



The Landis Arboretum Newsletter

Lape Road

Esperance, New York

Winter 1997

Vol. 16, No. 1

First Capital Campaign Begins

The Landis Arboretum's first Capital Campaign is officially under way. The campaign will raise funds to renovate the barn, a long-considered project.

After its original purpose as a shelter for farm animals ended, the barn became the primary facility for education programs, research, volunteer gatherings and all other activities of the arboretum when it was founded in 1951. Due to the lack of a foundation under the structure and poor drainage, years of direct contact with wet ground caused the sills to rot and threaten the structural integrity of the barn. For the last ten years, the building was used as a storage facility.

Our goal is to repair and renovate the barn so it can again be used for classes, workshops and cultural events, and at the same time to preserve that portion of our historic landscape.

The estimated total cost to bring the barn back to its former life as the core of arboretum activities is \$83,400. The renovation will begin with fundamental structural improvements. The drainage system will be upgraded to ensure that the interior of the barn stays dry; frost footings and foundations will be installed to the depth of 4 feet; the framing will be reinforced and stabilized; a new roof will be installed; siding will be repaired and replaced wherever needed, and the windows reglazed or replaced.

In addition to making repairs, a second level will be added to the west bay of the barn and a stairway will be installed to allow access to the second level from both ends of the barn. The flooring of the second level will be repaired and doorways installed to provide easy access between the east and west ends.

The fund drive is divided into four categories: arboretum general fund, grants, corporate gifts, and membership contributions with a separate goal for each category.

Through the efforts of Senator James Seward and Assemblyman John Faso, we have already received a \$20,000 grant from the NYS Office of Parks & Recreation. Crushed stone and timbers for

mezzanine construction have been provided by corporate donors and are on site. Another corporate friend will begin trenching work for the drainage system when the ground freezes sufficiently to minimize disturbing the surrounding area. Conceptual sketches and construction drawings were also donated. The estimated value of corporate contributions received or pledged thus far is \$3,900.



Photo by Gloria Van Duyne

However, the major part of the funding - \$44,450 - must be raised through membership contributions. With our more than 700 members it is an achievable objective. Even before the campaign officially started, eight members contributed; none are connected with organizing the drive but are simply members who wish to see the barn restored. To make **your** contribution fill out the form on page seven and mail it and your check to the arboretum. For further information call 518-875-6935. - *Herman Finkbeiner*

A REMINDER..... Your advance order for the 1997 Plant Sale must be at the arboretum, along with your payment, by February 14. Don't miss the deadline - mail your order NOW.

From the Board of Trustees - Carol Wock

At our January board meeting, Earl Van Wormer III was welcomed to the Landis Board of Trustees. Earl is Supervisor of the Town of Esperance and has become a great friend of the arboretum. He has worked to increase the visibility of the arboretum in Schoharie County and has introduced Gloria to many town and county leaders. Due to his efforts, the county budget for the first time includes a small amount of money for the arboretum.

Our treasurer, Nancy Boericke, reports that the 1996 fiscal year closed with a small surplus in the operating budget. After significant deficits in 1994 and 1995, our present fiscal health is indeed wonderful news. Generosity on the part of you, our members, has contributed to this financial well-being. At this date, the Annual Appeal is 20% ahead of last year's and money is still coming in. More detailed financial information will be included in the annual report for 1996.

In addition to our standing committees, several short-term committees have been organized to achieve specific goals. Trustees serving on the Plant Sale Committee are Nancy Boericke, Herman Finkbeiner, Lucinda Willemain and myself. Trustees serving on the Development committee are Claudia McLaughlin and Mary Ann Tomlinson. Committees are also being formed to oversee major arboretum events. - Carol Wock

Spring Plant Sale 1997...More of Everything

- Herm Finkbeiner

The Spring Plant Sale, which for more than 35 years has been The Horticultural Event at the Landis Arboretum, will be even more so in 1997.

This year the event will begin on Friday, May 16 with a members only "Pick of the Pots" preview party (see p. 2) under the direction of Claudia McLaughlin. On Saturday and Sunday, May 17 and 18, the sale as will be open to anyone and everyone as always. More than 6000 plants from more than 100 species including conifers (full-size and dwarf), deciduous trees, flowering shrubs, bulbs, alpines, annuals and perennials will be offered for sale, under the direction of Carol Wock, Peter Rumora and Herm Finkbeiner. Anne Jaster and her committee are organizing plant displays and increased signage, more efficient cashier facilities, and assistance in transporting purchased plants to your vehicle.

An expanded Acorn Shop will operate under the direction of Maria Greskovich and Gloria Van Duyne. Area plant societies have been invited to participate with displays and exhibits. Special exhibits of our herbarium and other arboretum resources are being organized by Nancy Boericke.

Lucinda Willemain is arranging for free lectures and demonstrations to be held throughout Saturday and Sunday. Peter Rumora is organizing a campaign to add at least 200 new members to the arboretum roster. Mary D'Alessandro is handling publicity and Carolyn Edwards will keep finances and records in order. A variety of food will be available to sustain shoppers and volunteers.

