Volunteer
Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania

Volunteer is a newsletter published monthly for Arboretum volunteers.
The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is an historic public garden and educational institution. It promotes an understanding of the relationship between plants, people, and place through programs that integrate science, art, and the humanities. The Arboretum conducts four major activities: education, research, outreach, and horticultural display. As the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania provides research and outreach services to state agencies, community institutions and to citizens of Pennsylvania and beyond.

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Volunteer
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Front Cover: Abeliophyllum distichum ‘Rosea’

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Sedum spurium ‘Dragon’s Blood’

juvenile red tail hawk Buteo jamaicensis
Arboretum Closed Until Further Notice

In response to the unprecedented public health crisis related to Coronavirus (COVID-19), Morris Arboretum will close to the public until the University of Pennsylvania feels that it is safe to re-open. Please know that this decision was made after careful deliberation and that our priority is to do all we can to ensure the safety and well being of our staff, volunteers, and visitors. Information pertaining to public health is rapidly evolving and, as such, it is not yet known when we will reopen. We will be vigilant in our efforts to keep our website up-to-date and we will communicate directly to members and class registrants via email with the latest details.

Canceled Events Due to Closure:
Spring Buds and Blooms Tour, 4/4
Volunteer Workshop: Philadelphia Drinking Water and Treatment Practices, 4/10
Cherry Blossom Days, 4/11, 4/18
Arbor Week, 4/20-4/24
MORE Hidden Gems Tour, 4/25

Morris From Home

Stay connected with Morris Arboretum from home! Check morrisarb.org for updates on how you can still experience the Arboretum in these three ways:

1. LEARN FROM HOME
The Continuing Education team is working hard to start offering classes online through video conferencing.

2. CONNECT FROM HOME
See the Arboretum through the eyes of our Horticulturists! Follow Morris Arboretum on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on what’s blooming in the garden.

3. GIVE FROM HOME
If you are in a position to make a donation of any size to the Arboretum, please consider doing so online at morrisarb.org/giving

We need your help!
What are you missing most about the Arboretum? What would you like to see more of on our social media pages? What classes would you like to see offered? If you have ideas on how we can better help you and others connect with Morris Arboretum during this challenging time, we’d love to hear from you! Email info@morrisarboretum.org with your suggestions.
Letter from the Editor

Hello everyone, from my cozy little apartment that I have gotten very familiar with in these past couple weeks. I miss you all dearly and hope that you are all safe, healthy, and relatively happy given the circumstances.

How are you feeling?

I have been checking in with myself regularly with this question, as I find myself oscillating daily between so many different emotions. It can feel good to just check in with those emotions, knowing that whatever you are feeling is valid, and there are probably so many other people right now sharing that feeling with you.

It seems as though we are stuck in this state of waiting, right? (Writing this, I can feel a nervous feeling coming up in my stomach). Because who likes waiting? There’s that sense of being stuck, uncertain, ready to move on. I know when I am waiting for something, my mind will start racing, trying to skip ahead, longing for the moment when I no longer must wait. But what helps me in these situations is to come back to the present moment or occupy myself with something that will bring me back to now.

This is the ultimate time for self-care, to do all the things you love to do or have always wanted to do, in order to bring your mind back to the present and to pass the time. I have been enjoying knitting, re-reading Little Women (to then watch the new movie and compare), reconnecting with old friends, playing Scrabble almost every night with my boyfriend (I am the current reigning champion, by the way!), meditating, and reading poetry.

I came across this poem, The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry, which I wanted to share with you all:

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

When first reading this, I imagined Wendell Berry going out into the world, using nature to find peace. This made me feel sad, thinking about how I (we) can’t go out and enjoy the outdoors right now, at least not without the anxiety of having to remain socially distant. But upon reading this a second time, I now picture Berry fearfully waking in the night, to then close his eyes and imagine being in nature. This got me thinking, this can be such a powerful tool for all of us right now. When we feel that stress or anxiety coming back, can we close our eyes and imagine that we are somewhere beautiful in the natural world. Maybe your favorite spot in the Arboretum. Maybe a memory you have in some place. Or maybe let your imagination take you to a fictitious land. But can we find that same feeling of calmness that we would get if we were actually being there? I know that I will be trying this meditation, I invite you to as well if it sounds intriguing.

