



George Landis Arboretum NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by the Friends of the Arboretum

Volume 3, Number 1

January, February, March 1984

NEW CONFERENCE CENTER

Great excitement filled the trustees this past year when it was learned that the Landis Arboretum would be the recipient of a \$53,000 grant from the National Heritage Trust through the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation. The grant money may be used only for the construction of a conference center on the arboretum grounds. Mr. James Gage, Friend and supporter of the arboretum and a member of the Board of Trustees Sally Gage, was instrumental in securing the grant. He and Director Fred Lape moved swiftly to arrange for a new well to be drilled so adequate water would be available for the new Center.

In July, Director Lape appointed Trustees Dale Morgan, James Bates, Forest Corbin, Paul Blair, and H. Gilbert Harlow to a Conference Center Committee charged with the planning and construction of the Center.

Selection of an architect was a thorough process as the committee was bound by extensive State guidelines and regulations. The firm of Hartheimer, Bender and Estey of Delmar was selected. The committee and Mr. Lape met a number of times with the architect to explain the philosophy and goals of the arboretum so the best site and design could be chosen and developed. The Conference Center will be built to the rear of the barn, in front of the peony bed, on a knoll overlooking the pond and the Schoharie Valley beyond.



Specifications were drawn up and five construction firms bid for the contract. Four bids exceeded \$74,000 and, after some negotiation, the fifth was within the grant range. Finally, on December 29, 1983, a contract was signed with MTR, Inc. of Albany. Construction should be completed in late spring or early summer.

The contract allows for the structure to be built minus one 12 foot bay and the electrical work. Options to complete this work must be exercised by April 1 and July 1 respectively if funds are available.

The Center is designed in a style consistent with the other buildings on the grounds, and will be available for use by students, scientists, garden clubs, and community groups, and will be accessible to the handicapped. The building will house a meeting area to accommodate 100-120 people, new bathrooms, and a small kitchen area. A new septic system is included. Long-range plans include the possibility of a fireplace for extended seasonal use, an outside deck, interior stairs,

a mezzanine, and road improvements, as well as other additions.

Arboretum trustees will soon report the status of construction and the donations received to enable completion of the Center. - Dale Morgan, Chairman, Conference Center Committee



SPECIAL....

SPECIAL.....

The arboretum has secured a limited number of the very choice *Clematis* 'Betty Corning' to offer for

sale on a first come, first served basis. *C.* 'Betty Corning' blooms in May, June and July. The 1 - 1 1/2 inch blue, bell-shaped flowers are followed by attractive seedheads, and are borne on vines which eventually reach 10 - 12 feet.

After many attempts by propagators, recently Arthur H. Steffen, a Fairport, NY specialist in small-flowering clematis varieties, has been successful in getting rooted cuttings to break dormancy.

The arboretum's supply is very limited, one plant to a customer, \$10 each. Make your check payable to the George Landis Arboretum and mail it to Margaret Law, Simmons Road, Glenmont, NY 12077.

The plants will be available for pickup at the arboretum on Swap Day, Saturday, May 12.

* * * *

In mid-winter often the gardener stares out the window in disgust - and retreats to a comfortable chair with a stack of seed catalogs and a sharp pencil. Just as often, temptation overcomes reason, and we find ourselves with seeds for every squash in the catalog....or enough 'Razzle Dazzle' petunias to enliven the whole neighbor-

hood. And then we find that germination was poor on the one pepper we really wanted to try....

Bring your excess seeds and plants, and your want list, to the arboretum at 10 a.m., Saturday, May 12 and participate in an old-fashioned swap.

The Friends will be on hand with pastries and coffee or tea for sale.

RARE PLANT SALE

The arboretum's Rare Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, June 9. This year the Friends' Steering Committee and the arboretum's Associate Director Richard Southwick, are laying the ground work for what will become, over the next years, an expanded Rare Plant Sale, offering a comprehensive selection of unusual plants for the home gardener and amateur landscaper.