The workers mentioned here need lots of additional volunteer help to accomplish their missions. If you can help - in the planning and preparation stages, during the Plant Sale weekend, or both - call the arboretum office (875-6935) and sign on. - Herm Finkbeiner

Annual Appeal - Gloria Van Duyne

It isn't too late to give to the 1996 Annual Appeal. The contributions made to the Appeal are used for arboretum operations - salaries, utilities, grounds and building maintenance, repairs. Your Annual Appeal contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. All levels of support are greatly appreciated. - Gloria Van Duyne

THE GEORGE 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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Fran Finkbeiner

Contributors

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Printer

infographics

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Wish List

- Two-line phones for the office
- New, or nearly new picnic tables
- Wood chips
- Quilters and seamstresses to help with a raffle quilt
- A radio with CD and/or cassette player in good condition for office volunteers
- A volunteer to co-lead a bird watch walk with a Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club leader

Pick of the Pots: A New Member Benefit

- Carol Wook

Have you ever wished you could shop at an arboretum plant sale without the crowds? This spring you can! As a special new benefit to all arboretum members, the evening before the plant sale opens to the public there will be a "Pick of the Pots" Preview Party and Sale. Attend this new event and be able to choose the "pick of the pots" - your chance to buy plants before the weekend crowds.

This is how to do it. Start the evening choosing from the 6,000 pots in the sale. (Member discount applies.) Sample wine and cheese as you stroll and pick your pots. Refresh with hearty soups, crusty breads and spring salad. Then relax as you listen to stories told by Lois Foight Hodges, area storyteller. Bring the family and join us for an evening of fun!

Members \$5. Non-member guests \$35 (which includes the price of a membership).

May 16, 5 p.m. to dusk. (Registration form may be found in the newsletter inserts.)

>>Director Van Duyne shows yet another part of her job description - bringing the weather bureau's precipitation collector indoors for the winter. Photo by Warren Burton, Adirondack Odyssey Photography.

Spring Benefit Upcoming

- Mary D'Alessandro

The Spring Benefit, the arboretum's traditional first fundraiser of the year, will again be held at the historic Fort Orange Club on Washington Avenue, Albany on Saturday, April 12.

The event, the arboretum's eleventh Spring Benefit, will take place from 4 - 7 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres will be served as attendees peruse and bid on the horticulture-related silent auction items; a live auction of the larger items follows. When the auction is complete, you will have the option of staying on for dinner at an additional fee.

Arboretum members will receive invitations in March; all reservations must be made in advance. If you would like us to send an invitation to a friend or acquaintance of yours, please call the arboretum (875-6935).



News from the Garden

- Gloria Van Duyne

Nineteen ninety six was a wonderfully busy year. We hope 1997 will be even busier. Visits to the arboretum were up from 2,247 in 1996 to 4,513 in 1997. Volunteer hours were also up to 2229 from 1531 the year before. In November, volunteers and their many efforts were acknowledged with an appreciation brunch given by trustees and staff. Tom Gage of Gage's Electric in Esperance fulfilled a wish on our Wish List - he donated his service to install wiring for a second phone line and he repaired other electric wiring. And, many thanks to Cobleskill Stone for donating 100 tons of stone for the drainage system in and around the barn. The Arboretum will be featured in an early 1997 issue of the New York State Conservationist with an article by arboretum trustee Lucinda Willemain. Profit from our Acorn Shop is up six-fold! Our quarterly calendar of events and its offerings have improved dramatically under trustee Claudia McLaughlin and the Education Committee. We have many items in our plus-column this year - and we are so pleased that YOU helped us with them.

Winter is a lovely time of year to visit the arboretum. Identify animal tracks in the snow while you walk the Lape and Woodland Trails; enjoy cross-country skiing, snow shoeing and sledding. The grounds are open from dawn to dusk every day of the year. - Gloria Van Duyne

How Does Our Garden Grow?



New Members - Please note that the names listed here are new members only. A complete list of members and contributors will be included with the Annual Report. **We wish you Welcome!**

Bethlehem Garden Club
Win & Flo Bigelow
Alan C. Bugbee
Jim & Sandy Denney
Nancy & Tom DeVito
Janet Falato
R.E. Fenton Family
Colleen Fitzpatrick
Prof. & Mrs. G. H. Flanz
Maria Greskovich
Mary T. Guzior
Diane & Raymond Jankowski

Matt Lofchie
Susan Mullen
Bruce & Marjorie Norcross
Tom & Pat Osborne
Jeffrey G. Plant
Gail Sacco
Anne Pratt Slatin
Louise Smith
Judi Steiger
Robert J. Strong
Jacqueline Tomlinson
Nicholas Zabawsky

Volunteer News

- Gloria Van Duyne

January 1997 marks the rebirth of the volunteer program at the arboretum. The focus of the program is to increase personal contact with our volunteers, to increase training and coordination of volunteers by staff and other volunteers, effectively utilizing their extensive efforts in the office, on the grounds, in caring for the collection, in day-to-day operations and at special events, thereby fostering the personal gratification of our many generous helpers.

