recognizing that he wasn't a "cultivated" gardener either by temperament or interest, Ed Miller was introduced to the Arboretum by a friend. Ed says that Landis feels "like home" to him, a place that offers something of Nature's infinite variety for everyone: the student of plants, the gardener, or the casual walker.

He credits Ruth Schottman's ECOS program for instilling a love for native plants. When he visited a teaching garden of native plantings at a university in North Carolina, he envisioned a similar garden at Landis and has worked for the past several years to create it. The Willow Pond Trail juxtaposes native plants within the same family so that the visitor can note similarities and differences among the species.

Ed has given more than twenty years in volunteer work at the Arboretum, particularly since retiring from his engineering career at GE. Although he's given so much of his enthusiasm, expertise, and physical exertion to the Arboretum, he insists that he's been richly rewarded by being able to realize a dream and to share that dream with others.

Sonja Javarone



Biology, it is said, is destiny.

In her childhood, Sonja Javarone spent hours playing house under a hawthorn tree and collecting wildflowers in the woodlands near her home in Milwaukee. Later, during her studies at the University of Wisconsin, she knew that she would take her degree in biology, concentrating in botany, and then, after receiving her MS at SUNY Albany, she was drawn to teaching high school biology. A chance visit to Landis convinced her that she would spend a good part of her retirement from nearly thirty years in the classroom volunteering at the Arboretum.

Like so many other volunteers, she maintains that she feels at home at Landis. It is a wonderful feeling, she says, to "talk the same language" with people who are interested in trees or who are thrilled by the sighting of a unique plant or animal.

Although she inspired many of her students to pursue biology in their higher education, she fears that "people are losing sight of their relationship with the plant world." Because they have no experience of Nature, they have no understanding of their environment. Landis, she says, presents a special opportunity to reacquaint people with the natural world.

Sonja is particularly excited by Landis' new land acquisition, with its first-growth beech forest. She reminds us that the American beech had a special association with the passenger pigeon, which used to feed on its nuts and roost in its branches, sometimes in numbers so great that those branches broke. The beech forests were leveled, and the fate of the passenger pigeon was sealed.


Plants don't talk back, she says, but they have a story to tell, and she comes to Landis to listen.

Photos by Marian Hatoopp

THANK YOU

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Sterling Insurance began in 1895 in Schoharie County. A group of local businessmen created the company so that if they had a covered loss, there was a pool of money to help them rebuild. Today they offer property casualty insurance to over 65,000 individuals and businesses all over New York State.

Their motto is *We Live In New York, We Work in New York, We Insure New York.*

For more information about the Arboretum's Corporate Sponsors Program and to lead the crowd by becoming a sponsor early, contact our office at 518-875-6935.

Annual Sponsorship Levels

\$1,000 Ash

General Corporate Sponsor Benefits: All Corporate Sponsors are recognized in Landis's quarterly newsletter and at major events. Corporate Supporters receive special invitations to corporate sponsor events.

\$5,000 Elm

Each Elm Sponsor receives general benefits and is recognized as an official sponsor of a Notable Tree in our collections with a plaque at the base of the tree.

\$10,000 Maple

Each Maple Sponsor receives general benefits and is recognized as an official sponsor of a specific trail through the grounds with a plaque posted at the beginning and end of the trail.

\$25,000 Chestnut

Each Chestnut Sponsor receives general benefits and is recognized as an official sponsor of a specific woody collection with a plaque posted in that collection.

Notable trees, trails and collections are limited and sponsorships are assigned on a first come first served basis.

SPECIAL EVENTS

A Hike Back in Time

Sunday November 13
1- 3:30 pm. Free.

Thanks to a recent property acquisition, Landis now owns some great old trees and a 200 year old grapevine. Join us for a hike to discover a remnant of an ancient forest. Afterwards, enjoy hot beverages and homemade goodies.

Leader: Susan Carver, Director of Education

Volunteer Luncheon

Wednesday, December 7
Noon

We will be having a volunteer potluck lunch at noon. We hope that our volunteers bring a dish to share with other volunteers. This is a wonderful time of year—when our gardens and weeds are not growing—to get to know and visit with other volunteers. Call or email our office to let us know how many people will be attending and what type of dish you will be bringing.

Second Sunday Snowshoe

January 8 • February 12 • March 12
1-3 pm. Free.

