

Volume 14, Number 1, Winter 2009

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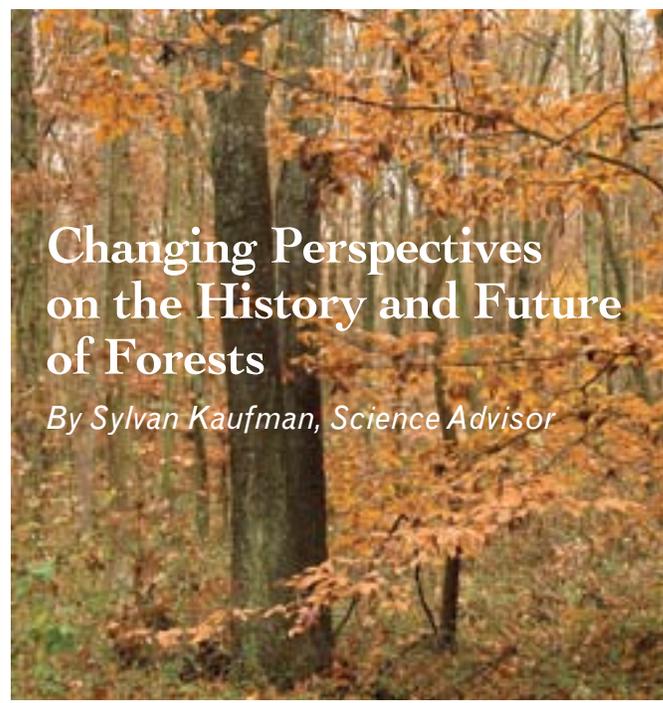
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A current description of the Arboretum’s upland forest community might read, “Mature forest dominated by oaks and hickories. Occasional patches of beech or loblolly and Virginia pine. Understory trees include dogwood, shadbush, paw paw, and ironwood. The sparse understory shrub layer includes acid-loving shrubs such as deerberry and pinxterbloom azalea.” The forests through which you pass on the Upland Path or Tuckahoe Valley Trail are about 100 years old, meaning that the forest has not been greatly altered by humans in the last hundred years. The forest has several hundred years to go before achieving the status of an old growth forest, but can it ever reach that venerable status without human aid? And if it does, what should it look like?

Below is a description of the coastal forest of what is now Delaware from Italian explorer Giovanni de Verrazano in 1524. Verrazano was in the service of the French crown.

**“We came, in the space of fifty leagues, to another land, which appeared very beautiful and full of the largest forests... We saw in this country many vines growing naturally, which entwine about the trees, and run up upon them as they do in the plains of Lombardy. These vines would doubtless produce excellent wine if they were properly cultivated and attended to, as we have often seen the grapes which they produce very sweet and pleasant, and not unlike our own. They must be held in estimation by them, as they carefully remove the shrubbery from around them, wherever they grow, to allow the fruit to ripen better. We found also wild roses, violets, lilies, and many sorts of plants and fragrant flowers different from our own.”**

If you have been to the Delaware coast recently, you will note that the coastline there would scarcely be described as “full of the largest forests.” Also note that Native Americans in 1524 were actively managing the forest to improve the grape harvest. Some estimates place the Native American population of the Chesapeake Bay region in that era at around 24,000 people.

Native American populations are estimated to have been at their peak 500–1,200 years ago. They extensively cleared floodplain forests and created fields near their towns. Clearings were estimated

*(continued on page 3)*

Adkins Arboretum is operated by the not-for-profit Adkins Arboretum, Ltd. under a 50-year lease from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The Arboretum's mission is to promote the appreciation and conservation of plants native to the Delmarva Peninsula.

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#### HOURS

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily  
(except Thanksgiving & Christmas)

#### ADMISSION

\$3 for adults  
\$1 for students ages 6–18  
free to children 5 and under.  
Admission is free for members.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Jodie Littleton, *Newsletter Editor*  
Joanne Shipley, *Graphic Designer*  
Barbara Bryan, *Artist*  
Richard and Ann Rohlfing, *Photographers*