Volunteer Work Days Extended - Wednesdays, Thursdays and the third Saturday of every month, excluding January and December, are our regularly scheduled Volunteer Work Days. Yes, we will have work planned for February 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a break for lunch and a brief meeting at noon. Bring a bag lunch; beverages will be provided.

Volunteering is NOT just weeding. Do you think only of weeding - above and beyond all those weeds in your own yard - when you imagine working at the arboretum? It's only one of the many volunteer activities. If you enjoy the outdoors, you might like to adopt an area. Love lilacs? Learn how to care for them while you work with others who love them too. Or you might adopt a section of the Lape Trail, work in the rhododendrons or beeches, or on the stone walls along Lape Road, or the Meeting House garden....or....



(Above) Florence Grimm clearing and grooming in the rare conifer area. Photo by Robert Grimm

Perhaps you would enjoy helping put together a special event like the Spring Benefit or Summer Garden Party, or to write articles for the newsletter, help with the Arbor Day Essay and Poster Contest, use a computer, do office work - chances are we have a need for your talents and interests.

Volunteers are welcomed and appreciated. Call the office (875-6935) to get a volunteer application and packet. - Gloria Van Duyne

Below: Peter Rumora spreading wood chips in the dwarf conifers; the chips were provided by Niagara Mohawk. Photo by Fran Finkbeiner



Gift Baskets Available

Do you know someone who loves to garden and would enjoy being an arboretum member? Perhaps a relative, a friend, or a neighbor would benefit from our activities and programs. A perfect gift may be a Landis Arboretum membership.

We have small gift baskets available to present to the recipient of your gift. The basket will contain small garden-related items, including our arboretum mug; a gift card will be attached. Call the office for more information. Your gift will benefit the recipient - and you will be demonstrating your support of our programs. - Carol Wock



Deer Fencing

- Gloria Van Duyne

Most gardeners and homeowners are well aware of the severe effect that hungry deer have on gardens and landscaping. The arboretum has worked for many years, with only partial success, to protect its rhododendron and azalea collection from winter browsing by deer. Last winter was especially hard on both deer and the collections.

We decided to change the way we fence this popular collection. For the first time in arboretum history we installed anti-deer fencing around the perimeter of an entire planted area. This 7-foot high, extra-sturdy plastic fencing is designed specifically to keep deer out; it is also the least visually intrusive. It is barely noticeable when compared with other fencing. One gate is located at the main entrance and two more will be installed in the spring to allow visitors and maintenance equipment to move through the area.

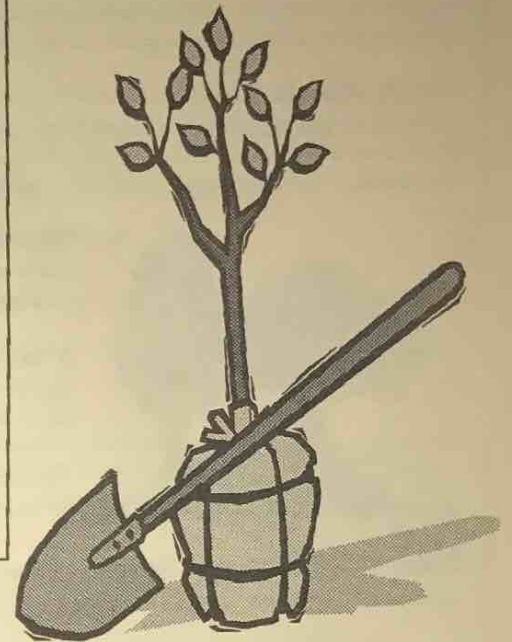
This major effort to clear brush, string cable, install poles and put up the actual fencing could not have been done without Ron Needle's (above, photo by G. Van Duyne) untiring efforts and imagination.

- Gloria Van Duyne

George Landis Arboretum Events Calendar

Events marked with * require pre-registration; events marked with** require pre-registration and pre-payment.

April	
4	Star Party 7:30 pm; Meeting House.
5	Star Party 7:30 pm; Meeting House.
12	Spring Benefit, ** 4 - 7:30 pm; Fort Orange Club.
26	Hawk Watch Family Workshop, 7 am to 5 pm; special program at 2 pm. Meeting House.
May	
3	Free Tour of Spring Bulbs at the Arboretum, 10 am; Lower Parking Lot.
10	Landscape Design Conference, **, 9 am to 4:30 pm; Farmhouse.
11	How Trees Grow Family Workshop, 2 - 3:30 pm; Meeting House.
16	Members' Preview for Rare Plant Sale**, 5 pm to dusk; Farmhouse.
17	Rare Plant Sale, 10 am to 4 pm; Farmhouse.
18	Rare Plant Sale, 10 am to 4 pm; Farmhouse.
24	Meet the Mammals Family Workshop, 2 - 3:30 pm; Meeting House.
31	Guided Bird Walk, 7:30 am; Lower parking lot. (Co-sponsored by Hudson Mohawk Bird Club.)