A limited supply of the dwarf conifers described in the following article, written by Professor Southwick, will be offered at this year's sale. We will reserve any of these plants for you, as a service to arboretum members only, if you will send your order to the editor at her address (page 8) before April 27. The cost of each plant is noted in parentheses in the article. The plants offered are grafts made in the winter of 1983-84; sizes vary according to variety.

Only a limited number of these choice dwarf conifers will be offered at the sale on a first come, first served basis, but many other rare and unusual plants will be available for sale. Orders received in advance of the sale will enable the committee both to avoid disappointing arboretum members and to avoid costly overstocking.

A sandwich lunch, beverages, and baked items will be available for sale on Rare Plant sale day. Come early to preview sale items and to have lunch. Arboretum members may purchase plants at 1:00 p.m., prior to the general public at 2:00 p.m.



CALENDAR

GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM

Esperance, NY 12066
(518)-875-6935

Summer 1984

May 5	10 a.m.	Nature Walk	Fred Lape
May 12	10 a.m.	Swap Day, an Exchange of Vegetable Seeds and/or Bedding Plants	
May 19	7 a.m. & 10 a.m.	Bird Walk	Sayla Ruscitto & John Bousman
June 2	10 a.m.	Lilacs and Crabapple Trees	Merrill Bousman
June 9	1 p.m. 2 p.m.	Rare Plant Sale - Friends of the Arboretum Rare Plant Sale - General Public And, the Adirondack Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society will also hold an exhibit and sale of rock garden plants.	
June 16	10 a.m.	Plant Propagation	Richard Southwick
June 23	10 a.m.	Drying Flowers for Decoration	Peter Kaskeski
June 30	10 a.m.	Peonies	Fred Lape
July 7	10 a.m.	Common Weeds and How to Use them	Anita Sanchez
July 14	10 a.m. & 1 p.m.	Wildflowers on Slides	Dr. Werner Baum
July 21	1 p.m.	The Arboretum Herb Garden	Mrs. Harry Brown
July 28	1 p.m.	Bonsai Exhibit and Clinic	
August 4	10 a.m.	Shrubs for Landscaping	Jack Faddegon
August 11	10 a.m.	Pruning Trees and Shrubs	James Bates
August 18	10 a.m.	Life of the Monarch Butterfly	Sayla Ruscitto
August 25	1 p.m.	Catalogues for Every Taste	Margaret Law
September 8	1 p.m.	Japanese Flower Arranging	Sally Gage
September 15	1 p.m.	Slides from a Trip to Greece	Elizabeth Corning
September 22	1 p.m.	Fern Walk	Dr. Eugene Ogden
September 29	10 a.m.	Foliage Walk	Fred Lape

ALL EVENTS ARE ON SATURDAYS AND ARE FREE.

PLANTS.....

YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW



One of the very frequent questions that visitors ask after touring the arboretum is "Where can I obtain a plant like _____?" Almost invariably the answer is "See your local nurseryman." The question is reasonable and the answer is sincere, but the chances that any one nurseryman could carry all of the plants found in the arboretum is preposterous. Friends in the nursery business were discussing this problem during the past winter and they felt that some very desirable plants are no longer readily available and that others are not being offered to the public for one reason or another.

First, desirable plants that are no longer available may have been replaced by ones more generally suited to the non-gardening homeowner, one merely interested in a minimal home landscape, or replaced by plants more suited to the environment, or by disease- or insect-resistant plants, or simply by plants better than the old varieties. Some, however, have been discontinued in nursery inventories with no real justification except apparent lack of interest by gardeners. A family of native plants, the azaleas, fall into this group. They have enriched the American garden for years and suddenly and without justification are no longer available to the buying public, except in the largest nurseries with mail order catalogues.

Individually they would have difficulty competing with some of the hybrids in the marketplace, but collectively they present an array of plant characteristics that would enhance any garden.

Along with other spring woodland flowers and spring flowering bulbs, the first azalea flowers appear on the hardy Rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*). The rosy-violet flower is one of the most delicate of our native flowers and the most hardy of all azaleas.