## Dear Members and Friends:

My best estimate is that this is my 34th issue of *Native Seed*, and thus my 34th letter. Until now I have been able to muse about topics generic enough not to be irrelevant, much less erroneous, by the publication date two months into the future. But now I'm stumped. What I compose today on the first of November, 2008, a clear fall day, will not reach you until early in the New Year, 2009. Maybe it is the heavy dose of media that has filled our lives the past few months, reporting on an historic presidential campaign and the radical gyrations of a failing economy that gives me the feeling that too much change is happening too fast to predict even 24 hours into the future. Or is it my years, now closer to 60 than to 50, that distort the travel of time? **On November 1, 2008, all I can say with certainty about 2009 is that it will be a year of exciting and positive change for Adkins Arboretum, and that details will follow.**

In 2008, while many of you were conscientiously meeting your generous pledge payments to the Arboretum's first capital campaign, *The Campaign to Build a Green Legacy* received two major gifts that pushed the Campaign well over the halfway mark, reaching \$4.5 million of the \$6.5 million goal. A groundbreaking for the Arboretum's new green visitor's center is now planned for mid-2009. In this issue you will read about these gifts—a \$500,000 gift from an anonymous donor and a \$1 million gift from the Arboretum's Board President, Dr. Peter Stifel. Obviously the generosity of these two individuals reflects their genuine passion for the Arboretum and its mission. Their gifts will sustain the Arboretum's programs for many years to come and will provide opportunities to expand the Arboretum's reach to a larger audience, with a compelling message for conservation.

Adkins Arboretum is poised to embrace partnerships that, even in this time of dwindling resources, will provide creative ways to leverage significant new resources. With these resources, the Arboretum will expand its services to the community with new expertise about best land management practices. In addition, an ambitious plan will be undertaken to implement strategies on the Arboretum grounds for managing invasive nonnative plants while creating display areas for diverse wildlife habitat and natural areas management.

Your continued support is critical to sustaining the Arboretum in this uncertain economic climate. The most important work you can do to protect the Arboretum's future is to be an Arboretum ambassador by sharing this special place with friends and family. Please visit often. Soon skunk cabbage will be carpeting the Arboretum's forest floor, winter's harbinger of good things to come. Yes, there's much good to come in 2009! And the details will follow. Happy New Year! 🌿



Best wishes,

Ellie Altman, Executive Director

Skunk Cabbage  
*Symplocarpus foetidus*



to cover 150–600 acres. It was during this time that maize began to be grown by the Indians. Even in 1620, William Strachey, who had been lieutenant governor of Jamestown, observed that Indians had cultivated 2,000–3,000 acres in the Tidewater region of Virginia. Larger fortified settlements would also have required a significant harvest of wood for fuel and building.

Forest historians estimate that the forest sites the first settlers saw that had not been cleared by Native Americans had been in place for the last 2,000–8,000 years, but even these forests were probably heavily influenced by the Indians’ activities. The Native Americans deliberately set large fires for the purposes of driving game, improving visibility through the forest, and stimulating the production of certain food plants. Forest fires open up the woods and allow plants that need more sunlight to grow. Fruit-bearing plants like persimmons, plums, and strawberries would have benefited from this practice. Scientists now know that fires in oak-hickory forests encourage the dominance of oaks and hickories by killing off less fire-tolerant maples and beeches. The Indians foraged for acorns and some hickory nuts as important sources of food. Acorns were also a favored food of game animals such as deer, turkey, and squirrels.

In 1748, naturalist Pehr Kalm wrote of the scene near Wilmington, Delaware, “The forest was high but open below, so that it left a free prospect to the eye, and no under-wood obstructed the passage between the trees. It would have been easy in some places to have gone under the branches with a carriage for a quarter of a mile, the trees standing at great distances from each other, and the ground being very level.” This open gallery forest was likely a product of the frequent fires set by the Indians, not a sign of what the forest would have looked like in the absence of human intervention.

By 1650, there were 13,000 colonists from Europe in the Chesapeake Bay region and only about 2,400 Native Americans left, fewer people total than when Verrazano sailed by. Smallpox and influenza had decimated the native populations in a very short amount of time, leaving scattered, weakened tribes. These population shifts and colonization by Europeans forever altered the forest communities of North America.

Many European colonists came here to farm and held no love of forests. Captain John Smith described the land around Jamestown from the perspective of a person most interested in agriculture: “Virginia doth afford many excellent vegetables and living Creatures, yet grasse there is little or none but what growth in lowe Marishes: for all the Countrey is overgrowne with trees, whose droppings continually turneth their grasse to weedes, by reason of the rancknesse of the ground; which would soone be amended by good husbandry.” He does go on to describe the excellent wood that could be obtained from the oaks and the variety of foods provided by the native plants, including chinquapins, plums, grapes, and acorns.