Volunteer Opportunities

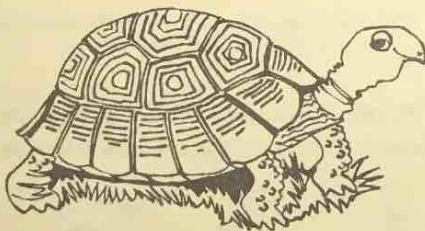
We need YOU! Volunteers are an indispensable part of the Arboretum staff, whether they work on a regular basis or help out occasionally. *Volunteer Work Days* are scheduled every Wednesday and Thursday, and the third Saturday of every month, except December and January. A variety of tasks will be available, with staff and Board members directing and helping out. Bring a friend and spend an hour or a day enjoying the Arboretum and each other's company while tackling some of the essential outdoor and indoor tasks.

Free Tours

This year, the first Saturday of each month from May through October will feature a free tour of part of the Arboretum's collection, with emphasis on areas of special seasonal interest. The first in this series is scheduled for May 3, featuring spring bulbs in the Arboretum's perennial garden and elsewhere on the grounds. No registration is necessary for these programs, which begin at 10 am, from the lower parking lot, rain or shine.

Arboretum Adventures for Kids

New last summer, this series proved to be a big hit! Programs will be held on Wednesdays, beginning July 9, and ending August 13. For children ages 7 - 11, each session will run from 10 am to 1:30 pm, and will include participatory learning sessions in the morning, lunch (brought from home) and crafts, games and other activities related to the program topic in the afternoon. Cost is \$10 per session for the first child in a family, \$8 per session for additional children in the same family, and any child attending the first five sessions may come to the sixth at half price (\$5 and \$4). Pre-registration and prepayment are required by one week before each class date; registration forms are available from the Arboretum office.



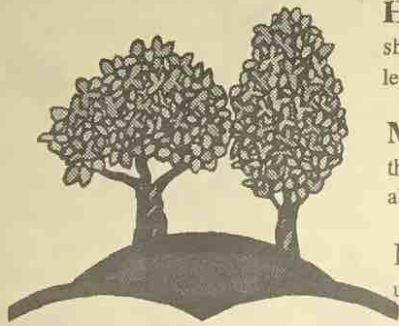
Note: Arboretum members have the opportunity to register children NOW for the *Arboretum Adventures for Kids*, before the information about them is offered to the general public. Last year these programs filled very quickly, and we encourage members to sign up right away to avoid disappointment!

- July 9 • Mammals
- July 16 • Reptiles & Amphibians
- July 23 • Backyard Bugs
- July 30 • Pond & Field Habitats
- August 6 • Look Up to the Trees
- August 13 • Birds

Free Family Workshops

This very popular series with nature educator George Steele begins in April and runs through the end of October. This is the perfect chance for your family to take a detour off the information superhighway and *experience* nature. There is no charge for the programs, but non-member families are requested to make a donation to the Arboretum to help cover the program costs. All programs in this series begin at the Arboretum Meeting House, and are held rain or shine, so participants should dress for the weather. No registration needed.

Hawk Watch. Saturday, April 26, 7 am to 5 pm, with a special program about hawks from 2 - 3:30 pm. From the Arboretum's perch over the Schoharie Valley, we'll spend the day on the lookout for hawks returning from their southern haunts, some coming from as far away as South America! Stop by any time during the day and enjoy the view while looking for raptors. At 2 pm a special program about hawk identification and ecology will be given in the Meeting House.



How Trees Grow. Sunday, May 11, 2 - 3:30 pm. Look at a tree from the roots to the terminal shoots and learn how a tree grows. We'll transplant a seedling for you to take home so that you can keep on learning about how trees grow in your own back yard.

Meet the Mammals. Saturday, May 24, 2 - 3:30 pm. They have fur, give live birth and feed their young milk. We're one of them and they're all around us, but we don't always see them. Learn more about mammals through the signs they leave behind, including tracks, scat, bones and homes.

Insects of the Night. Saturday, June 14, 8 - 9:30 pm. Fireflies, crickets, moths, and more. Join us in a search for these nocturnal arthropods as we learn how and where they live.

Summer Wildflowers. Saturday, June 28, 2 - 3:30 pm. The fields turn bright with colors as the flowers of summer begin to bloom. We'll explore the Arboretum looking for, identifying, and learning the lore of these flowers.

A Mid-Summer Evening's Walk. Saturday, July 12, 8 - 9:30 pm. We'll be looking for bats, night insects, and anything else that's moving about the Arboretum at dusk. Learn about the role they play in nature during the part of each day when people are usually sleeping.