Be well, stay healthy, and here’s to a happy April,

Alessandra Rella
The McLean Contributionship
Endowed Education Intern
A VISIT TO ANOTHER PLANET

After a week of very enjoyable biking in central Chile, we shifted gears (pun intended) and flew off to the remote Atacama Desert. Here we experienced a landscape unlike anything we had ever seen before. The Atacama Desert Plateau is a 600-mile strip of land on the Pacific Coast of South America, west of the Andes. It is one of the driest places in the world as it gets even less precipitation than the polar deserts – on average 0.6 inches per year. Some weather stations in this area have never received any rain! This extreme aridity is caused by a constant temperature inversion due to the cool north flowing Humboldt ocean current and strong Pacific anticyclone conditions (i.e. a high pressure system as opposed to a low pressure system that results in cyclones). The Atacama may be the oldest desert on earth – it has experienced hyperaridity for at least three million years.

The terrain is generally stony and consists of salt lakes and lava flowing towards the Andes. In a region about 60 miles south of the port city of Antofagasta (average elevation of 10,000 feet) the soil has been compared to the soil on Mars. This area has been used as a location for filming Mars’ scenes in the television series Space Odyssey: Voyage to Planets. Also, planetary scientists tested early prototypes of their Mars rovers at Atacama.

500 species of flora thrive in Atacama due to their extraordinary ability to adapt to an extreme environment. Some of these include thyme, llareta, and salt grass plus trees such as chanar, pimiento tree, and leafy algarrobo. Very hardy cacti and succulents such as candelabro and cardon also do well in the Atacama. Some of these plants can live for over 3,000 years. Sand colored grasshoppers, beetles, desert wasps, butterflies, Atacama scorpions, iguanas, and lava lizards are seen outside of the most extremely arid areas. Also in abundance are many varieties of birds including Humboldt penguins, hummingbirds, rufous collared sparrows, and Andean and Chilean flamingos. Last, but not least, are seen guanacos, vicunas, llamas, and alpacas.

With 200 cloudless nights per year and minimal rainfall and light pollution, Atacama is an astronomers’ delight. The area provides stargazers with a clear view of the southern sky which is not visible north of the equator. Long before European astronomers charted unknown constellations below the equator, indigenous people relied on the southern sky. Sometimes their buildings and villages were aligned with the heavens and they used the sun, moon and stars to tell time. Western astronomers were drawn to Chile in the 20th century looking for the best sites to build observatories. American institutions and the European Southern Observatory (ESO) also built observatories in the middle of nowhere. Many of these observatories are still up and running. Visible from Atacama are such glorious sights as Scorpio, the Southern Cross, the Milky Way with its many star clusters and nebulae plus the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds (two companion galaxies to our Milky Way). The Atacama (particularly near the town of San Pedro) offers many opportunities for old fashioned stargazing as some resorts have their own private observatories where local guides point out highlights.

One of our most thrilling activities in the Atacama was a visit to Rainbow Valley. This area gets its name from the variety of colors that can be seen in the hills of the valley: earth colors, red, beige, green, white and yellow combined with white salt and a deep blue sky. These truly spectacular colors are due to the different concentrations of clay, salts, and minerals in the soil of the valley. If you ever get to Chile, the Atacama is an area you will not want to miss. Just be sure to brush up on your Spanish as very little English was spoken in any of the areas we visited.

Hope you are enjoying the early spring as neighborhoods look lovely during much needed walks. Looking forward to being back together again at the Arboretum – don’t know when at this point, but it will happen. Stay safe and well until then!

Joan Kober
Chair of the Guides
Thanks to all of you for your patience and devotion to the Arboretum during these very trying times. We are attempting to carry on as usual by scheduling tours so your willingness to sign up is much appreciated even though many of the tours have been and will most likely continue to be cancelled. We all miss giving tours, attending meetings and seminars and simply going about our normal Arboretum activities. However, as you all know, these times are anything but normal!!