*(continued on page 7)*

**The Arboretum welcomes and gratefully acknowledges these new members.**

- Mr. Robert Agee
- Ms. Colleen Avancera
- Ms. Abby Barber
- Ms. Susan Bartholomaus
- Mr. and Mrs. Ed Berkman
- Ms. Nicole Berry
- Ms. Raven Bishop
- Ms. Elizabeth Fitch Bishop
- Ms. Christy Blake
- Mr. and Mrs. Mike Boone
- Mr. and Mrs. Marc Boone
- Mr. and Mrs. Norman Bowie
- Mr. and Mrs. Jim Brenholtz
- Mr. Sam Brinton
- Ms. Mary Broadhurst
- Mrs. Joanna Brohan
- Ms. Barbara Brooks
- Ms. Melanie Brown
- Ms. Stephanie Bruce
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Buckley
- Mr. David Burroughs
- Mr. and Mrs. John Campanelli
- Ms. Sarah Campbell
- Ms. Sally Campion
- Ms. Anne Caramanico
- Mr. Abhi Chakrabarti
- Ms. Adele Clagett
- Ms. Barbara Clark
- Ms. Suzanne Clarke
- Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Connolly
- Mr. and Mrs. Steve Cooley
- Ms. Ann Davidson
- Ms. Lynn Davidson
- Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Dill
- Ms. Zita Dresner
- Mr. and Mrs. Craig Duerling
- Ms. Eileen Emmet
- Ms. Betsy Farlow
- Ms. Donna Fellows
- Ms. Sharon Finizio
- Ms. Lisa Forester
- Ms. Cynthia L. France
- Ms. Beebe Frazer
- Mr. Richard Fullwood
- Ms. April Gagalski
- The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore
- Ms. Linda Gaskill
- Ms. Jennifer George
- Dr. and Mrs. Conway Gregory
- Ms. Kimberly Haig
- Ms. Linda Hanley
- Ms. Jeannie Haramoto
- Ms. Joan Hart and Mr. Bob Jensen
- Ms. Sharon Hellman
- Mr. Bob Jackson
- Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jaegly

*(continued on page 5)*

# Inaugural *Magic in the Meadow* Fundraising Event Closes the Gap on the *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy*



From left, Capital Campaign Chair Kathy Carmean, Executive Director Ellie Altman, and Board President Dr. Peter Stifel celebrate Stifel's gift of \$1 million to the Arboretum's Campaign to Build a Green Legacy. Stifel, a retired University of Maryland geology professor, pledged the gift to support the Arboretum's goal of building "green" facilities to house its education programs. The gift was announced September 20 at the Arboretum's fundraising event, *Magic in the Meadow*.

Once twilight gave way to one of the starriest skies along the East Coast this past fall, the real magic of the Arboretum's inaugural *Magic in the Meadow* fundraising gala came when Board President Dr. Peter Stifel made a \$1 million pledge to the Arboretum's *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy*.

The gift is the largest gift to the Arboretum's first capital campaign in its 28-year history. With construction of the new Arboretum Center scheduled to begin in mid-2009, the campaign is now only \$2 million away from its \$6.5-million fundraising goal.

The gift also gives Dr. Stifel the naming opportunity for the expanded Arboretum Center. While generous donors have reserved naming rights to the center's open pavilion, art gallery, and North Meadow, other named gift opportunities are available and include choices in both the facilities and endowment categories.

A retired University of Maryland geology professor and lifelong land steward, Stifel lives at his family estate, *Hope House* in Tunis Mills, Maryland. He has served on the Arboretum Board of Trustees since 2002. At the evening's events, Stifel spoke passionately about both the Arboretum's contributions to the region and his commitment to helping it achieve its goal of building new "green" facilities to house its programs.

"The Arboretum is a place for children to roll up their sleeves, get their feet wet, and get in close contact with nature, rather than sitting idle pushing buttons," Stifel remarked. "I am truly honored and grateful to be able to help Adkins improve its facilities and ultimately help people make this important connection with nature."

