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

Photos: Alessandra Rella, unless otherwise stated

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Letter from the Editor

Winter is officially here, which means so is the cold and early fall of dusk. If I’m being honest, I’ve never liked the wintertime. Mainly because I find it so hard to do things. Once I get all settled and cozy indoors, it’s hard for me to muster up the courage to go back out and face the cold. On top of that, as soon as the sun sets, I’m hit with an immediate bout of sleepiness, further persuading me to stay indoors.

Luckily, there’s an easy solution to my problem: bundle up and go outside! I’m wincing writing this… “No! It really is too cold!!”… but I guess it’s like jumping into a cold pool; you just have to take a deep breath and do it. In the end it’s usually worth it.

I’m thinking back to one year when I spent Christmas with my Aunt in Wisconsin. After a slow morning of lounging and relaxing indoors, my Aunt says, “OK! It’s time for a walk.” I don’t remember exactly what I said, but I’m sure it was some sort of whine of resistance. But yet, we all bundled up, set out into the frigid air (though my Aunt would tell me it really wasn’t that cold, a truly seasoned Wisconsian), and we took a lovely and really enjoyable walk through the snow.

I experienced this same thing a few weeks ago. I was sitting on my couch, questioning why I had agreed to meet a friend in Fairmount Park on such a cold and windy day… “Can I still cancel?” …but I pulled myself up and got out the door. And it was such a lovely afternoon! In fact, it was while I was walking in the park that day that I had this realization that I’m writing about here. Every year, I spend most of the winter being miserable about the cold, short days that keep me inside. What if I just didn’t let that stop me? Because the truth is, every time I do go out into the cold, I feel better because of it. Whether it’s that sense of awakening I get from the brisk air against my face, or the satisfying feeling of finally getting back indoors to a warm cup of hot cocoa.

So, my personal challenge this winter is to get out more, even when the cold and darkness lure me under warm blankets. Having the Arboretum at my disposal is an incredible gift. It’s such a beautiful place to enjoy a daily brisk walk. (Also, on a separate note, I can’t believe how different the Arboretum looks now that so many trees have lost their leaves!!)

Wishing you a lovely holiday season with your family and friends. I hope you have lots of wonderful moments, both indoors and outdoors!

Happy December,

Alessandra Rella
The McLean Contributionship
Endowed Education Intern
Notes from the Guides Chair

Sustainable Practices for the Holidays

Holidays can be joyous, but also stressful and less than environmentally friendly. In fact, the statistics are alarming: Americans throw away about 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Eve than any other equivalent time period during the year. In addition, the paper used by every American family to wrap just three presents would cover 45,000 football fields. What can we all do to cut down on the waste and put the “joy” back into the holiday season? Adopt some very basic sustainable practices, of course! Here are some of my favorite ideas organized by category – hope you find them helpful:

### DECORATING
- Use LED lights, or even better, solar powered LED lights
- Connect indoor and outdoor lights to a timer to save electricity
- Use fewer lights in your decorating (or even no lights!)
- Skip the tinsel and plastic decorations
- Use natural materials (evergreen branches, berries, flowers, fresh fruit, etc.) to create stunning arrangements and decorations (see p. 8)
- Buy a potted tree with root ball that is native to your area to be planted in your yard after the holidays
- Make edible ornaments like suet bells or pinecones with peanut butter to hang in your yard to feed wildlife.

### SHOPPING/GIFT GIVING
- Shop as close to home as possible in an area where many stores are located
- Give gifts that promote the use of less stuff (i.e. a book on craft making, reusable items, or a cookbook for leftovers)
- Give gift cards to local museums, concerts, restaurants or theaters
- Make your own gifts
- Give apps as gifts for kids with smartphones
- Donate to a non-profit in honor of the gift recipient
- Organize a “re-gifting” swap with friends and family
- Give gifts of your time and skills: coupons to household chores, babysitting, cooking of meals, dog walking, etc.

### GIFT WRAPPING/ GREETING CARDS
- Use creative materials for gift wrap like calendars, scarves, old maps, newspaper, fabric, or children’s artwork
- Make the wrapping part of a gift. For example, a decorative gardening pot filled with gardening supplies or a mixing bowl/stockpot filled with kitchen items
- Give bags/baskets that can be used again
- Avoid metallic and plastic wrapping paper that’s not recyclable
- Send e-cards instead of paper cards
- Use last year’s holiday cards to create gift tags

### ENTERTAINING
- Research sustainable food choices in your area and buy locally
- Serve finger food to cut down on plate and utensil use
- Buy snacks and drinks in bulk to avoid excess packaging
- Use smaller plates to encourage smaller portions to reduce waste
- Use re-usable cups, plates, and utensils instead of disposable ones
- Donate leftovers to a food bank or compost appropriate leftovers

Hope your holidays are filled with joy. Looking forward to seeing you at our Holiday Potluck celebration on December 17th. Remember to sign up on the Team Up Calendar.