Try to hang in there, be safe and most of all be well. We are a strong knit family of individuals who care deeply about each other so we will get through this. Let’s plan a huge garden celebration when social distancing is a thing of the past. I certainly look forward to that day!

All my best,

Joan Kober
Chair of the Guides

*Helleborus* at the Orange Balustrade
Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities

Intern Project Wednesdays
Starting Wednesday, April 1, join the interns every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. for virtual presentations of their intern projects! Check your emails for the invitation links.

Book Club

**Bringing Nature Home**
By Douglas W. Tallamy
Friday, April 3 | 1:00 p.m. | Virtual Meeting

The book club will meet virtually this month for an online discussion. If you would like to participate, please contact Deitra Arena in advance at deitraarena@gmail.com

As development and subsequent habitat destruction accelerate, there are increasing pressures on wildlife populations. But there is an important and simple step toward reversing this alarming trend: Everyone with access to a patch of earth can make a significant contribution toward sustaining biodiversity. *Bringing Nature Home* has sparked a national conversation about the link between healthy local ecosystems and human well-being. By acting on Doug Tallamy's practical recommendations, everyone can make a difference.

**My First Summer in the Sierra**
By John Muir
Friday, May 1 | 1:00 p.m. | Gates Hall*

In the summer of 1869, John Muir, a young Scottish immigrant, joined shepherds in the foothills of California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains. The diary he kept while tending sheep formed the heart of this book. *My First Summer in the Sierra* incorporates the lyrical accounts and sketches he produced during his four-month stay in the Yosemite River Valley and the High Sierra. His record tracks that memorable experience, describing in picturesque terms the majestic vistas, flora and fauna, and other breathtaking natural wonders of the area. Today Muir is recognized as one of the most important and influential naturalists and nature writers in America. This book will delight environmentalists and nature lovers with its exuberant observations.

*Subject to change to a virtual meeting

The Book Club is open to all Arboretum volunteers and staff. All are welcome to attend any session and you do not have to attend every month.

Looking for more to read? Join the Morris Arboretum Social Distancing Book Club on Facebook! One book will be recommended every two weeks. The first book to read is *Planting in a Post-Wild World* by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West.
In response to the unprecedented public health crisis related to Coronavirus (COVID-19), classes through and including April 20 have been canceled. We will reassess cancellation for classes that take place after that date and post updates on our website.

If you registered online, your refund will be processed automatically. If you paid by check, telephone, or other method, we will have someone from our education team get in touch with you by phone and/or email to continue your refund process in the method you paid originally.

Please follow the progress of spring at the Arboretum through Facebook and Instagram and look for new online classes in the future to keep you connected, learning and growing.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

**Morris from Home**

**A Photo Guide to Rose Pruning**

By Eloise Gayer, *Charles S. Holman Endowed Rose Garden Intern*

The forsythia is blooming, which means it’s rose pruning time! As the Rose Garden Intern, my back has been thoroughly aching these past few weeks as Rosarian Vince Marrocco and I prune our way through the thousand or so roses we grow here at the Morris Arboretum. While there are many different kinds of roses that require different styles of pruning, this guide will demonstrate how to prune a repeat-blooming shrub rose, which is the type of rose most likely to be found in your average garden.

We start, of course, with personal protective equipment. Gauntlet gloves keep your arms and hands safe from scratches, while alcohol spray sterilizes your pruners to prevent spreading diseases (like the dreaded Rose Rosette Disease) from previous pruning jobs. In the Rose Garden, we spray our pruners in between each plant. Now we are ready to prune.

When pruning a rose, you must be fearless! Roses are tough and vigorous plants, and a hard yearly pruning will keep them from out-growing their space. If left unchecked, many shrub roses will grow up to eight feet in height and width, so don’t be afraid to prune hard and put those roses in their place!
Pictured left is the rose I pruned for this demonstration: Carefree Celebration. Because of the warm weather, it has begun leafing out early, and I had to be extra careful while pruning to avoid breaking off the new leaves. The goal for pruning this rose is to create a vase shape: strong canes pointing up and outwards from an open center. I also reduced the height to about 10 inches from the ground, as the rose will grow several feet during the course of the season and will block the other roses behind it if it grows too tall. You can adjust this height according to your desired outcome: for a taller plant, reduce your rose to one or two feet instead.

