

VOLUNTEER

August 2021



Morris Arboretum
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Volunteer

Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania

Volunteer is a newsletter published monthly for
Arboretum volunteers.

Mission

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania
inspires an understanding of the relationship between
plants, people and place through education, research and
horticultural display.

Vision for the Future

As an irreplaceable public garden, the Morris Arboretum
provides a place of respite, beauty and learning where
the joy and wonder of the natural world inspire all who
visit to be enthusiastic ambassadors for plants and our
fundamental dependence on them.

A vital part of one of the great research universities in
the world, the Morris Arboretum is renowned for its
science aimed at understanding and conserving plants
and ecosystems.

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Volunteer

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mailed to the Arboretum Attn: Education Intern.

Photos: Lynn Weaver, unless otherwise stated

Cover: *Chalybion californium* on *Pycnanthemum muticum*



Rosa 'AUSlea' - LEANDER Rose

Rose Garden

Contents

Letter from the Editor	1
Notes from the Guides Chair	2
Volunteer Opportunities	3
Learn from Home	4
From the Archives	5
Garden Highlights	6



Rhododendron prunifolium - Plumleaf azalea

English Park

Letter from the Editor

As you stroll through the Sculpture Garden, a barrage of tiny homes emerge from the undergrowth. Some have seashell paved walkways, pinecone kitchens, and curved bark roofs. Others have smooth stone floors and pinestraw walls. They lie in the hollows of toon trees, lean precariously against exposed roots, and sit pleasantly among the tall grass. Perhaps more interesting than all of these things though is that the ethereal subdivisions change every day.

Fairy Woods is a summer-long exploration in nature play, where children are provided natural materials, a short prompt, and nothing else. It's a space for building, getting dirt under fingernails, and imagining a world of tiny fairies and gnomes. Education staff and volunteers reset the building materials once a week, but the houses often last far less time than that.

As each new group of kids roll in, existing houses are cannibalized for materials, redecorated, or knocked over completely for the joy of seeing something fall. The brevity of it all is just another part of the fun.

Fairy Woods will be with us at least through the end of the summer, so feel free to take a turn through the Sculpture Garden and check out the wild and ever-changing neighborhood of homes. Most of them can be found under the toon trees, but keep your eyes peeled for houses that have wandered from the grove.

And, once you're done with the house tours, you can cross the stone bridge between the Sculpture Garden and English Park and investigate the native azaleas and rhododendrons that are blooming in the shade of the dawn redwoods. Happy summer!

Lynn Weaver



Entrance to Fairy Wood



A cozy fairy house

Notes from the Guides Chair

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS RESPONSIBLY: LEAVE NO TRACE

The outdoors face serious threats from people. During the year of the pandemic, people sought relief from being indoors in massive numbers. At Morris Arboretum, the number of visitors increased by 18% and membership grew by 45%. At nearby Wissahickon Valley Park, visitation increased from a 2019 estimate of 1.6 to a projected 2 million visitors per year.

With the increased use of outdoor spaces by humans comes threats to plants, wildlife, water. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (LNT.org), an organization that was formed in 2010 to provide proven, research-based solutions for the protection of the natural world, works with the public and those managing public lands, to educate people about ways to keep these places healthy and beautiful. Based on research, LNT discovered that 9 out of 10 people in the outdoors are uninformed about their impacts.

From July 22- 26, a team of Leave No Trace staff visited the Wissahickon Valley Park, selected as one of 100 Hot Spots in the US. Throughout their time here, LNT staff provided educational programs, trainings, and initiated service projects aimed to put into place Leave No

Trace measures to equip the area to bounce back from increased use and recover its natural qualities.

LNT's most common litter sightings included:

1. orange peels, banana peels and apple cores, shells from nuts. There is a common misconception that "natural trash" is okay to leave behind. However, natural things that are not natural to the place they are being left attract wildlife to areas of human activity, affecting health and habits.