Joan Kober
Chair of the Guides

Sources:
Go Green for the Holidays, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention online article, November 2018
Sustainable Holidays, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, October 25, 2019
Volunteers Needed for Tu B’Shevat

Help children celebrate the New Year of Trees at our annual Tu B’Shevat program! Students will participate in a variety of guided activities in and outside of the Widener Visitor Center to learn about the importance of trees, and also prepare their own tree seedling to take home.

We need volunteers for a variety of activities during the week of Sunday, February 9 – Sunday, February 16, 2020 at the times listed below. Feel free to volunteer for multiple slots! Sign up is available via the Team Up calendar or contact Lisa Bailey at baileyL@upenn.edu

Time slots

Sunday, February 9: 10-11:15 a.m.  11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
Monday, February 10: 10-11:15 a.m.
Tuesday, February 11: 10-11:15 a.m.
Wednesday, February 12: 10-11:15 a.m.
Thursday, February 13: 10-11:15 a.m.
Sunday, February 16: 10-11:15 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

We’re excited to announce that activities have been updated for next year’s program. Please plan to join us for a training session on

Thursday, December 12th at 2:00 p.m. in the Upper Gallery

for demonstration of the new activities and to get some hands-on practice.

Volunteer Newsletter Contributors Wanted

Are you a writer, poet, artist, or photographer? Consider contributing to the Volunteer Newsletter! You can submit material you’re interested in publishing to Alessandra at arella8@upenn.edu.

Tu B’Shevat is the Jewish New Year/ “birthday” of trees. This ecological holiday is celebrated by taking time to remember our connection to the earth and our role as caretakers of our environment. On this day, children traditionally go out with their families to plant trees and learn about their importance.
Announcements

New Volunteer Event

Trip to the Wagner Free Institute
January 14, 2020 | 10:15 a.m.

The Wagner Free Institute of Science is a rare survival—a museum and educational institution that remains nearly unchanged from the nineteenth century in both the arrangement of its specimens and in its educational mission. The exhibit hall houses over 100,000 specimens and this tour will offer a glimpse of some of their stories and where they fit in the vast history of science.

Vans will depart from the Visitor Center at 10:15 a.m., returning to the Arboretum at approximately 1:00 p.m. Please sign up on the TeamUp calendar or email Lisa at baileyL@upenn.edu.

CALLING ALL GUIDES!

Invite Your Friends to be Arboretum Tour Guides

Are you passionate about the work you do as a volunteer guide at the Arboretum? Help us spread the word! Training for the next Guide class is now set for March 2020 and we are actively recruiting enthusiastic candidates! If you have friends or family that share your love of nature and the environment, please tell them about our upcoming training. Likewise, if you are hosting adult tours during the upcoming months, be sure to mention that we are looking for new guides and point anyone interested to the Volunteer section of the Arboretum website for additional details and an application.
Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities

Volunteer & Staff Garden Railway Night

Thursday, December 5 | 4:30-7:30 p.m. | Garden Railway

You’re invited to an early premiere of the Holiday Garden Railway, special for volunteers and staff members. Come enjoy the twinkling lights and good company!

Saturday Morning Live: Conifers Tour

Saturday, December 7 | 11:00 a.m. | Widener Terrace

Curious about conifers? Explore the wide variety of conifers – both evergreen and deciduous – on display at Morris Arboretum. From cones to needles, weeping and upright, you’ll learn more about these tremendous trees from around the world.

Holly Highlights and Winter Greenery Tour

Saturdays, December 14 & 28 | 2:00 p.m. | Widener Terrace

Bundle up for a unique tour highlighting the Arboretum’s collection of hollies and other broadleaf evergreens that enliven the winter landscape with their lush greenery and provide year-round appeal and an everlasting framework for seasonal plantings. Explore the holly slope area, learn some fun facts, and get new ideas for your own home garden.