Herpetology Hike. Saturday, July 19, 2 - 3:30 pm. The Arboretum is a great place to explore for amphibians and reptiles. We'll be looking for and learning about salamanders, newts, frogs, snakes, and turtles.

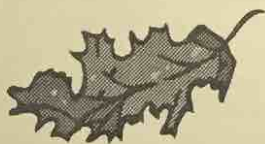
Know Your Trees. Saturday, August 2, 2 - 3:30 pm. Learn how to identify the common native trees found in the Arboretum's woodlands. We'll explore the different guide books and keys that are available to help learn more about what trees grow around our homes.



Full Moon Campfire Sing-a-Long. Monday, August 18, 8 - 9:30 pm. Enjoy the moonrise as we sit around a campfire, sing songs and listen to stories. Bring a picnic dinner to enjoy on the hill before this traditional Arboretum program.

Pond Ponderings. Saturday, September 13, 2 - 3:30 pm. Have you ever wondered what lives in the ponds and lakes? All kinds of things! We'll spend some time trying to capture some of the insects, crustaceans, snakes, turtles, frogs and fish for an up close look at how they live.

Bird Feeder Workshop. Saturday, September 27, 2 - 3:30 pm. Now is the time to get ready to feed the birds. We'll make some simple bird feeders, and learn how to identify our feathered visitors. Participants interested in this workshop should save and bring along milk containers (cardboard or plastic), sports drink plastic containers (three to make one feeder) and pine/spruce cones.



Fall Foliage Walk. Sunday, October 12, 2 - 3:30 pm. Enjoy an easy walk about the woodlands and fields looking at and learning about the changing colors of the season.

Plant Art Workshop. Sunday, October 26, 2 - 3:30 pm. Learn how to do leaf rubbings, Cherokee leaf prints and plant dyeing. Bring a white T-shirt and a white handkerchief to work your artistic talents on.



Star Parties

The Albany Area Amateur Astronomers meet regularly at the George Landis Arboretum for its dark skies and good horizons for star-gazing. These free programs feature telescopic viewing (telescopes provided by the club), an introductory program, and sky tour. Star Parties meet at the Arboretum Meeting House, but are cancelled when skies are mostly cloudy. Participants should bring a blanket to sit or lie on, (and bug repellent in warm weather). These events begin in April and continue through December; see calendar listing for dates and times.

George Landis Arboretum

PO Box 186 ~ Lape Road ~ Esperance, NY 12066
518-875-6935



We would like to extend our thanks to the following businesses who help support the Arboretum by advertising in our newsletter.

WANT TO SEE YOUR BUSINESS LISTED IN OUR DIRECTORY?

Advertise With Us!

Your ad will be seen by Arboretum members in our quarterly newsletter. Various sizes and prices are available.

For more information on how to place an ad in this newsletter, call the Arboretum office at 518-875-6935.



Wholesale Growers of Quality
Landscape-Size Perennials



Behn's Best Perennials, Inc.

Excellent containerized perennial plants ready for resale and landscape use. 380 hardy varieties, 40,000+ plants on hand. Wide selection, wholesale only, weekly delivery for retail garden centers and landscape gardening professionals. Sales only to the trade.

1997 plant list available, call (518) 766-9820. Open March 3, M-F, 8-5.

Joseph and Caren Behn, Malden Bridge, NY 12115



George Landis Arboretum

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes! I would like to become a member

Name _____

New Member

Renewal

Address _____

Membership amounts in excess of \$15 are tax-deductible

Individual \$25

Supporter \$75

Make your check payable to:
Landis Arboretum

Family \$35

Patron \$125

and mail to:

Contributor \$50

Betty Corning Benefactor \$500

George Landis Arboretum
PO Box 186, Lape Road
Esperance, NY 12066

Fred Lape Founders Circle \$1000

Yes, I would like to be a volunteer. My phone number is _____

Spring Conference Registration – Landscape Design

May 10, 1997 ❖ 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Morning Topics: *How To Put Your Landscape Design on Paper and Wildflowers and Other Lawn Alternatives*
Afternoon Topics: *Naturalistic Landscaping and Renovating Your Landscape.*

Name _____ Daytime phone _____

Address _____

	Morning	Afternoon	Total
Members @ \$25/half day, \$40/full day			
Non-Members @ \$30/half day, \$50/full day			
Box lunches @ \$5.50 each			
TOTAL:			

Please list names of any additional participants on an attached piece of paper and mail with your check to:
 Landis Arboretum,
 PO Box 186
 Esperance, NY
 12066

Members Only Preview Party

May 14, 1997

Name _____ Members @ \$5 ea. = \$ _____

Address _____ Non-Members @ \$30 ea. = \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

Daytime phone _____

Make check payable to *Landis Arboretum.*

Please list names, addresses and phone numbers of non-member guests on an attached piece of paper.