When deciding which canes to prune out of your rose, there are three things to look for: dead canes, crossing or rubbing canes, and canes that are less than pencil-thick in diameter. Crossing or rubbing canes will create wounds at their points of contact, which will affect the health of the plant in the long run. Canes that are less than pencil-thick will not usually bulk up in their second year; it is best to prune them out and let the thicker canes take charge. And dead canes don’t do anybody any good! Pictured below are some canes I decided to remove. Some are dead, some are crossing, some are too thin, and some point directly into the center of the plant, which we want to keep open to create that vase shape.

Here, I removed two crossing canes to prevent damage as they grow larger and begin to rub.

Here I removed two canes that were thinner than a pencil (on the right side of the main cane), and two canes that were growing directly into the center of the plant (on the left side of the main cane).
The dead cane on the right had to go! The dead cane on the left looks shabby next to its strong, green companion, and it is growing towards the center of the plant. Out he comes!

Now that the dead, crossed, and thin canes are removed, I finished by pruning my remaining canes to my desired height of 10 inches. When pruning these canes, always prune to an outward-facing bud in order to direct the new growth that will begin once the bud breaks dormancy. Outward-facing growth with an open center encourages air movement within the plant, which can help deter pests and diseases. Pictured left is an outward-facing bud that has already broken dormancy, and is easy to spot. On the right is a bud that may be harder to spot. If you have to prune an inch or two higher or lower than you’d like, it’s worth it to find that outward-facing bud!

Now behold your finished product: a perfectly pruned shrub rose. It may seem as though the plant will never recover from such a severe pruning, but remember: when pruning roses, you must be fearless! Pruning your rose will encourage strong new growth with many blooms, create air circulation and prevent damage and disease. Your garden and your roses will thank you for the effort.

To learn more about roses and rose pruning, I suggest visiting the American Rose Society’s website to access its many rose resources, and the Philadelphia Rose Society’s website for a comprehensive list of hardy roses to grow in the area. Additionally, please feel free to email me at eloiseg@upenn.edu with specific questions about your roses at home! I am happy to offer any advice I can. We look forward to the day we can open the gates and show you our roses blooming! Happy pruning!

Want to learn more? Watch our video, Rose Pruning at Morris Arboretum with Vince Marrocco and Eloise Gayer.
Morris from Home

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Greenhouse

Contributed by Emily Conn,
The Martha J. Wallace Endowed Plant Propagation Intern

Buds are breaking, spring ephemerals are painting the landscape with bright colors, and warmer weather is on the horizon… spring is on our doorstep! Take a trip with me in a behind-the-scenes exclusive to see what is blooming in our greenhouse complex and hoop houses! These facilities are off limits to the public but I want to show you all the emerging colors and textures that spring is bringing us.

Greenhouse Glass Rooms

First we’ll see what’s blooming in the greenhouse complex. These glass rooms are attached to the head house, where the Propagator Shelley Dillard and the intern have their offices, work space for repotting plants, and propagation benches. The orchids pictured below are past gifts from volunteers, and they are kept in the greenhouses so that interns can learn how to re-pot orchids.

One of the most unique flowers you’ve likely ever come across, in which the flowering structure is fused with the midrib of the leaf. In botanical terms, this is called an ‘epiphyllous inflorescence’. We are waiting for the blossoms to fully open!

_Cattlianthe ‘Jewel Box’ orchid_  
_Paphiopedilum ssp. Venus slipper orchid_  
_Helwingia chinensis_  
_Primum ‘Fudan-zakura’ Japanese cherry tree_  
_Hippeastrum ‘Papilio’ butterfly amaryllis_
Covered Hoop Houses

In addition to greenhouses, we also have three hoop houses that are covered with insulated plastic in the winter to overwinter larger, hardy woody plants that are in pots. When plants are in pots, they need a bit more protection from the elements. A sure sign of spring is when outdoor temperatures are warm enough that we can cut U-shaped flaps in the plastic, which release heat, allow for air flow, and acclimate the plants to outside temperatures! If the hoop houses get too hot the leaf buds will break open, and a hard dip in temperatures would kill that tender new growth.