Canadense requires little space, being no more than three feet tall and tolerant of partial shade,

The next to bloom is Pink-shell Azalea (*R. vaseyi*) with light pink flowers on a five-six foot plant, blooming in early May. In mid-May two azaleas bloom which offer some confusion to many gardeners and plantsmen, the Pinxter Azaleas or "Wild Honeysuckle". Locally, two species are called Pinxters, the more northerly species and also the most fragrant, *R. prinophyllum*, also called *roseum* and Rose-shell Azalea, and *R. periclymenoides*, also called *nudiflorum* or Pinxter-bloom, the former being a larger plant (over eight feet in height), and the latter five to six feet in height. Both species have pink flowers, prefer moist sites and tolerate moderate shade.

Next to bloom is the Flame Azalea (*R. calendulaceum*), in late May and early June. The Flame Azalea has the widest range of flower color, from yellow to orange to scarlet. The plant is somewhat less hardy than the earlier species but it seems to be perfectly hardy in the arboretum.

R. bakeri is also hardy, and somewhat similar to the Flame Azalea, but it blooms a little later and tends to have flower colors more in the range of orange and red.

The last two azaleas to bloom have white flowers and are quite fragrant. The Sweet Azalea (*R. arborescens*) blooms in early June, is a large shrub over six feet in height, and it seems perfectly hardy in our region. The Swamp Azalea (*R. viscosum*) is very hardy, tolerant of rather moist soil conditions, is very fragrant, and blooms in early summer (completing more than two months of flowering period for native azaleas).

The long flowering period, the range of flower color, flower form, fragrance, and range of garden tolerance make these plants an important contribution to American gardens.

Secondly, some plants have not been made available to the gardening public. Many excellent plants have not been seen by the public except in arboretums or in very exclusive gardens. Some have only recently been found; others are difficult to propagate and must be increased by grafts which make them more expensive and also somewhat limits the supply. For the nurseryman, these plants present a bit of a problem; higher cost, lack of identity, or similarity to plants which are easily propagated and are in ready supply.

At this time, the rare, dwarf, and unusual conifers are in this second group, along with a few deciduous species.

The conifers offer a wider range of choices of hardy plants which could easily be used in our region. A few of the more interesting and promising ones are described in the following text. All are quite hardy in our area and offer one or more interesting garden or landscape uses.

Globe Silver Fir (*Abies alba* 'Globosa') is a dwarf form of the European Silver Fir. It has deep-green foliage and forms a somewhat flattened globe that requires no shaping. This is one of the many dwarf plants which require little or no maintenance. (\$11.75)

The Dwarf Balsam Fir *Abies balsamiae* 'Nana') has all of the hardiness of our native fir, with the same rich green foliage, but forming a compact, slow-growing cushion. As one would expect, it is well-adapted to our region and requires little if any maintenance and no shaping. (\$5.25)

The Green Globe White Fir (*Abies concolor* 'Green Globe') is a dwarf form of our Western White Fir with similar soft-green foliage color and a symmetric globe-shaped growth pattern. The crushed needles have a faint citrus fragrance. The growth rate is relatively slow, and it requires no shaping and minimal maintenance. (\$8.25)

Dwarf Giant Fir (*A. grandis* 'Nana') is a form of our Western Giant Fir, a West coast species. The dwarf form has the same shiny-green foliage as the species, but a much-reduced growth rate. This plant is quite uncommon in the plant industry. As with most of the dwarf forms, it requires little garden care. (\$10.25)

The Blue Arizona Fir (*A. lasiocarpa arizonica*) is not dwarfed, but it has a somewhat slower growth rate than other comparable conifer species when cultured in our environment. This form is grafted and has a bluer color than seedlings I have grown from stock received from C.E. Heit. Although propagators make no claim to its distinctive characteristics from the species, I believe it represents a color selection difference, being as distinctly powder-blue as the best Colorado Blue Spruce. The leaves or needles are soft, unlike those of the spruce, and the early growth (at least) is more compact, to a certain degree reflecting its alpine origin. (\$8.25)