Come explore different areas of Landis on snowshoe during this winter program series. Along the way, we will look at animal signs and discuss winter botany. And afterwards, we'll enjoy hot beverages and homemade goodies. Beginner and experienced snowshoers welcomed. Bring your own snowshoes or borrow a pair from Landis. We'll take a hike if there is not enough snow.

Leader: Susan Carver, Director of Education

A large "Thank You" to Miller Printing and Litho of Amsterdam who have produced the Arboretum's printed materials, in spite of ridiculous deadlines, and funky files.

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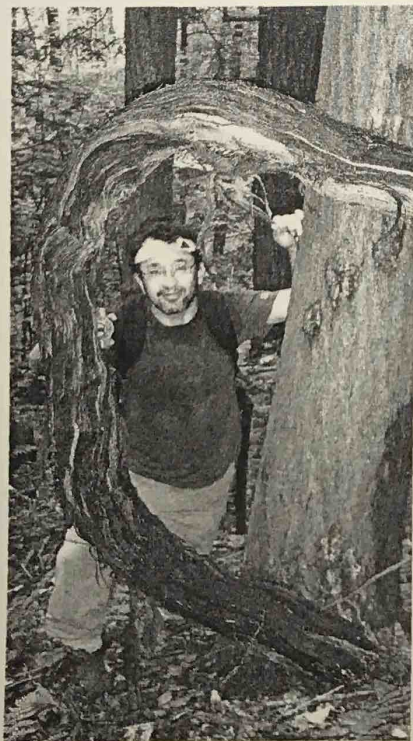
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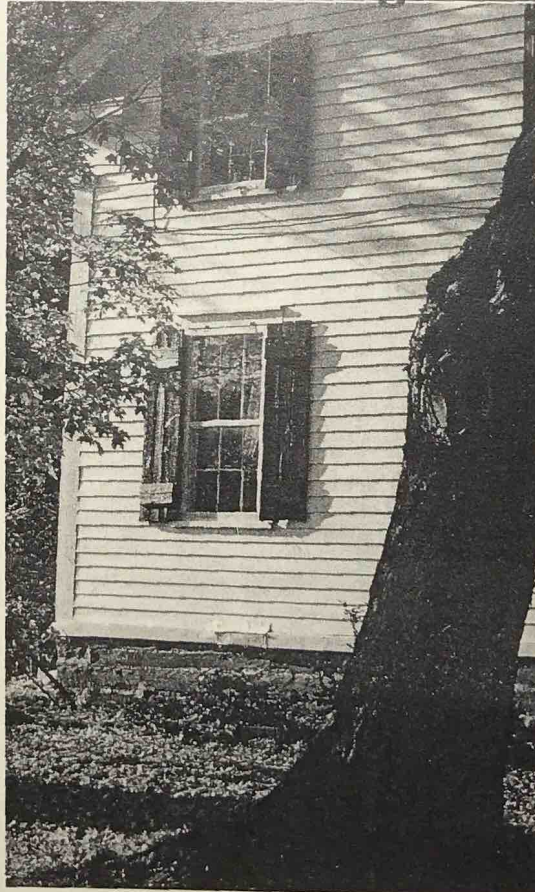
Join today!

BECOME A MEMBER of the Landis Arboretum. You'll support an important community resource and enjoy all the benefits of membership.

- Quarterly Arboretum newsletter filled with articles about our collections and activities
- Advance notice of classes, tours and many other special events
- Discounts on classes, trips, events and Acorn Gift Shop purchases
- The satisfaction of helping to sustain a valuable natural resource
- Members only events: Pick of the Pots Plant Sale Preview Party, guided tours of the new trails and grounds, and the Plant Swap in fall

MEMBERSHIP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT part of the Arboretum's financial support. Contact the Arboretum at 518-875-6935 or landis@midtel.net.

Meet the Challenge—Help Conserve Energy



Landis member Barbara Hunt is offering a challenge to other members. She will donate \$1,000 in memory of her sister, Olive Richmond, of Surrey, England, if an equal amount can be raised by members. The \$2,000+ is to be used exclusively to cover the cost of replacing doors and windows in the farmhouse, which houses the Arboretum offices and Acorn Gift Shop. The new doors and windows will reduce drafts and heating bills.

To pledge toward this challenge, call Landis at 518-875-6935 or e-mail landis@midtel.net.

Reference "challenge" on your check send to George Landis Arboretum, PO Box 186, 174 Lape Road, Esperance, NY 12066.

We welcome other challenges to help raise funds for projects and activities that are of special interest to you.