The *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy* supports a 9,500-square-foot expansion of the existing center to help meet the demands of a growing visitorship and the Arboretum's land stewardship outreach initiatives. The new Arboretum Center is designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council and will be a significant model for environmentally responsible and sustainable living for land stewards throughout the region. The new Arboretum Center will use nontoxic, recycled, and local materials, an innovative energy efficient heating and cooling system, and other sustainable building methods.

Three new pavilions will include a visitor's orientation wing with a reception area, gift shop, and café; additional classroom space; a conference room; and a large meeting space for community events. An L-shaped gallery will act as the concourse and will provide exhibit space for the Arboretum's ongoing art exhibits.

The capital campaign project also includes a reconfiguration of the Arboretum's entranceway and parking areas, the Native Garden Gateway, for easier access and immediate immersion

of visitors into the Arboretum experience and its conservation mission.

“Peter’s gift affirms how meaningful the Arboretum’s contributions are to the region and to the children and adults it serves,” said Arboretum Executive Director Eleanor Altman. “The announcement of Peter’s gift was both a humbling and magical experience. With the philanthropic support of other generous donors who care about the conservation of the Chesapeake region’s native landscape, we want the magic of next year’s *Magic in the Meadow* event to include an announcement that we have raised the remaining \$2 million needed to meet our goal.”

**Next year’s *Magic in the Meadow* event is set for Saturday, September 26.**

For more information about named gift opportunities and the *Campaign to Build a Green Legacy*, contact Ellie Altman at 410-634-2847, extension 22 or at [ealtman@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:ealtman@adkinsarboretum.org).

*Guests to next year’s Magic in the Meadow are in for another “Who Knew!” treat from the Arboretum. The Delmarva Stargazers, who used their 15” reflector telescopes at this year’s event to unveil spectacular views of Jupiter and other celestial beauties, claim the Arboretum’s remote location is at the center of the darkest sky along the entire Atlantic coastal plain, offering some of the best celestial viewing from Northern Georgia to Southern Vermont. The only other locations that come remotely close to the stargazing from Adkins Arboretum, according to one member, include the mountains of Pennsylvania and North Carolina and another eastward location in Pocomoke, Maryland.* 🌿



## Lunch with Dr. Peter Stifel, Adkins Arboretum President and Philanthropist

By Tracey Munson

October 2008—I slow under the bent tree along the two-mile lane to Hope House in Tunis Mills, Maryland, to take in the beautiful sounds of everything alive on Dr. Peter Stifel’s working farm and waterfront family estate. I smile, realizing lunch with the retired University of Maryland geology professor will not only answer my most pressing interview questions, but will most likely net a lesson in nature and its connections to life, love, and art for me. And so it is.

I want to learn what inspired Peter to recently give \$1 million of philanthropic support to Adkins Arboretum and the vision of an expanded, greener, more accessible Arboretum Center. As we set out to explore the land and life that resonate on these 300 acres of Earth, he discusses how the Arboretum’s mission and his life’s work go hand-in-hand.

“I’ve spent my life studying and teaching four and a half billion years of Earth’s history and how life has evolved,” he reflects as he plucks a pear from a 100-year-old tree surrounded by and growing out of a huge but younger oak. “Having taught about the earth and its life for thirty years at College Park, I totally support everything the Arboretum is doing. I’m truly honored and grateful to be able to help Adkins improve its facilities.”

We continue down the lane, listening to Canada geese take flight overhead, admiring a native red oak, or *Quercus rubra*, and picking up a blue heron feather and a paw paw leaf along the way. Hope House is a sanctuary, a place for flora and fauna to thrive. Peter’s stewardship—of both his family’s land and his menagerie of chickens, sheep, goats, peacocks, and doves—resonates with the Arboretum’s mission of conservation, education, and enjoyment of the natural world.

“The gift is to help the Arboretum fulfill its goal to provide a place, in nature and the outdoors, for learning about plants and the environment, for reflection and contemplation, and for the enjoyment of art, of music, and of the natural world around us,” he notes.

As we travel along the water’s edge, Peter speaks of three longtime colleagues who are very different, yet much the same in their zest for embracing life, sharing a belief of articulating things well, and giving generously of both knowledge and financial support. Peter gives philanthropically to other organizations close to his heart, including his alma maters, the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and Cornell University (1958), highlighting the value of the lessons learned in teamwork and perseverance during a semester at sea.

As we finish the tour and adjourn to the house for lunch, our conversation about the gift concludes. “The connection between nature and music, art, the human spirit—anything that involves the senses—is inseparable,” he reflects. “Adkins Arboretum keeps all that is meaningful in nature not only relevant, but appreciated and, most importantly, understood.”