Weeping European Larch (*Larix decidua* 'Pendula') is a weeping form of the European Larch, a large tree with soft-green foliage, weeping branches and with yellow autumn foliage color. This form can be manipulated for height and form as the gardener wishes. Its deciduous nature and fall foliage color are rather unique for a conifer. This plant is considered by some to be the most beautiful of the weeping conifers for our region. (\$11.75)

Weeping Norway Spruce take several forms or degrees of their pendulous nature. The *Picea abies* 'Reflexa' has weeping branches, deep-green foliage, and tends to be low and spreading unless trained to a single upright stem. This plant makes an unusual garden effect when it has been shaped or trained. It can reflect the gardener's desires and easily fits into unusual landscape effects with training. It is a rather vigorous grower, but because of its weeping nature, it can be easily confined. (\$6.75)

Another Norway Spruce of interest is *Picea abies* 'Pumila', a dwarf, globe-shaped plant. This plant has the same deep, rich-green color of the species with a low or flattened globe-shape. It has a slow growth rate and uniform low maintenance pattern, requiring little or no shaping, like many of the forms of Norway spruce. Like the species, it has few or no cultural problems. (\$6.75)

Little Globe (*Picea glauca* or *Picea alba* 'Little Globe') is a dwarf of our native White Spruce. One plant growing in Cobleskill has reached a size of about three feet wide and two feet high in almost ten years. It has a low globe-shape, with somewhat bluish foliage in a very tight growth pattern. Growing in a most adverse location, it shows no sign of cultural limitations. It is growing where most plants would sun-scald in winter, but this plant always has good color and requires no special care. (\$14.75)

The globe Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Glaucula Globosa') has the typical silvery-blue foliage of select Colorado Blue forms and grows in a compact globe-shape. Among the many cultivars of the Colorado Blue, this is probably the most useful. It has a slow growth rate and acceptable growth pattern, with the much-desired color of the select Colorado Blue Spruce cultivars. (\$7.25)

The weeping form of the Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Glaucula Pendula') is a weeping plant with growth vigor approaching that of the species, making it a gardener's challenge. It can be trained to any height and present the affect of flowing water. The silvery-blue foliage makes it an extremely distinctive plant. It does, however, require care, training and maintenance to fully express its beauty and potential. (\$7.75)

The Dragon-eye Japanese Red Pine (*Pinus densiflora* 'Oculis-draconis') is an unusual expression of plant variegation. The needles have two colors expressed in alternate bands of green and yellow. The tree has normal growth vigor and form. Although it is con-

sidered hardy in our area and shows no signs of winter damage at my home. I would not recommend that it be exposed to the most extreme elements of winter. It has a very interesting foliage and can best be appreciated on close examination, consequently it requires careful site consideration. (\$7.75)

When I first saw the dwarf Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana* dwarf) I could imagine the impact that this plant could have in the nursery industry. It has all of the hardiness and cultural characteristics to be ideally suited to our region and with controlled growth pattern and deep-green foliage color of the species. The shape is a somewhat flattened globe with a tight, symmetrical growth habit. Unfortunately it is rather slow-growing, even among dwarfs, but certainly it is one of the really distinctive conifers for our region. (\$14.75)

Many visitors to the arboretum remember the dwarf Austrian Pine which for years thrived with the large Norway Spruce behind the house (a tree unfortunately girdled by mice a few years ago). The plant, *Pinus nigra* 'Hornibrookiana') is now propagated regularly and, as you may well remember, it has the rich, deep-green color of the species but with a dwarf, compact, somewhat spreading growth pattern. Although it has more vigor than many dwarfs, it retains a maximum height of about three feet, but tends to reach considerable width and like the species, it seems to have no cultural problems in our area. (\$9.75)

The contorted Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Contorta') is an unusual form of our native pine with twisted needles and corkscrew-like contortions of the branches, presenting an unusual growth pattern and color effect to this native species. As any contorted plant receives mixed responses by viewers, it is considered either extremely ugly or interesting and it seems to draw no moderate response. It should, therefore, be used with discretion. (\$7.75)