2. Bottle caps, plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Plastic bottles and bottle caps can last indefinitely and aluminum cans leech styrene, xylene and benzene, all suspect carcinogens, into the soil and air as they disintegrate.

3. Plastic straws are a common litter item that often ends up in our oceans.

Let's all spread this Leave No Trace knowledge to others and change these common types of litter to the least.

May you be healthy,
Jim Kohler
Chair of the Guides



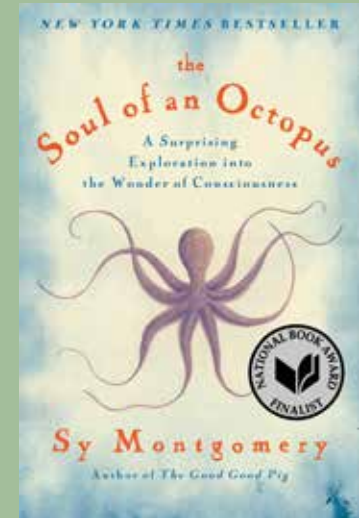
Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities

September Book Club

The Soul of an Octopus by Sy Montgomery

September 10 | 1:00 pm | McLean Room, Widener

Scientists have only recently accepted the intelligence of dogs, birds, and chimpanzees, but are now watching octopuses solve problems and are trying to decipher the meaning of the animal's color-changing techniques. With her "joyful passion for these intelligent and fascinating creatures," Montgomery chronicles the growing appreciation of this mollusk as she tells a unique love story. By turns funny, entertaining, touching, and profound, *The Soul of an Octopus* reveals what octopuses can teach us through the meeting of two very different minds.



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.

'Fireside' Chat with Bryan Thompson-Nowak, Direction of Education



September 24 | 10:30 am | Widener Tent

Pull up a chair and sit down with our Director of Education, Bryan, in this cozy meet and greet! You'll hear more about Bryan's background, his previous roles at the Arboretum, and future plans for the Education department, plus you get to mingle with other volunteers at the Visitor Center for the first time in over a year. You won't want to miss this!

Did you know... The blue mud wasp (*Chalybion californium*, as pictured on the cover) is most famous for its predation of black widow spiders? While adult wasps feed on nectar, their larvae require high-protein foods like spiders!

Learn With Us

Registration for fall classes will open mid-August, but it's never too early to plan your schedule! See below for a taste of the great classes we have lined up.

For our full catalogue of online and on-location classes, be sure to check our website in the coming weeks, morrisarb.org/onlineclasses



Basic Plant Identification

Lynn Weaver, *Educator, Morris Arboretum*

Saturday, October 2 | 10:00 am - 11:30 am | On-location

In a sea of green leaves, plant identification can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Join Lynn at the Arboretum for a guided walkthrough of basic plant characteristics and common families. She'll share her favorite tips and resources for plant ID and give you the confidence to go out into the world and greet plants by their names.



Birding at Green Lane Park

Sharon Meeker, *Experienced Birder and Trip Leader*

Tuesday, August 31 | 5:00 pm until dusk | On-location

Grab your binoculars and get ready to bird in this fabulous evening class at Green Lane Park in Montgomery County! While the park covers over 3,400 acres of diverse habitat- from reservoir to field to red-cedar stand and more- and hosts both migratory and breeding birds, this class will focus on the variety of shore birds that call the sanctuary home.



Native Bees: Your Garden's Best Pollinators

Sam Dorege, *Wildlife Biologist, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center*

Friday, September 24 | 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm | Virtual class

Get ready to learn how to select plants for your garden that will attract native bees. Sam will introduce some of the 100+ species of native bees found in the Philadelphia area with the help of his beautiful macro photographs, and then walk through their plant needs. Even small plantings on a terrace or in a window box can make a difference- especially when you are the size of a bee!