These delicate, bell-shaped flowers give off an impressive stench! They can stink up the entire hoop house with a smell similar to rotting meat.

Check out the pollen caked on the leaves under each flower!

The brilliance of this yellow flower can’t be captured by camera; when you walk into a hoop house with the sun shining on these flowers, it really does appear to ‘glow’!
Wild About Witchhazels

I absolutely love our selection of witchhazels, with a spectrum of colors ranging from red, rose, yellow, burnt orange, and nearly purple! The flowers are coming to the end of their season but are still striking in shape and color! I chose to highlight two of my favorites here, and luckily their flowers were still in good shape.

When warmer temperatures roll around, there is sure to be a flurry of flowers perfuming the hoop houses and greenhouse complex. I hope this little glimpse into the behind-the-scenes of our greenhouse has brought some brightness into your day!
Morris from Home
Magnolias in Bloom


Magnolia Fun Facts!

1. Magnolia are named after the French botanist Pierre Magnol.

2. There are around 210 species of Magnolia. They differ in size, shape, color of flower, and type of habitat.

3. Magnolia are prehistoric! The fossil record shows that these trees existed at least 20 million years ago.

4. Magnolia flowers are typically pollinated by beetles. The high-protein pollen that magnolia flowers produce is a food source for beetles. It’s theorized that the flowers evolved to encourage pollination by beetles.

5. The bark of some Magnolia, such as Magnolia denudata, is used in traditional Chinese medicine to improve lung health and treat anxiety.

6. Magnolia flowers are protogynous, which means that the flowers first open with the female parts of the flower receptive, then close, then reopen with the male parts (stamens) ready to shed pollen. This increases the chances for cross-pollination, as opposed to self-pollination.
Home Gardens

A Garden Helper
Contributed by Bob Gutowski, Director of Education and Visitor Experience

I was clearing a strawberry bed at home when I disturbed the sleep of my garden helper, *Bufo americanus*, the American toad! Typically they arise from hibernation around Passover or Easter and head to the pond to sing and breed in a symphonic ritual of spring. The Arboretum Wetland is a great toad concert venue. One toad can consume nearly 10,000 invertebrates in a three month season. Is that a toadabite of bugs? Best of all, they eat slugs!

What’s happening in your garden?
Send us pictures of what you’re planting, what’s in bloom, or what you find in your home garden to share with the Morris Arboretum community! Please send your pictures and captions to Alessandra at arella8@upenn.edu
Arboretum Travels

Reflections from the American Public Gardens Association Education Symposium

Contributed by Alessandra Rella, The McLean Contributionship Endowed Education Intern

This February, I attended the APGA Education Symposium in Austin, Texas. I had my travel schedule planned perfectly: I woke up at 2:30 a.m. to catch my 5:00 a.m. flight, which would get me to Austin around 10:00 a.m., leaving plenty of time to make it for the 11:30 a.m. start time. Well I think you all know where this is going... we all boarded the plane, fastened our seatbelts, and prepared for takeoff, when the voice of a flight attendant came on the intercom saying, “ladies and gentlemen, we do not have a pilot confirmed for this flight.” She continued to say that we all had to get off and wait three hours for the next flight. And so, I missed my connecting flight in Charlotte, NC, and in turn did not get to Austin until 3 p.m. Long story short, I missed the first day of the conference. Though I was sad, I did get some extra time to explore Austin and I also got to relax in a rocking chair in the Charlotte airport under an allée of trees!

I eagerly woke up the next morning, ready for the second day of the conference (a.k.a. my first day). First, we visited Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. They have this great big windchime welcoming visitors at the entrance, which I stopped to look at and enjoy. Someone asked, why is it so large and low to the ground? A staff member responded that the goal is to encourage children to touch the windchime and play with sound. On cue, a little boy ran up to the windchime and slammed his little hand into the dangling diamond shape, setting off a lovely, yet slightly jarring sound. He turned to us with a big, proud smile on his face.

