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
Alex Correia-Sareyka, Editor
Contributors: Jody Sprague, Bess Trout, Elizabeth Gavula

Questions, comments, and submissions can be directed to the editor at edintern@morrisarboretum.org or mailed to the Arboretum Attn: Education Intern.

Photos: Alex Correia-Sareyka, unless otherwise stated

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The wetlands and surrounding meadows have quickly become one of my favorite places at the Arboretum. The area is less trafficked, with a quiet and tranquil feel. The diversity of native plant species unique to this habitat attract a variety of interesting birds and other animals. Not to mention, my intern project is based in the wetlands, which gives me ample excuse to visit the area frequently.

I have particularly enjoyed watching the seasonal changes in the wetland and meadows. I assumed the area would be less interesting in the late fall and early winter, but I sure was wrong! The colorful wildflowers of the meadow have become fluffy heads of seeds, the bright red fruit of *Ilex verticillata* can be found along the perimeter of the wetland, and the crimson leaves of *Acer rubrum* stand out in the landscape. If you listen, you can hear the chattering call of the belted kingfisher that can be seen perching in the dead tree overlooking the water. Don’t miss the display of colors, textures, and variety of wildlife at the wetland throughout the year!

Alex Correia-Sareyka

*The McLean Contributionship*

*Endowed Education Intern*
Hello Everyone,

Last October, we had a terrific field trip to the James G. Kaskey Memorial Park (often called the BioPond). We were led on our tour by 2011-2012 Morris Arboretum Intern, Josh Darfler. He explained the history of the garden and gave us a tour of the greenhouse and Kaskey Park. What fascinated me about the BioPond was the mystery of what was living there. The aeration system was not functioning well, so the water was quite hazy, but we could see huge Koi. Josh mentioned that they were going to start draining the pond that weekend. I was curious as to what they would find, and Josh agreed to let us know. He gave us the following account.

“Just a few days after the Morris Arboretum group left, we started the process of draining the pond in order to fix our aeration system, which had started to fail over the summer. We were also taking the opportunity to remove the massive population of Koi and turtles from the pond and rehouse them across the Delaware Valley in order for us to establish a more sustainable and healthy ecosystem in the pond. Over the week we removed over 400 fish from the pond, without a single death, as well as 30 turtles. We estimate that there are still an additional 25-45 dormant turtles still in the pond, burrowed into the mud on the bottom for the winter. The hope is to catch them in the spring once they emerge. Surprisingly, there was not a lot of debris on the bottom of the pond besides stones and sticks. We did find a few cell phones dropped into the pond over the decade, as well as a collection of water bottles, children toys, and some jewelry. Mechanical repairs are still ongoing, but we hope to have the pond refilled before Thanksgiving break.

- Included in that 400 fish is about 75-100 goldfish, about 6 large catfish (some of which are albino) and the rest are all Koi.
- Most of these animals were released into the pond by community members who originally owned the animals as pets. Red Eared Slider – an invasive species of turtle, and the predominate turtle in the pond – is very popular in the pet trade, but do grow to large sizes and live a long time. We believe students would get these animals as pets for their houses or dorm rooms and then release them into the pond at the end of the semester. This spring we will then start the process of repopulating the pond. Our hope is to plant aquatic plants to help trap and uptake nutrients, as well as smaller (mostly native) fish that will create a balanced ecology in the pond. We are working with experts in the area to create this plan. Our hope is to have a pond that is much clearer, with vegetation, and supports more wildlife including ducks, amphibians, and reptiles. If we find any native turtles in the pond, we will reintroduce them as well.”

Josh, thank you for satisfying my curiosity about the biopond. Thank you also to our program committee for planning yet another great field trip.

Happy Holidays,

Jody Sprague, Chair of the Guides
Continuing Education

Volunteers who have worked over 30 hours during the past year may take classes at a discounted price. Please refer to the Volunteer Price Spreadsheet in the Education Office for a complete list of volunteer class pricing. To sign up for a class please call 215-247-5777 ext. 125.

**Holiday Tabletop Tree with Lights**  
*Monday, December 12*  
*10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.*  
Make a special centerpiece that is sure to put you into the holiday spirit. Create your own tree from long-lasting greens, bows, and glass balls. Decorate your centerpiece with fresh flowers and lights for a festive holiday decoration.