Education Volunteer Winter Potluck

Tuesday, December 17 | 12:00 noon
Upper Gallery

Join us for a winter celebration! Bring your favorite dish to share and enjoy with fellow education volunteers and staff. Please RSVP with your name and dish to Alessandra at arella8@upenn.edu or via Team Up (https://teamup.com/ks5bfc51e6e0901b9f/)

Horticulture Volunteer Holiday Luncheon

Wednesday, December 18 | 12:30 p.m.
Upper Gallery

Celebrate the winter season with fellow horticulture volunteers and staff members! This luncheon will be potluck style, so please bring your favorite dish to share with everyone.
**Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities**

**Book Club**

**Silent Spring**  By Rachel Carson

Friday, December 6 | 1:00 p.m. | Gates Hall

Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* was first published in three serialized excerpts in the *New Yorker* in June of 1962. The book appeared in September of that year and the outcry that followed its publication forced the banning of DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson’s passionate concern for the future of our planet reverberated powerfully throughout the world, and her eloquent book was instrumental in launching the environmental movement. It is without question one of the landmark books of the twentieth century.

**Beyond Words**  By Carl Safina

Friday, January 10 | 1:00 p.m. | Gates Hall

Weaving decades of field observations with exciting new discoveries about the brain, Carl Safina’s landmark book offers an intimate view of animal behavior to challenge the fixed boundary between humans and nonhuman animals. *Beyond Words* brings forth powerful and illuminating insight into the unique personalities of animals through extraordinary stories of animal joy, grief, jealousy, anger, and love. Wise, passionate, and eye-opening at every turn, *Beyond Words* is ultimately a graceful examination of humanity’s place in the world.

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

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**2020 BOOK CLUB SCHEDULE**

*1/10: Beyond Words by Carl Safina

2/7: What a Plant Knows by Daniel Chamovitz

3/6: The Weather Makers by Tim Flannery

4/3: Bringing Nature Home by Douglas W. Tallamy

5/1: My First Summer in the Sierra by John Muir

6/5: The Triumph of Seeds by Thor Hanson

9/11: Eating on the Wild Side by Jo Robinson

10/2: The Weather Detective by Peter Wohlleben

11/6: America Eden by Victoria Johnson

12/4: Among the Bears by Benjamin Kilham

*On the second Friday of the month*
Arboretum Events

Holiday Garden Railway Nights

Fridays, December 20, 27
Saturdays, December 7, 14, 21, 28
Sundays, December 15, 22, 29
4:30-7:30pm

Enjoy the Holiday Garden Rail all lit up and decorated for the season. White lights sparkle along the rails and miniature greens adorn the buildings.

Insider Art Holiday Pop-Up Shop

Sunday, December 15
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Finish your holiday shopping while admiring the works of art created by some of the Arboretum’s talented members and staff. Participants include Volunteer Guide/Photographer Melvin Chappell, Horticulture Volunteer/Rug-weaver Olly Williams, and Visitor Experience staff members Genevieve Senechal, Anna Horsey, and Sherry Falese. Many forms of media will be represented including textiles, jewelry and ceramics.
Volunteers who have worked over 30 hours during the past year may take Morris Arboretum 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, or sign up online using the code “ELM” for discounted classes.

**Holiday Wreath Making Workshop**

Cheryl Wilks, *Floral Educator, Florist, and Owner of Flowers on Location*

**Saturday, December 7 | 1:15-3:15 p.m.**

Dress up your front door for the holidays with an eye-catching, festive wreath. You will create a beautiful wreath from fresh, loose boughs of greens, along with a selection of ribbons and decorations to make it festive. Bring a pair of pruners and a box to take your wreath home in.

**Create a Beautiful Holiday Arrangement for your Table or Mantle**

Cheryl Wilks, *Floral Educator, Florist, and Owner of Flowers on Location*

**Saturday, December 21 | 1:00-3:00 p.m.**

Design a beautiful, long-lasting holiday arrangement for your table centerpiece or fireplace mantle. Different shapes for your centerpiece will be demonstrated. You will have an assortment of greens, flowers, branches, candles, accessories, and more to choose from to make your one-of-a-kind arrangement. Bring a rectangular box to transport your design home.

**Introduction to Botany**

Cindy Skema, Ph.D., *Botanist, Morris Arboretum*

Tim Block, Ph.D., *Directory of Botany, Morris Arboretum*

Fronny Plume, Ph.D., *Botanist*

**Three Wednesdays: January 22, 29, February 5 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

*50% off discount for volunteers*

Get a “quick-start” introduction to botany. This course is designed for everyone, no matter what their background, who has an interest in plants and has always wanted to know more about the biology of these fascinating organisms. This three-session class will provide you with the basic plant biology understanding that could change the way you look at tree care, gardening, or even the produce at the farmer’s market!
In the Arboretum

A reminder that a large area between the Garden Railway and the Swan Pond is now roped off in order to begin remediating the severe soil compaction there. The arborist team has air-spaded around the root zones of the five large trees in the area: the *Metasequoia*, weeping cherry, Chinese elm, tabletop elm, and *Taxodium*, which get the heaviest traffic.