Mail to: George Landis Arboretum
 PO Box 186, Esperance, NY 12066

BOSTON FLOWER SHOW TRIP REGISTRATION

March 11, 1997

Name _____ members at \$50 each = \$ _____

Address _____ non-members at \$60 each = \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

Daytime Phone _____

Pick-up at: _____ 7:00 a.m. at Wade Tours
 _____ 7:30 a.m. at Crossgates

Make checks payable to Landis Arboretum. No refunds after February 14 unless we are able to resell your ticket.

We must have the above information for each member of your party. List names of additional participants on an attached piece of paper.

Mail To: George Landis Arboretum
 PO Box 186, Esperance, NY 12066

The Snow White Syndrome - Peter Rumora

Growing plants expand, be it up, out, or both. "Show me a plant that has stopped growing and I'll show you a dead one." All trees and shrubs get bigger with age, which gives credence to the belief that the best pruning any plant will ever have is in its selection. Sizing the plant to the space allotted should be the first concern in plant selection. The countryside is littered with hidden house entrances and windows because two cute little evergreens were planted on either side of the door 20 years ago.

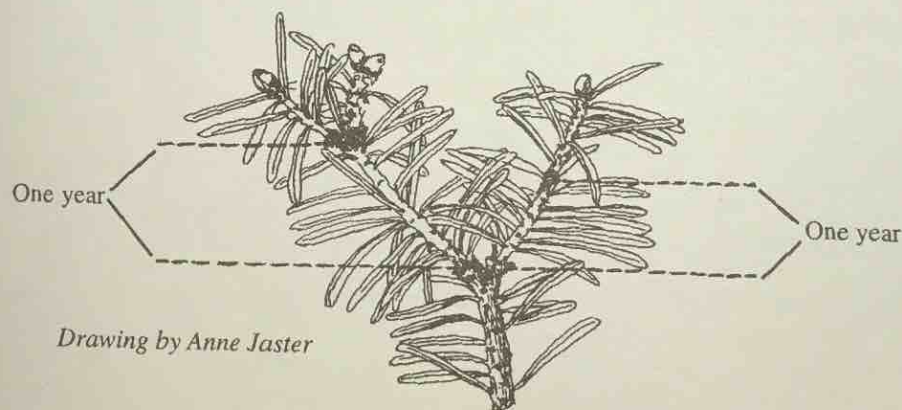
A fine group of pre-pruned plants is the slow-growing conifers. Many, many shapes, sizes, colors, textures with varying growth rates are available.

Conifers that are different from the species occur in two ways: bud mutation or seed mutation. Both mutations produce growth that is different than the parent plant. Differences may be in rate of growth, needles or leaves (density, length, curvature), color and branching. In bud mutations, the offshoot is called a "sport" or "witches' broom." The latter name arose because quite often the offshoot is much denser than the parent and makes a wonderful "flying broom."

Many are sterile and will not produce seed. The most widely planted example of a seed mutation is the Alberta Spruce and it has produced many sports, two being 'Sanders Blue' and 'Rainbow End'. Some seed variants are a result of natural cross-fertilization.

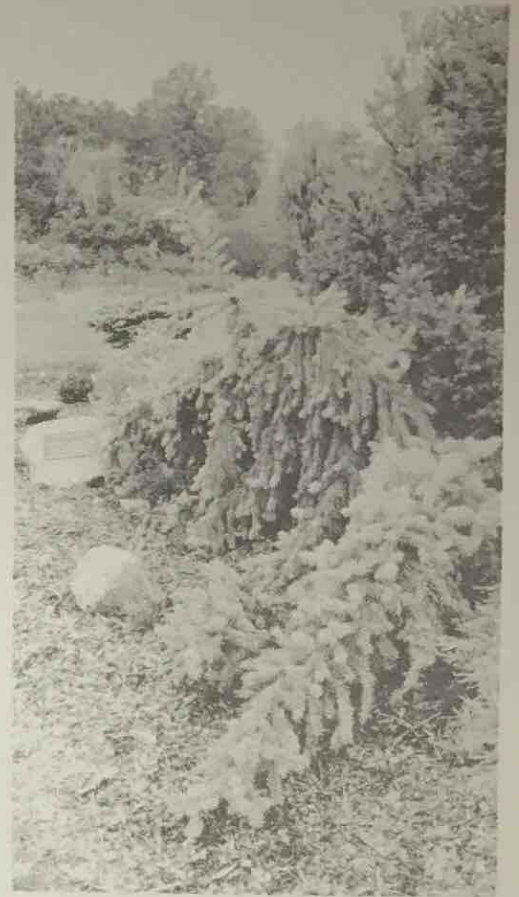
How slow is slow? Conifers that grow less than two inches a year are considered to be dwarfs. The littlest of this group of plants grows less than one quarter inch per year. More than two inches but less than four inches is considered to be slow-growing.

Dwarf and slow-growing conifers come in various shapes from thin, upright columnar to prostrate spreading. The prostrate forms can be staked and retain the staked shape. Colors run through shades of green, blue, yellow and grey-white. It is wise to ask if the "gold" of the catalog can become a dead-looking brown outside your door in the winter. The shape of the young plant is usually the same outline as the mature plant.