Hours later, we bid our good-byes as I leave the sanctuary of Hope House. I take with me a clearer understanding of the importance of the trees and birds and all the other life sustained there. Heading home, I’m eager to share what I’ve learned with my children, hoping they too will carry land stewardship forward for the next generation. Another important lesson, compliments of the Professor.

*Tracey Munson lives in Easton, and enjoys sharing stories through words and photography.* 🌿

# From the Bookshelves

By Arboretum Librarian and Maryland Master Gardener Carol Jelich

***The Maryland Master Gardener Handbook* by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program. Revised Edition, Fall 2008.**

When can I expect the last freeze date in Caroline County? Is there a salt-tolerant shade tree that I can plant near the water? I would like to grow apricots—can you recommend an early-ripening variety? Last fall, some of the needles on my pine tree turned yellow and fell off. Is it dying? For the answers to these and many other questions, you can turn to this newly revised publication, *The Maryland Master Gardener Handbook*. With 640 pages and 400 color photographs, this book could serve as your complete horticultural reference shelf.

Maryland Cooperative Extension is the outreach arm of the University of Maryland that educates Maryland homeowners. Horticultural research at the University supports the information provided to the public in such forms as fact sheets and a free phone-in service (800-342-2507). To help extend the ability of Extension to reach the public, the Master Gardener (MG) volunteer program was created in 1978. The MG program is based in counties throughout the state, and offers horticultural training in exchange for volunteer service. Its mission: "To educate Maryland residents about safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities." The handbook is organized to support the basic training program for MGs, but it is a useful publication for the gardening public as well.

The revised handbook reflects the maturity of the MG program, which has grown to incorporate environmental stewardship into horticultural practices. For example, the handbook has been expanded to include a chapter on ecology, in recognition that an understanding of how nature functions underlies successful management of the home landscape. In addition to a chapter on turf grass, there is a chapter on turf

alternatives. Invasive plants, water quality, and conservation are all subjects of new chapters. Lists of recommended plants have been revised to include more native plants, and to exclude plants known to be invasive. Overall, the handbook offers a sustainable approach to gardening that will help improve soil using organic materials, grow healthy plants, and manage most pests without pesticides.

The book is organized into 28 chapters. There is information on botany, soils, plant nutrition, entomology, pesticides, and plant diseases. Other chapters focus on plant groups: herbaceous and woody plants, vegetables, small fruits, fruit trees, herbs, and houseplants. Do you want to know about composting, landscape design, aquatic gardening, wetlands, and attracting (or controlling) wildlife? That's all included.

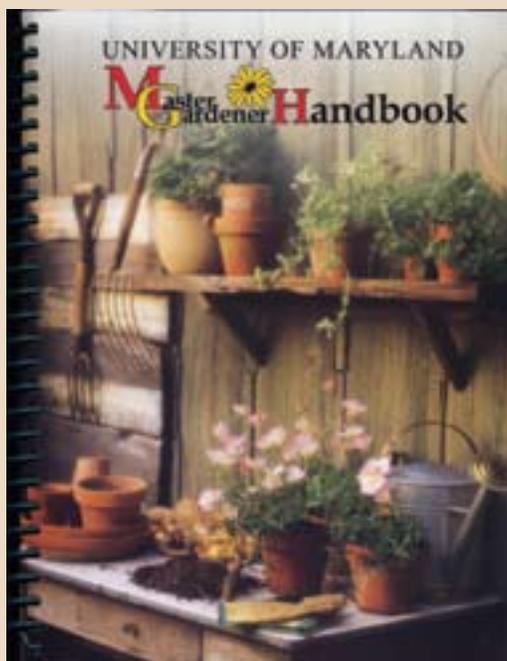
Especially helpful is a 114-page section on integrated pest management that will help the reader identify problems in the landscape. It includes diagnostic keys for all major plant groups. There are special keys for cultural and environmental problems, insects, and diseases. Color photos of plant problems aid in identification.

The appendix includes an extensive glossary and other resources, such as a hardiness zone map, heat zone map, freeze tables for Maryland, and a table showing pH requirements for a variety

of plants. Thick spiral binding and laminated covers will take the heavy use this book invites.