Ornithotherapy for your Mind, Body, and Soul

Holly Merker, *Environmental and Ornithology Educator*

Wednesday, November 10 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Virtual class

Learn why getting your daily dose of birds is just what the doctor ordered in this virtual class with Holly Merker! Spending time in nature is shown to reduce stress, support immune health, and foster a sense of connection to something beyond ourselves. This class will delve into our connections to birds and how to practice Ornithotherapy for optimal benefits. Watching birds can bring you more than just enjoyment!

From the Archives

by Joyce H. Munro

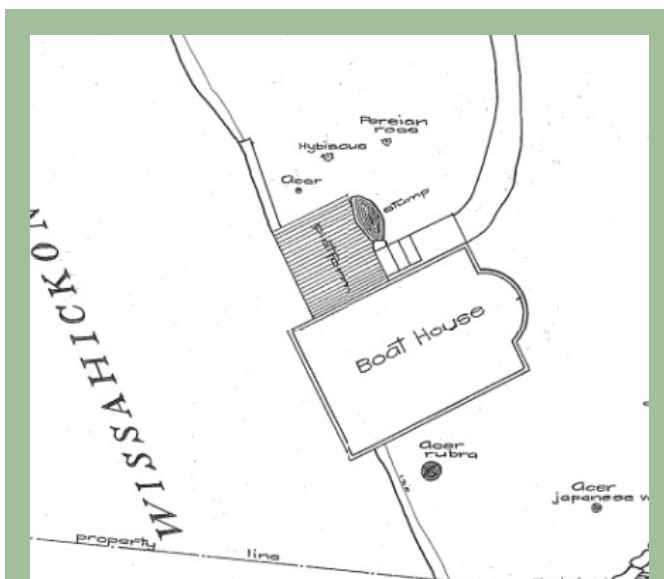
A Map Worth Studying

Soon after establishing the Compton estate, the Morrises built a rustic two-story boat house in a remote corner of the “south woods” on the banks of Wissahickon Creek. Similar to Orange Balustrade (constructed about the same time), the boat house harmonized well with its natural setting. It was framed with whole log posts that must have been twenty feet or longer. The boat slip, clad in slab siding on three sides and accessed by a wooden overhead door, was on the lower level; above the slip was a spacious veranda with a wide-overhang roof. The structure did not have running water or electricity. Clearly the Morris boat house was meant to be simple and utilitarian, in contrast with their elaborate stone mansion.

When the water was high enough, the

boat could be rowed into the slip, otherwise the rower would need to step out of the boat and drag it in. On the creek side, the veranda extended over the water—like a rough-hewn juliet balcony—with simple log railing and backless benches suitable for fishing. Adjacent to the house was a floating platform, built around the stump of a felled tree.

A counterpoint to the stylish garden follies that the Morrises created later on the estate, the boat house was emblematic of the wholesomeness of country life in the 1890s. Until the Morris siblings moved to Chestnut Hill, they had never lived on a creek, but they enjoyed being on the water, whether creek, river or ocean; it only made sense to build a boat house, buy a boat, climb aboard and start paddling.



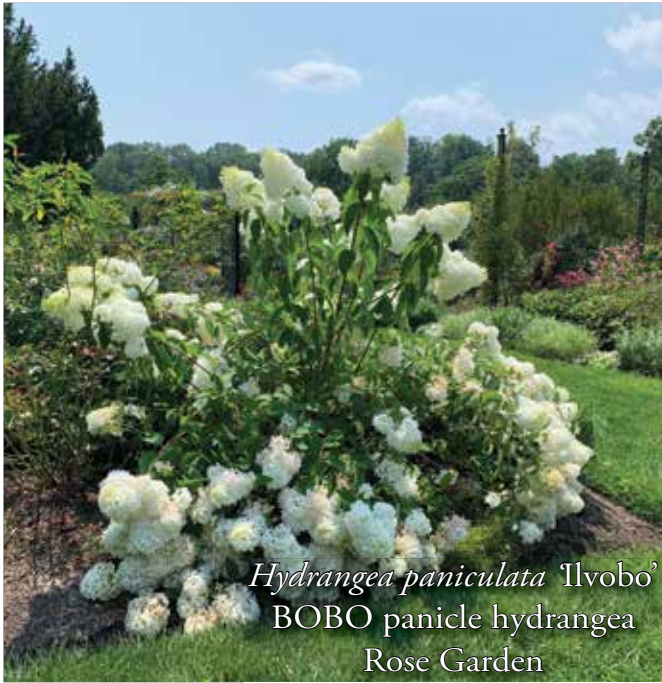
Detail of Compton Atlas, Pugh & Hubbard, 1909