The plant sale in May will provide an excellent chance to add conifers to your garden. A selection of slow-growing as well as standard-size, pot-grown plants will be offered. Stand back and consider the shape and color and then use your thumb to determine how fast it will grow. The final step is to BUY!

Everyone knows Snow White had seven dwarfs all quite different than each other. Dwarf conifers are very addictive and just owning one will often bring on the Snow White Syndrome. - Peter Rumora



(Above) - Dwarf conifers at the Landis Arboretum may be found in beds around the library-greenhouse complex. The garden shown here is dedicated to the memory of Harriett Rosa Peck, Librarian at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute from 1912-1948, and First Friend of the George Landis Arboretum. A collection of dwarf conifers from Richard Southwick, former Landis Arboretum trustee and retired Professor of Horticulture, SUNY Cobleskill, may be found in the same area. Photo by Fran Finkbeiner

A branching is generally a year's growth (left). The top shoot shows the upward growth and a side branch the lateral growth. A top shoot about the size of your thumb is slow-growing and if half-a-thumb, it is a dwarf. A top shoot bigger than the long part of the palm of your hand is a "grower." The growth rate of slow-growing conifers accelerates at about ten years of age.

A Healthy Addiction

- *Herm Pinkbeiner*

Snow White's collection of seven dwarfs was barely a beginning, but her preoccupation with a charming prince may have prevented her from becoming a true collector.

Almost every genus of conifers has examples of slow growing and dwarf cultivars. Küssmann's *Manual of Cultivated Conifers*, 2nd edition, 1983 lists thirty different species of spruces in active cultivation. Hornibrook (*Dwarf and Slow Growing Conifers*, 1938) lists sixty dwarf

varieties of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) alone and makes the statement that it would require a good-size garden to do justice to just the spruces.

While it would certainly be spectacular, we won't have representatives of *each* genus and species at the plant sale. It simply isn't possible. But there will be many to choose from, and to whet your appetites, I'll use the spruces to illustrate how addiction can result from pursuing these delightful plants.

Among the first things that an upstate N.Y. gardener is likely to consider is winter hardiness. The Norway spruce cultivars stand out; they are uniformly listed in Zone 4 with many in Zone 3. In form they range from the truly upright *Picea abies* 'Cupressiana' to the weeping *Picea abies* 'Pendula' to the spreading, carpet-like, *Picea abies* 'Repens'.

Picea abies 'Clanbrassiliana Stricta'. A dwarf conical form creating a compact, pyramidal "Christmas tree." This plant was first described by Loudon (*Trees and Shrubs*, 1838). For a time it was thought to have disappeared from cultivation but was "rediscovered" by Hornibrook having been renamed (or misnamed) by the nursery trade as a form of *P. abies* 'Pygmaea'.



PYRAMIDAL

Picea abies 'Gregoryana Parsonii'. An excellent rock garden plant, dark green in color, forming a broad, irregular mound usually growing 1-2 inches per year with occasional spurts of 3-5 inches in some

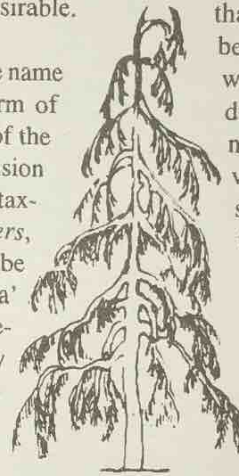
plants. The plant was originally distributed by the Parsons Nursery of Flushing, NY hence the varietal name. There are excellent specimens at the Arnold Arboretum and at Highland Park in Rochester.

Picea abies 'Little Gem'. A somewhat more dwarf form of 'Nidiformis', the Bird's Nest Spruce. It originated as a witches broom on 'Nidiformis' and tends to be about as wide as it is high. Bartels (*Gardening with Dwarf Trees and Shrubs*, 1983) includes this form among his selection of "the most important spruces." The central depression, resembling a bird's nest, is not as prominent as in 'Nidiformis'. Some feel the plant is less demanding of full sun than other spruces, but full sun is still desirable.



ROUNDED BUSH

Picea abies 'Pendula'. As the name indicates, it is a weeping form of Norway spruce. This is one of the plants that illustrates the confusion that exists in dwarf conifer taxonomy. Welch (*Dwarf Conifers*, 1966) feels the name should be abandoned because 'Inversa' and 'Reflexa' have been carefully described and are truly pendulous, whereas the name 'Pendula' has been loosely assigned to a wide variety of quite different plants. Küssman agrees with him - and then goes on to describe 'Pendula Bohemica', 'Pendula Major' and 'Pendula Monstrosa'.