Here are the answers to the questions posed above: The last spring freeze date in Denton has ranged from April 6 to April 29. Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a lovely native shade tree that is salt tolerant. 'Harcot' is an early ripening, productive apricot tree. It's normal for pines and other evergreen trees to lose older, interior needles in the fall.

*This book is for sale by mail order through the Home and Garden Information Center. Visit [www.mastergardenerumd.edu](http://www.mastergardenerumd.edu), or call 800-342-2507. It also is available for sale in the Arboretum Gift Shop.*



Changes in the animal composition of the forests would alter the plant composition. One of the earliest consequences of the dramatic population decline from disease was that game populations probably exploded. There is some evidence that the large herds of deer and dense flocks of passenger pigeons seen by early settlers were there because there were so few people left to hunt them. European settlers brought pigs, cattle, goats, and sheep that were often allowed to graze freely in the forest. Acorns and other nuts were considered valuable forage for some of these livestock. The grazing probably helped keep the woods open for a time, but the practice of allowing animals to roam the woods gradually ceased as farms grew larger in the 1700s. This would lead to an increase in the density of tree saplings in previously open forests. But the loss of large predators and the increase in forest edge habitat led to another increase in deer populations, which again caused changes in what species lived and died in the woods. Hunting later led to the near extermination of deer, but their populations have rebounded since the 1960s.

Later tree pests and diseases also took their toll on some species. Chestnut blight killed millions of chestnut trees starting in the early 1900s. Although chestnuts were not a dominant tree on the Delmarva, they were commonly found in the forests. Gypsy moth, a Eurasian insect that arrived in the late 1800s, also did significant damage to many species of trees, but it especially favored oaks. More recently, hemlock woolly adelgid, Emerald Ash Borer, pine beetles, Asian longhorn beetle, laurel wilt, and others have been added to the list of insects and diseases that could greatly change the composition of future forests.



Looking back at forest history should shape our perception of future forests. Restoration usually looks at some historic point in time as a reference for the goals of a particular project. Generally that point in time has been prior to European settlement because of the vast changes that took place on the land as large-scale farming and the introduction of new plants increased. But the influence Native Americans had on pre-European landscapes is often overlooked. Their frequent use of fires resulted in the open, gallery-like forests noted by early settlers, but that is unlikely to be a restoration goal because it is much less acceptable or practical to impose frequent burns on the modern landscape with its rural housing developments and planted pine plantations.

Looking back 3,000–4,000 years, there would have been an environment on the Eastern Shore with relatively few people present, but without people present, there is limited information that we can gather on what the forests looked like. Analysis of pollen records can give an idea of the species composition of the forests, but not the size of the trees or how many small trees there were.

So the goal of restoration is not to reproduce a snapshot in time, but rather to produce a functioning forest ecosystem that has as many elements of an historic landscape as we can achieve. We choose the species composition based on what trees will still grow under current climatic conditions, in the presence of pests and diseases that were not here 500 years ago, and within the constraints of the boundaries of roads, towns, and housing developments.

The major goal of any restoration is to create an ecosystem that will persist with little human intervention. In this era that may be a difficult goal to achieve, but it is certainly one to strive for. Maybe now more than ever, we hold the future history of the forest in our hands. Maryland spends huge resources trying to keep the Emerald Ash Borer in check. It monitors gypsy moth and pine beetle outbreaks. Community groups work toward freeing their parks from being overtaken by invasive plants. Individuals work with organizations trying to breed blight-resistant American chestnut trees. All of these efforts take place because of the value we place on the ecosystems that surround us, especially forests. Forests hold a special place in the hearts of many people, whether it is for their wildlife, providing material goods of firewood, fruits, and mushrooms, their cool shade in the heat of summer, the wild playground of children, or the spiritual nature of their towering trees. 🍂

(New Members cont'd from page 3)