Morris boat house on Wissahickon Creek, circa 1900

Keeping you connected from home

Garden Highlights



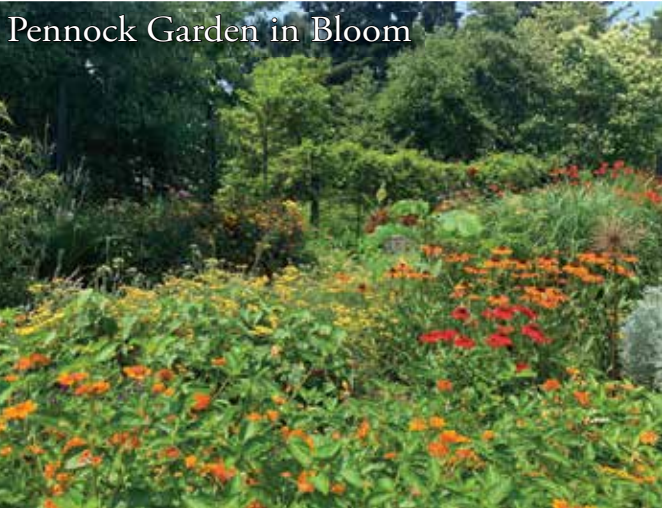
Hydrangea paniculata 'Ivobo'
BOBO panicle hydrangea
Rose Garden



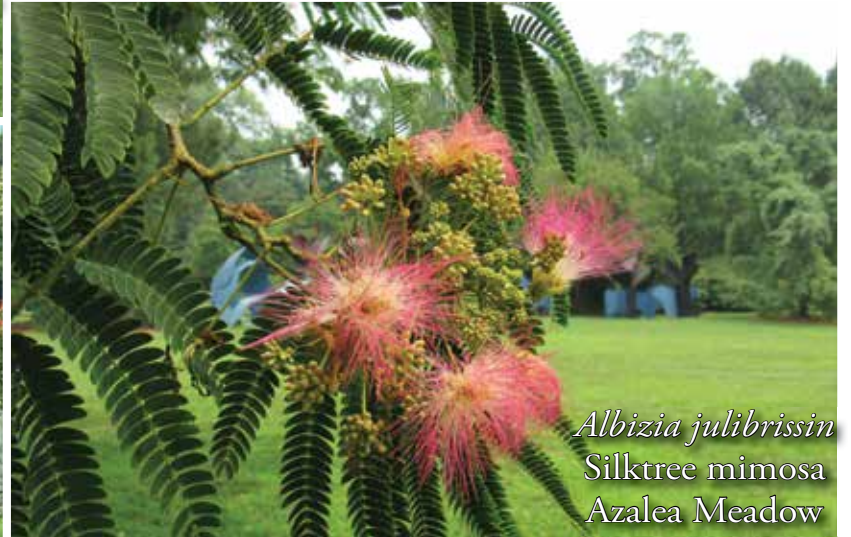
Anemone tomentosa
Windflower
English Park



Asclepias tuberosa
Butterfly weed
Swan Pond



Pennock Garden in Bloom



Albizia julibrissin
Silktree mimosa
Azalea Meadow



Hybiscus syriacus 'Diana'
Diana Rose-of-Sharon
Widener Visitor Center



Vitex agnus-castus
Lilac chastetree
Rose Garden