WEeping

Picea abies 'Pumila'. A dwarf globe early in life then becoming somewhat wider than tall as it ages. One of the more formal of the dwarfs, it tidy in appearance with dark green foliage, uniformly branched and quite compact. Part of another taxonomic tangle, Küssman asserts that most plants sold under this name are incorrectly named. The plant - whatever its correct name - is a delight for anyone's garden.



ROUND

To demonstrate that dwarf conifer growers *do* become addicted, there are at least a couple of other totally different but equally interesting plants that I feel I must mention. Both will be available at the Spring Plant Sale. One of the most beauti-

ful of the slow-growing types is *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Boulevard', a silvery blue-green plant with dense foliage that sparkles in the sunlight. It will stand light trimming but it definitely is not a SPREADING dwarf. We have a 25 year old specimen that is about 8 feet tall but it has spent its entire life in the shade of other trees; in full sun it would probably be 4 to 6 feet taller. It does like moist soils but rebels against heavy clay especially if the pH is above 6.5.



SPREADING

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the hemlock *Tsuga canadensis* 'Little Joe'. First let's look at *T. canadensis* 'Minuta' which was discovered in 1927 in the Green Mountains of Vermont by Daniel St. George. He immediately recognized that he had found something special because seedlings of the same plant were found at the discovery site. Most dwarfs are sterile, do not set cones, do not produce viable seed. In this case viable seeds were absolutely essential since 'Minuta' grows from one-third to one-half inch per year and at that growth rate, rooting cuttings becomes hopeless. 'Little Joe' doesn't grow quite as fast as 'Minuta'. It has somewhat finer-textured foliage and no history of sudden rampant growth. Like most hemlocks it does not like hot sun



OVOID

but is a perfect plant for a shady spot in your rock garden.

If you haven't considered dwarf conifers for your garden in the past, we hope you will do so at the plant sale. The plants listed above will be available as well as others in several additional genera (firs, chamaecyparis, pines, arborvitae, hemlocks, junipers). And I'll bet the number of dwarfs in your collection will grow far beyond that of Ms. White.



CONICAL

PROSTRATE



Spring Plant Sale
May 17 and 18

Boston Flower Show Bus Trip

Join us for the Landis Arboretum's trip to the New England Spring Flower Show in Boston on Tuesday, March 11. This year's theme "Secrets of the Garden" comes to life on five-and-one-half indoor acres with floral displays, landscaped gardens, the Garden Marketplace with more than 250 vendors, hands-on demonstrations and presentations, entertainment and informal dining.

Cost: \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members. The cost includes round trip bus fare, flower show admission and a return trip snack. Lunch is available at your own cost from a variety of vendors at the show.

You may board the bus at Wade Tours on Burdick Street, Schenectady at 7 a.m., return 7:30 p.m. or at Crossgates Mall, Albany at 7:30 a.m., return at 7 p.m. **Registration deadline: February 14.** (A registration form may be found in the newsletter inserts.) For more information, call the Landis Arboretum 518-875-6935.

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The following businesses have given their support to the programs at the Landis Arboretum by contributing \$300 or more this year. We appreciate their generosity.

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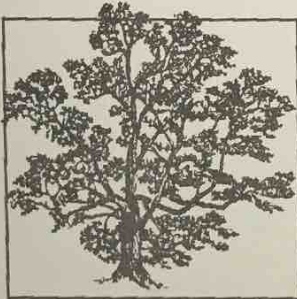
Have You Remembered the Arboretum in Your Will?

It is possible to help provide for the future of the Landis Arboretum by making arrangements today. A variety of methods for planned giving are available, some of which include tax benefits. For more information about the options and the best method for you, contact your attorney or financial planner. If you would like to or have already included the arboretum in your will, please let us know so we may have the opportunity to thank you.

Gift Matching

If the company you work for - or retired from - matches contributions that you make to a particular organization, please remember to notify your company's gift matching center. One such employer is General Electric and they may be contacted by mail as follows:

GE Fund Matching Gift Center, Box 45284, Jacksonville, FL 32232-5284 or by phone at 1-800-462-8244. Have on hand your employee (or retiree)'s Social Security number, the date of the gift, amount of gift and the zip code of the recipient. (Our zip is 12066.)



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WINTER NIGHTS

Winter nights were the loneliest. The wind whistled like hawks in the chimney, the fire crackled in the stove, the burned hunks dropped to the ash bed dully. Nails drew in the siding.

They sat at the table around the kerosene lamp. The boy did his lessons. Sometimes his father helped him. Not often. As outside, they worked poorly together. The boy was a stubborn pupil, he fought instruction.

The dark night prowled around the farmhouse, it looked in at the windows with terrible faces, and the boy, done with his lessons, looked out timidly and saw the yellow light of a neighbor's house beyond the terror shining clearly.

The stoves were piled with wood. The boy went to bed, he shoved deep in the blankets, he curled in a knot, he buried all but his nose. Howling the wind shook the house. Now the boy did not mind either the wind or the dark. He closed his eyes, the bed grew warm, he dreamed.

- Fred Lape, "Hill Farm"