Mr. Larry Josefowski  
Mr. Jerry Kasunic  
Mr. and Mrs. William Kelly  
Ms. Beryl Kemp  
Ms. Sarah Knight  
Ms. Nancy Koval  
Mr. Peter Kryszak  
Ms. Cathy Leacock and Mr. Dan Shapiro  
Mr. Joe Lieb  
Ms. Debbie Luthy  
Ms. Janine Maher  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Marinucci  
Mr. and Mrs. Glen May  
Mr. L. McCaskill  
Mr. and Mrs. Byron McAllister  
Ms. Sharon Mengel  
Ms. Jessica Milligan  
Ms. Eleanor Montgomery  
Mr. John Mooney  
Ms. Peg Ness  
Ms. Nancy Packer  
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Palazzolo  
Ms. Ginny Papke  
Ms. Mary Parker  
Mr. Stuart Parnes  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Petronis  
Ms. Jessica Phillips  
Mr. Danny Poet  
Mr. Brian Polly  
Mr. Larry Porter  
Mr. Franco Primavesi  
Ms. Kathy Quackenbush  
Mr. John Racine  
Ms. Dawn Raines  
Ms. Maria Raithby  
Mr. Jeffrey Rank  
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Rouse  
Ms. Ali Russ  
Ms. Michele Schweikle  
Mr. and Mrs. Graham Scott-Taylor  
Ms. Kelly Sell  
Ms. Carol Siemonof  
Ms. Tracy Smith  
Ms. Carol Smith  
The Spears Family  
Mr. William Spofford  
Mr. Russell Steffy  
Mr. Duncan Stuart  
Ms. Alleane Taylor  
Ms. Nancy Thomas  
Ms. Alva R. Trahan  
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Traynelis  
Ms. Rose Ver Elst  
Dr. and Mrs. William Wade  
Ms. Loretta Walls  
Ms. Cora White  
Ms. Kathleen Wilson  
Ms. Karen Wilson  
Mrs. Zaida Wing

# Teach interpret plant, enjoy!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Visitor's Center Receptionist

Help staff the Visitor's Center and greet and orient visitors.

### Data Entry Administrative Assistant

Assist staff with data entry and administrative tasks. Training provided.

### Education Programs for Children

Help teach children about native plants and the environment through programs and summer camp.

### Education Programs for Adults

Develop and teach courses about native plants, gardening techniques, integrated pest management, and native plants.

### Special Events

Volunteers are needed to assist staff with the annual Arbor Day Run, Saturday, April 18.

### Community Outreach

Promote the Arboretum's mission at community events.

### Nursery Work Crew

Join the Nursery Work Crew on Tuesdays and learn many facets of plant propagation and care in preparation for the Arboretum's annual plant sales.

### Weed Warriors

Work with the Land Stewardship Coordinator to manage and remove noxious invasive plants that threaten the survival of the Delmarva Peninsula's native plants.

### Grounds Work Crew

Help maintain the woodland and meadow paths and assist with other maintenance projects. Volunteers can take on a project independently or work as part of a volunteer crew. Get a good workout and help keep the Arboretum looking its best! Tools, equipment, and safety instruction provided.

### Membership Promotion Team

Join a team of volunteers to promote the benefits of Arboretum membership.

### Individual Volunteer Projects

Propose your own volunteer project. Ongoing projects include maintaining bluebird habitat, creating educational publications, and teaching the public about native plants and sustainable horticultural and gardening practices.

For more information, including volunteer schedules, contact Erica Weick, Coordinator of Volunteer Programs, at 410-634-2847, ext. 27 or at [eweick@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:eweick@adkinsarboretum.org).

Application forms can also be obtained at the front desk or downloaded at [www.adkinsarboretum.org](http://www.adkinsarboretum.org). Click on the Volunteer link to access the forms. 



### Volunteer Training— Visitor's Center Greeter

March 13, 20, and 27, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Join the Arboretum's Front Desk Team and help prepare for the opening of the new Arboretum Center. Review communication techniques, learn how to use Arboretum and community resources to answer visitors' questions, and review friendly merchandising and customer relation techniques for membership promotion and bookstore, gift shop, and plant sales. Brush up on cash register and office skills. Registration is required.

Contact Erica Weick at 410-634-2847, extension 27 or [eweick@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:eweick@adkinsarboretum.org) for more information.

## Pat Bowell Named 2008 Volunteer of the Year

The paths that bring volunteers to the Arboretum are as varied as the plant species in its forest and meadows. For 2008 Volunteer of the Year Pat Bowell, the path was paved with pure serendipity. While helping a neighbor tidy up his yard, she unearthed a years-old black plastic pot containing an Adkins Arboretum plant label and a small, unplanted, yet still living plant. Her curiosity led her to visit the Arboretum to learn about native plants. She enrolled in the Queen Anne's County Master Gardener program and eventually returned to the Arboretum as a volunteer.