The globe form of our native White Pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Globosa') is a dwarf compact globe with all the color and distinctiveness of the species. (\$11.75)

Along the road behind the house at the arboretum, on the way to the mountain ash collection, you may remember a silvery-green mound on the left, the Weeping White Pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula'). This plant has been in that location about 17 years, and has now formed a great mound of the soft-green foliage color of the Eastern White Pine. The plant itself is its own best salesman; where color and form of this type is desired, few plants could challenge this species form. However, it takes many years to reach such a stage of development. (\$7.75)

Beside the library at the arboretum is a very symmetrical light-green globe evergreen, much prized by Mr. Lape and certainly a distinctive little plant. It is known as Verkade's Witchesbroom White Pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Verkade's Witchesbroom'). Although it is an Eastern White Pine, it has a light- or yellowish-green color and a very slow growth rate, and retains the very symmetrical globe shape. (\$8.25)

One of the very nice, low-growing ground cover-type of dwarf conifer, is the Albynn Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris* 'Albynn Prostrata'). It has the steel-blue color of the species but creeps along the ground much like a ground cover. As one would expect, this sort of plant requires attention when challenged by over-storying plants, but it offers an excellent color and texture change for a ground cover and has the advantage of a very confined growth pattern. (\$15.75)

Like the previous species, the dwarf Globe Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris* 'Nana') has all the cultural advantage of being dwarfed, forming a tight, slow-growing globe shape. (\$9.75)

Certainly one of my favorite plants is the weeping form of our native arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Pendula'). I have found that this weeper has the ability to train itself very nicely. It normally sends off leaders in an almost horizontal direction, and then the pendulous branches cover the stem with green foliage. Used as a directional plant in garden landscapes, it gives a most interesting effect requiring

- - - - - CUT - - - - -

It is membership renewal time...send your renewal now.

3/84

- Friend, \$10-\$25
- Sponsor, \$25-\$50
- Supporting, \$50-\$100
- Patron, \$100 or more

GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM
Membership Application



Please support the extensive work of the arboretum and make a tax deductible contribution.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Renewal _____

Amount enclosed _____ New member _____

THANK YOU!

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, free admission to the lecture series and early admission to the annual Rare Plant Sale. Make your check payable to:

GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM
Mail to: Esperance, NY 12066

little care and few maintenance problems. This plant would also be very useful around water focal points. (\$7.75)

Another groundcover, creeping plant suitable for our area is the dwarf hemlock "Cole's Prostrate" (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Cole's Prostrate'). It is a slow-growing, mat-like ground cover, exposing an interesting network of branches and leaves. Because of its low-growing characteristics, it requires attention when overtopped by other plants. Arboretum visitors can see the specimen in the rock garden section. (\$9.75)

One of the most distinctive plants hardy to our area is the "Frosty" cultivar of our Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Frosty'). The new foliage is white with a small area of green on the tips of the needles; in winter the white areas turn pinkish. This unusual form requires constant shade to succeed in the garden, and consequently it is a

plant for the collector or the connoisseur. (\$40.00)

Some of the finest dwarf conifers have been found in the hemlock species "Verkade's Recurva" (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Verkade's Recurva') which is a very nice, deep-green form with a rather irregular growth habit. The growth is slow and distinctive with needles that turn back on the stem, giving a very rich, lustrous appearance. This plant is very easily maintained in the garden, requiring no special considerations. (\$12.75)

The Jacqueline Verkade hemlock is probably the most delicate-appearing of all of the dwarf conifers I have seen. It has an almost perfect teardrop shape with a somewhat diminutive leaf and fine branchlets, a beautifully proportioned dwarf. (\$12.75) - Richard Southwick

Fran Finkbeiner, Editor RD 2, Box 322 Rexford, NY 12148



GEORGE LANDIS ARBORETUM
 Lape Road
 Esperance, NY 12066

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Esperance, NY
 Permit No. 6

Robert B. Clark
 Cattle Landing Rd
 RD 1, Bx 288
 Meredith, NH 03253