Tread Lightly
Contributed by Andrew Hawkes, *Assistant Arborist*

There is something mysterious and almost magical that happens just below our feet. A whole different kind of world exists underground. It is an ecosystem of lifeforms operating in the spaces between soil particles. An amazing amount of activity is going on in one cubic foot of soil. It is in this soil matrix, amongst a network of diverse organisms in which a tree’s roots live and grow.

What do trees need to grow and thrive?
What can we (who?) do (or not do) to help?

What is a healthy root system?

**What are some reasons to use an air tool on tree roots?**

1. Expose root system to find stem and girdling roots* (root collar excavation)
   *Caused mainly from poor nursery practices- neglecting to prune encircling roots when repotting, severing a large portion of the root system during transplanting balled and burlapped trees-especially when the root flare is below grade.

2. Expose the root system during transplanting efforts
   Alternative to the Balled & Burlapped method (B&B) for reduced transplant shock.

3. Expose the root system during construction and utility activities
   Alternative method to trenching that can avoid the need to sever large structural roots or large percentage of the root system.

4. Improve soil conditions (soil fluff, radial trenching, vertical mulching)
   Decreasing compaction and addition of organic matter allows increased macro pore space for air and water reducing likelihood of erosion during heavy rain events.

[Learn more](#) about using an air tool!
Five Things You Might Not Know About...

How the Morrices Spent Christmas

by Joyce H. Munro

1. John and Lydia usually spent Christmas at 826 Pine Street, though some years they went to Compton. On Christmas Day 1900, John and Lydia celebrated at Pine Street with Louise Kellner, their travel companion, by lighting sixteen candles on the tree… and while the candles burned, they ate a leisurely breakfast.

2. John and Lydia’s gift-giving custom was simple and straightforward: each year they gave close family members, servants, and business acquaintances a modest cash gift. Occasionally, the Morrices gave someone a special Christmas gift. In 1901, the gift was a doll house, “fixed up” by Lydia with Louise’s help, and the recipient was Amy Gould, the Head Gardener’s daughter.

3. In the 1920s, Lydia set up her Christmas tree in the glassed-in porch of Compton. She must have been quite proud of her tree and its lavish decorations, because she arranged for Frederick B. Scheetz to photograph it and send her a dozen copies. The photograph below is probably the one taken by Scheetz.

4. Holiday feasting would not be complete without a tasty Christmas pudding. In Lydia’s hand-written recipe book is the recipe for Christmas pudding, contributed by her friend, Mrs. George Henry Lea (Alice Van Antwerp). If you’re interested in making Mrs. Lea’s version of this holiday tradition, be aware that the recipe leaves out a couple of key ingredients!

5. Three times in their lives, the Morrices celebrated Christmas on distant shores. In 1889, the Morrices and Louise Kellner were in Bombay, where they were served a “native Christmas meal” with plenty of cakes and candies made of camel’s milk and sugar. Then in the evening, they attended a performance of a Hindi opera. In 1894, they celebrated the day onboard ship bound for Egypt. Louise wrote that it was cold and windy and although the dining room was decorated with mistletoe and holly, the food was “just so so—not bad enough to starve on and not good enough to thoroughly enjoy.”
Garden Highlights

Malus sieboldii
toringo crabapple
Crabapple Slope

Hamamelis virginiana
common witchhazel
English Park

Hydrangea quercifolia
oakleaf hydrangea
Widener Walkway

Pinus rigida
pitch pine
near Oak Allée

Callicarpa japonica
Japanese beautyberry
Parking Lot

Calycanthus chinensis
Chinese sweetshrub
Azalea Meadow
Upcoming Events

December 2019

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<td>Recruiting / Retention Committee Meeting 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Guides Council 1:30 p.m. - Volunteer &amp; Staff Holiday Garden Railway Night</td>
<td>Book club 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Saturday Morning Live Tour: Conifers 11 a.m. - Holiday Garden Railway Nights</td>
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<td>Tu B’Shevat Training 2:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Holiday Highlights and Winter Greenery Tour 2 p.m. - Holiday Garden Railway Nights</td>
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<td>Education Winter Potluck 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Horticulture Volunteer Holiday Luncheon 12:30 p.m.</td>
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Weekly Volunteer Events

Saturdays: Wellness Walks 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Saturdays and Sundays: Regular Tour 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Sundays: Regular Tour 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Wellness Walks 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
## Upcoming Events

### January 2020

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<td>Volunteer Trip to Wagner Institute 10:15 a.m.</td>
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