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**Create a Beautiful Holiday Arrangement for Your Table or Mantle**  
*Sunday, December 18*  
*1-3 p.m.*  
Design a beautiful, long-lasting arrangement for your table centerpiece or fireplace mantle. There are a number of shapes to choose from, and they will be demonstrated. You will have a wonderful assortment of greens, flowers, branches, candles, accessories, and more to choose from to make your one-of-a-kind arrangement.

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**GMO’s: The Science, the Hope, and the Real World**  
*Sunday, January 22*  
*2 p.m.*  
Dr. Andrew Binns will provide a brief summary of the science behind GMO production and ‘conventional’ plant breeding; discuss the conceivable positives and negatives from these two approaches based on the science behind them; and examine how political/economic discourse affects decision making in relation to utilization of these technologies.
Volunteer Opportunities

Tu B’Shevat - The New Year of Trees

Help children celebrate Tu B’Shevat! It’s the Jewish New Year of Trees. In Israel, Tu B’Shevat is a national holiday and children don’t go to school. Instead, they go with their families or classmates to plant young trees in the countryside and learn about the importance of trees. We need volunteers for a variety of activities throughout the week at the following times. Feel free to volunteer for multiple slots! Sign up via Team Up, or e-mail Lisa Bailey if you are having trouble using Team Up at baileyl@upenn.edu

Sunday, February 5: 10-11:15am, 11:30am-12:45pm
Monday, February 6: 10-11:15am
Tuesday, February 7: 10-11:15am
Wednesday, February 8: 10-11:15am
Thursday, February 9: 10-11:15am
Sunday, February 12: 10-11:15am, 11:30am-12:45pm
Volunteer Workshops

**Curious About Conifers?**

Bundle up for a special walking tour highlighting a selection of impressive conifers at Morris Arboretum. These notable specimens provide multi-season interest with an array of varying forms, foliage, bark, and of course, cones! Don’t miss out on this opportunity to satisfy your curiosity about conifers and enhance your guiding repertoire.

**Saturdays, December 10, January 14, and January 28**

2:00 pm | Widener Terrace

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**Pollinator Garden Presentation**

Join Penn State Master Gardener & Morris Arboretum Education Guide, Howard Goldstein, for a morning power point presentation on the award winning Pollinator Garden located at W. Fairmount Park’s Horticulture Center. The photos on this presentation are from the Pollinator Garden and document the flowering shrubs, perennials, annuals, and insects from the last three years that we see from early spring to late fall. There will be handouts and samples of books pertinent to pollinator gardens and insects.

**Tuesday, January 10 | 10:30 am | Upper Gallery**

*photo courtesy of Howard Goldstein*
Volunteer Photos

Last month, our volunteers took a trip to Cedar Grove, the Morris family summer home, and to East Laurel Hill Cemetery, where John and Lydia Morris are buried.
Holiday Happenings

Horticulture Volunteer Holiday Potluck

Treat your fellow Horticulture volunteers to your favorite dish or dessert and enjoy this winter celebration!

Wednesday, December 14th | 12:30pm
Upper Gallery

Education Volunteer Winter Potluck

Bring your favorite dish to share and enjoy a winter celebration with fellow Education volunteers and staff! RSVP to Alex at acorreia@upenn.edu or via Team Up, and include the name of your dish.

Thursday, December 15th | Noon-2pm
Upper Gallery

Staff & Volunteer Evening at the Holiday Garden Railway

Bundle up and come enjoy the twinkling lights of the Holiday Garden Railway after dark on this special evening set aside for volunteers and staff. Complimentary cookies and hot cocoa will be available. Bring a flashlight!

Thursday, December 1st | 4:00-7:00pm
**Restoring Our Heritage**

by Bess Trout, *Hay Honey Farm Endowed Natural Lands Intern*

I grew up visiting a nature center in my neighborhood, where a black and white photo hung on the wall of two men standing among the massive trunks of a chestnut forest. One of the people who worked in the nature center pointed it out to me. He told me that these woods were once full of trees that made even the great oaks seem small, trees that bloomed in such profusion that the hills looked snow covered in June. Trees with such reliable mast production that they were a food source for the whole forest. *Castanea dentata*, the American chestnut, was the tree the forest lost.

We’ve all heard the story of the fungus that spread like wildfire across the two hundred million acres that formed the native range of the chestnut. By 1950 they were all but gone, a handful of lone survivors, a few shrubby shoots sent up by a dying rootstock. The forests where William Penn and John Bartram walked, the woods that witnessed the birth of a nation, had changed forever.

