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
Pilar Rivera, Editor

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Photos: Pilar Rivera, unless otherwise stated

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Cover photo: The Arboretum’s living collection contains 17 types of Cornus florida.

Prunus ‘Shirotae’, Shirotae cherry

Viburnum plicatum f. tomentosum ‘Shasta’
Shasta doublefile viburnum
Letter from the Editor

The Arboretum isn’t only a living collection of trees, it is also a home to many different types of wildlife! From my desk in the Horticulture Center, I am fortunate enough to spot multiple bird species every day, including the red bellied and downy woodpeckers, house finches, chickadees, and nuthatches. My favorite has become the northern flicker, who is mysterious and elusive. I have only spotted one twice, for less than a minute each time.

In addition to birds we see groundhogs, deer, and an occasional fox. Yesterday a groundhog climbed five feet up a tree (I didn’t know they did that) and I jokingly called it ‘groundhog parkour’. My first spring in Philadelphia has been full of surprises so far!

It is reassuring to know that the Arboretum provides a habitat for a diverse population of plants and animals. I feel fortunate to see this diversity on a daily basis. Next time you’re at the Arboretum, take time to observe the fauna around you. Keep an eye out for insect pollinators, bird nests, chipmunks, and even snakes! You’re bound to see one or all of these things on your next visit.

Pilar Rivera
The McLean Contributionship
Endowed Education Intern
Note from the Guides Chair

Hello Everyone,

At a recent garden club meeting, the guest speaker spoke on the importance of planting native plants. Now, we have all heard about the need to have native plants in our gardens, but I really don’t understand the definition of ‘native’. After asking the speaker for the definition of native, I was less than satisfied. He was so definite on what a native was. All I could think about was guide training when we discussed the *Metasequoia*. We were told this plant was found in fossil records on the west coast, but it had disappeared long ago from the continental U.S. Did this mean that it was native to Oregon at one time?

My curiosity was quenched by Dr. David Hewitt’s article in *PHS Grow* magazine. Dr. Hewitt is often asked by his students, “Is it native?” His response is, “Well, it’s hard to say.” The quick answer can be very easy; what is difficult is providing an accurate answer. Did they mean native to the United States? To eastern North America? To Pennsylvania? To Philadelphia? We have to be clear about which one we are using. In addition, he mentioned that chronological parameters are important. One definition comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Plants Database: “Native means naturally occurring at the time of Columbus.” Columbus arrived to the New World in 1492- long before even the most rudimentary surveys of plant life were written. How can we be sure of what was here prior to that?

Dr. Hewitt used, for example, the American holly, *Ilex opaca*. Many people think that it is native to Philadelphia County. But the holly was not mentioned by Botanist Peter Kalm, who visited the New World (including Philadelphia) in the 1740’s. Neither did William Penn mention it in the 1680’s when he sent lists of plants growing in our region back to England. William P.C. Barton’s *Compendium Florae Philadelphicae*, published in 1818, calls it a “rare” plant in New Jersey but makes no mention of its existence in Philadelphia. According to Dr. Hewitt, *Ilex opaca* was not listed for Philadelphia even as late as 1905. Ida A. Keller and Stewardson Brown, in the definitive *Handbook of the Flora of Philadelphia and Vicinity*, didn’t list it for Philadelphia County, though they did find it in other parts of southeastern Pennsylvania and said it was “common” in New Jersey.

What does this imply? The American holly didn’t grow on its own in Philadelphia prior to European colonization or even prior to the 20th century, thereby making it a non-native species to this county. Dr. Hewitt was not suggesting that we need to reassess the credentials of every plant assumed to be native here but to be willing to accept some uncertainty when we want to know if a plant is native.

This works well for me. I am very comfortable with a bit of uncertainty. The next time a speaker says this or that plant is definitely native, I shall be a bit skeptical. But I still believe in the importance of planting native.

Happy Gardening,
Jody Sprague
Chair of the Guides
Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer for Plant Sale

Help make this year’s plant sale the best yet. Shifts are available Tuesday-Saturday. There is a job for everyone and plant sale volunteers earn a 20% discount coupon! Please click here to see the dates, times and available slots. Questions? Contact Michelle Conners at mconners@upenn.edu or ext. 109.

Tuesday, May 3rd - Saturday, May 7th (Plant Sale runs Thursday - Saturday)

Understanding and Managing Trees

Joshua Best, The Walter W. Root Endowed Arboriculture Intern, will lead us on a walk to explore the management efforts to protect and preserve the Arboretum’s outstanding trees. He will share the biology behind certain management practices that are crucial to the preservation of healthy trees. This is an opportunity to learn how to explain Arboretum tree management practices to visitors.

Thursday, May 12th | 1:00-2:30 pm
Meet in Upper Gallery

- In the Quiet -
Out on a Limb

Experience the Squirrel Scramble like never before. Come see the new site-specific piece local dancer and choreographer Jenny Roe Sawyer has created for Out on a Limb. Free with admission.

Saturday, June 25th &
Sunday, June 26th
11am and 1pm both days

Prunus ‘Okame’, Okame cherry

Cercis chinensis, Chinese redbud
Volunteer Workshops

Small Trees for Small Spaces Tour

Join fellow guides for a tour of the Arboretum’s smaller specimen trees ranging in height from 15 to 30 feet. These trees, literally and figuratively, have been overshadowed by the Arboretum’s big trees, but are now getting a much-deserved moment in the spotlight. Don’t miss this opportunity to see trees that will ‘pop’ in your own home garden.