After a morning session on how to make gardens more welcoming to all groups of people (Come talk to me/email me to hear more!), I went on a tour of Lady Bird’s very extensive children’s garden. Throughout the garden, they had small statues of native animals, which were oh-so-cute. Apparently, a live bobcat was once seen sitting next to its doppelgänger! Another feature of the garden that I loved was this large spiral maze that kids could run through. Within the spiral there were plants, each of which had some sort of spiral within its structure. Kids are encouraged to look closely and analyze each plant to see if they can find the spiral!

Also on this tour, we took a stop at Lady Bird’s outdoor library. If you look close, you’ll see that there are shelves built into the walls (both inside and out) filled with books. Children are encouraged to look through them and even take some books home, as long as they bring them back, or donate others in their place! This little house also completely closes up when not in operation, with each panel closing in to the right.

Later in the day, we went to Zilker Botanic Garden. After a warm welcome, we learned the spectacular story of the large Japanese garden they have on site. At age 70, a man named Isamu Taniguchi built this garden over the span of 18 months as a gift of gratitude to the city for the education his sons received at the university there. Many find this gesture particularly touching since during WWII, Mr. Taniguchi and his family were taken from their farm in California and interned in various detention camps, eventually being sent to one in Texas. Take a tour of the Taniguchi garden here!

While exploring Zilker, I found my way to their children’s garden, where they had pages from the book The Very Hungry Caterpillar, printed on large panels and placed through the garden so kids and their families could read the book as they walked along. How cute is that?

The last day of the conference was spent back at Lady Bird, where I attended a panel on incorporating STEM curriculum into garden programs and another on nature play. We also had a chance to walk through Fortlandia, a part of their garden with many spectacular forts to be discovered at every turn!

I had a wonderful time in Austin and definitely confirmed my love for environmental education and desire to continue working in this field!
From the Archives

A Picture Worth 300 Words
by Joyce H. Munro

H. H. York took this photograph of the weeping European beech near the Orange Balustrade in 1933. York was not a professional photographer but a Professor of Botany at the University of Pennsylvania and Plant Pathologist at the Arboretum. During his 20-year tenure, York took a number of photographs on Arboretum grounds.

Harlan Harvey York was born in Indiana and completed his undergraduate degree at DePauw University and Master of Arts at Ohio State. When York received the Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in 1911, the field of plant pathology was rapidly expanding and he had no trouble landing a job. By the time he joined the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Botany in 1927, York had held three academic positions, in Texas, Rhode Island and West Virginia, as well as concurrent positions with the Bureau of Plant Industry in Washington, D.C. and the New York Conservation Commission. His change of jobs is somewhat unusual for a plant pathologist in that era, but the focus of his work was always the same—control of tree-killing diseases like blister rust, the most destructive disease of white pines in North America. He once boasted that he had worked in every state east of the Mississippi, tracking brown spot and gall rust.

After retiring from the University at age 75, York moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where he worked with the State Department of Conservation for ten years and authored, 100 Forest Trees of Alabama. He concluded his book with this statement: “The basic elements that have contributed to our forest’s success have been private ownership; public programs which provided technical assistance; protection from fire, insects and disease; favorable taxes; and availability of diversified markets for forest goods and services.”

Wonder what York would think of the state of the world’s forests today?
Garden Highlights

**Pieris japonica**  
Japanese Pieris  
The Overlook

**Cornus officinalis**  
Japanese cornel dogwood  
Oak Allée

**Erin’s Planters**  
Widener Terrace

**Bellis, pansies,**  
*Erysimum, Ranunculus, Juneus*

**Lonicera standishii**  
var. *lancifolia*  
narrowleaf standish honeysuckle  
The Studio

**Rhododendron mucronulatum**  
Korean Rhododendron  
Parking Lot

**Forsythia viridissima**  
greenstem forsythia  
Azalea Meadow

*Photo by Caitlyn Rodriguez*