Or had they? In 1983 a group of plant scientists founded the American Chestnut Society in the hopes of restoring this giant of the eastern woods. The task they faced seemed nearly impossible. They hoped to take an American chestnut and cross it with *Castanea mollisima*, the Chinese chestnut, a tree that has a natural resistance to the blight. Their goal was to take the resulting offspring and back cross it repeatedly to the American chestnut, until they were left with a tree that was as close to the native species as possible, but with enough genes from its Chinese relative to protect it against the blight.

It took until 2007, but we now have trees that are 15/16 American chestnut. Twenty-four years of careful science have brought us to a generation that we hope preserves the height, spread, and food and flower production of the straight species. A tree that, after more than two decades of effort, may grow to fill the enormous gap its ancestors left behind.

You can visit one of these saplings yourself, growing just off the path under Out on a Limb here at Morris Arboretum. It is dwarfed now, by the surrounding umbrella magnolia and American hop hornbeam, but it is growing. One day I hope I might walk down that path beneath the spreading branches of a towering chestnut, and show my children the tree we thought we had lost forever. The tree that science, determination, and hope brought back.

*Thank you to the American Chestnut Foundation for information: http://www.acf.org/*
As their trip to Egypt and the Nile wound down, John and Lydia spent some time in European cities where, as Louise Kellner’s journal records, Lydia did some shopping.

**June 17, 1895 – Vienna**
After Luncheon we took a landau and first drove to Madame Stadler, a large establishment of “Modes”, where we had the pleasure of looking at perfect frights of hats and bonnets, and left without buying anything though the saleslady vowed and declared, whenever Miss Morris tried on one of these modern concoctions, that “Madame looks charming!”

**June 18, 1895 – Vienna**
Miss Morris and I started out after breakfast for hats, and found perfect beauties in a store where we had seen them in the windows before. Then we had a chase after some underwear… After Luncheon Mr. Morris and I went to the Custom House to redeem a bottle of hairwash that had been sent from Philadelphia [there are several accounts in the journals of Lydia seizing a “free” day to wash and dry her hair]; then Miss Morris and I went to the Establishment of Mr. Ch. Drecoll, where Miss Morris ordered some fine dresses to be made for her… [Christophe Drecoll’s was a prominent fashion design house in Vienna].

**June 19, 1895 - Vienna**
Miss Morris stood for nearly three hours at Drecoll’s to be fitted, and most of the time I sat by to interpret; when both Miss Morris and the lady who fitted her were tired out, the former and I went shopping. Miss Morris bought herself two hats and a veil, and I a bonnet – we went into several stores for shirt-waists - looked at table-linens – ordered some underwear, and finally returned to the Hotel…we started out again to Klein, am Graben, then Miss Morris had another fitting at the dressmaker’s…All this sounds as if it had been a stupid day for us, which however has not been the case at all, for Miss Morris and I had a glorious time in looking at all the handsome materials and lovely “will be” dresses of hers… [J. & L. Lobmeyr glassmakers provided crystal chandeliers for palaces and co-developed the first electric chandeliers in the world in 1883, with Thomas Edison].

**July 2, 1895 – Venice**
…to fill the spare time before Luncheon, we went to Jerusum’s lace store, where Miss Morris gave an order for a tablecloth, and bought some dresses. [Michelangelo Jerusum revived the secrets of Venetian lace-making and opened a shop on Piazza San Marco in 1870.]

*And there was shopping with John too!*
…we floated along the Grand Canal to a place where they make Gondolas, as Mr. Morris has the idea of buying a “Piccolo Gondola” for Chestnut Hill, where he will amuse himself to paddle it on the Wissahickon.

Written by Elizabeth Gavula
Garden Highlights

Cryptomeria japonica
Japanese cryptomeria
near Fernery

Cornus officinalis
Japanese cornel dogwood
Log Cabin

Stewartia monadelpha
tall stewartia
Azalea Meadow

Nandina domestica
heavenly bamboo
Swan Pond

Ilex opaca  ‘Old Heavy Berry’
Old Heavy Berry American holly
Holly Slope

Asclepias sp.
milkweed
Wetland
## Upcoming Events

### December 2016

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### Weekly Volunteer Events

- **Wednesdays:** Horticulture Volunteers 8:30am-12pm
- **Saturdays and Sundays:** Regular Tour 2:00pm-3:00pm
- **Saturdays:** Winter Wellness Walks 10:30am
### Upcoming Events

**January 2017**

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