Saturdays: May 14 & 28, June 11 & 25 | 11:00 AM | Visitor Center

Hort Volunteer 1st Wednesday Schedule 2016

Join us the first Wednesday of every month for exciting workshops, talks, and tours. Meet at 12:30pm at the Widener Terrace, unless otherwise noted.

May 4th  Shane Campbell- Fly Fishing Lessons & Demo at the Mill
June 15th  Nina Schneider – Hydrangea Walk & Talk
July 6th  Bob Gutowski – History Walk
August 3rd  Louise Clarke – Social Media
September 7th  Paul Meyer
Continuing Education

Volunteers who have given 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.

Stargazing at the Morris Arboretum
Thursday, May 5, 8:30-10pm
Rain Date: Monday, May 9
Join us for a pleasant evening in the garden. Observe the Aquariids meteor shower on the 5th or the Lyrids on the 9th. Learn observing techniques to help you fully enjoy the shower.

Tai Chi in the Garden
Four Tuesdays beginning May 10, 10:30-11:30am
Reduce stress, quiet down, and move in a slow balanced way to cultivate energy. The healing art of Tai Chi will be practiced in the beautiful outdoor setting of the Morris Arboretum.

Floral Imagery in Copper Foil
Friday, May 20, 10:30am-1pm
Learn about the history of floral imagery in different world cultures. Then, emboss flowers in 36-gauge copper foil for a great home display or gift.

- Education Volunteer Workshop Hours -
We offer a variety of classes that are eligible for Education volunteer workshop hours. Below is an upcoming approved course. To register online, visit https://online.morrisarboretum.org/classes, or call (215) 247-5777 ext. 125.

Morris Moth Night:
Celebrating National Moth Week
Tuesday, July 26, 8:00 p.m.
Please join us at the annual Education Volunteer recognition event, Twilight and Peonies. Circle the date on your calendar, bring your spouse or significant other, and enjoy this gala event being held in the tent behind Widener.

Our delicious potluck dinner is always a highlight of the evening, so please contribute by signing up via the Team Up Calendar for one of the following: an appetizer, main dish, vegetable, salad or dessert. Beverages will be provided for your enjoyment.

We hope you will also participate in our annual plant exchange. All you need to do to participate is place a favorite plant from your garden in a pot, attach a label with growing requirements/bloom time, and place your plant on the back wall of the tent when you arrive. Then at the end of the evening you can take home another plant of your choice. This is a great and free way to add diversity to your garden. The evening will also feature the presentation of volunteer awards. Don’t forget to wear your name tags!

Please RSVP on the TeamUp Calendar. Don’t forget to sign up to bring a dish to the potluck! If you have any questions, contact Pilar Rivera at pilarr@upenn.edu or (215) 247-5777 ext. 159
Story From the Archives

This delightful diary entry reveals the playfulness of the Morrieses. It was recorded by Louise Kellner as she, John and Lydia sailed down the Nile in the Dahabeah “Severn” with Mr. Mustapha Mohammed as their guide.

February 24, 1895 – On the Nile

“This Sunday was spent in a quite different way from others, the cause of which was a pretty white donkey that Mustapha had received as a present the last day at Assouán from one of his many friends. Mr. Morris had granted him the request to take the donkey along in one of the Feluccas [wooden sailing boat], and Mustapha, who did not know how to name the donkey, asked Mr. Morris to do this for him. So after breakfast we spent the rest of the morning to get ready for the ‘christening’ of the poor animal, and we all had a hand in the getting up of a decoration for the occasion, that the donkey was to wear when he received his name. Mr. Morris painted a white ribbon green (the colour of the Bedouins), on which Miss Morris embroidered the new name, and sewed a medal on it, which was nothing more or less than an American quarter of a dollar through which Mr. Morris had bored a hole, and I gave the silk ribbon to go around the animal’s neck in the colours of red, white, and blue. Right after luncheon the donkey was brought on the fore-deck – he had previously had a good scrub and bath in the Nile, and while Miss Morris and I decorated him, Mr. Morris gave him the name ‘Columbus.’ We had a good deal of fun over it, and everybody seemed to be pleased.”

Sailing on the Nile, 1885. Photo courtesy Morris Arboretum Archives
Garden Highlights

**Cornus florida**
flowering dogwood
Compton Woods

**Cercis canadensis** ‘Flame’
Flame eastern redbud
Oak Allée

**Malus** ‘Indian Magic’
Indian Magic crabapple
near Rose Garden

**Picea abies** ‘Acrocona’
Acrocona Norway spruce
near Swan Pond

**Rhododendron kaempferi x malyatica**
azalea hybrid
Compton Woods

**Rhododendron austrinum**
Florida azalea
near Key Fountain
## Upcoming Events

### May 2016

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**Weekly Volunteer Events**

**Wednesdays:** Horticulture Volunteers 8:30 am - 12 pm  
**Saturdays and Sundays:** Regular Tour 2 pm - 3 pm  
**Saturdays and Sundays:** Welcome Cart 11 am - 3 pm  
**2nd Saturday of the Month:** Mill Volunteer Workday 9am

- **Save the Date** -  
  Education Volunteer Award Dinner  
  Wednesday, June 1st 6-8 pm
## Upcoming Events

### June 2016

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