"It was a fortuitous event," she says of that day. "I believe it was my fate to find that pot, with that tag, and that little surviving native plant."

Pat's discovery proved fortuitous for the Arboretum as well. Since joining the volunteer corps in 2004, she has worked in nearly every volunteer capacity. Most weekends, you'll find her behind the front desk, welcoming and orienting visitors, answering questions, and serving as one of the Arboretum's premier ambassadors. She volunteered to work weekends after learning that the small staff was covering the front desk seven days a week.



"I love meeting people who come to the Arboretum for a variety of reasons," she says. "It gives me an opportunity to talk to them one-on-one, to find out what interests them, and to learn their reasons for visiting. I have an opportunity, in a couple of minutes, to make an impression that's going to last."

Pat calls the Arboretum the "perfect place" that came at the "perfect time" in her life. She came to gardening later in life, after retiring from a major corporation, and says her time spent at the Arboretum is both stimulating and humbling. "I feel as though I get more from the Arboretum than I give," she says. "Whenever I'm around the staff, I walk away with so much information. They're wonderful about sharing what they know."

Coordinator of Volunteer Programs Erica Weick says that Pat "brings enormous talent to the volunteer program. Her dedication to the Arboretum and its mission is inspiring. It is a pleasure and a privilege to recognize her as Volunteer of the Year." In addition to staffing the Visitor's Center on weekends, Pat is a volunteer docent, works in the nursery, helps with major events, has led preschool and camp programs, is a member of the Book Club, and is active on the development and membership committees.

Executive Director Ellie Altman reflects that Pat's contributions to the Arboretum are unique in that "with equal enthusiasm, she handles clerical work, assists with hostessing tasks, and does the big thinking of strategic planning for fund raising and marketing. With her professional experience, she brings a big view to the Arboretum."

As the Arboretum admires Pat's dedication and ability to move seamlessly among her volunteer roles, so does Pat admire the vision for the Arboretum's future shared by its staff, Board, and volunteers. "Everyone is driven by a common vision," she says. "There is a singularity of purpose. Whatever your interest is, you will find a way to fulfill it at the Arboretum." She relates her experience of working with children enrolled in summer camps as an example of the Arboretum's mission—and its magic: "I like working with the smaller kids, those who have never touched frogs or played in the mud or who are afraid of water. By the end of the week, they're dirty and kissing toads and running all over."

**"I do feel the Arboretum is a magical place," she continues. "It changes and evolves right in front of your eyes and is always full of wonder and surprise. I look forward to that."**

She discusses arriving early on weekends to walk the paths so she can tell visitors firsthand about what's happening in the Arboretum woods. "There's always something new. I have walked these paths a thousand times, and every time there is something different. I enjoy it here so much. I wouldn't give it up for anything."

Pat lives in Queenstown, Maryland, with her husband, Mike. In her free time, she is an avid gardener and is active in her community.



# Native Plant Lore

## From Green to Auburn to Gold: Winter Interest

By Nancy Beatty, Arboretum Docent

According to British author and journalist Anne Scott-James, “Dilettante gardeners love the spring and summer; real gardeners also love the winter.” I couldn’t agree more. After the splendor of fall, there tends to be a resignation by many that the gardening season is over and that Mother Nature is ready for a break. The flowers have been nipped by the frost, the vegetable plants are worn out from production, and the trees are dropping their leaves, all in preparation for the cold weather to come. But this wonderful season of winter should be a time of reflection on yet another busy and prolific growing season.

The winter season is an ideal time to study structure and form, or, as we hear quite often, the “bones” of our own gardens and the surrounding landscapes. In the forest, various shrubs and trees create winter interest by the use of their leafless forms, peeling bark, and berries. An ancient white oak, *Quercus alba*, with its sculptural outline is a distinct and dramatic sight against a gray winter sky. Who among us can forget the majesty of the beautiful Wye Oak that stood as a testament to the grandeur of what a tree can offer?

The peeling bark of the river birch tree, *Betula nigra*, is a year-round treat, but it is especially beautiful against a background of newly fallen snow. Growing along a forest stream, it creates a clear, clean reflection when the weather is cold and still.

Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, and red chokeberry, *Photinia pyrifolia* (*Aronia arbutifolia*), offer beautiful red berries throughout much of the winter.

The Arboretum’s South Meadow offers quite a different view, with large drifts of grasses displaying colors of gray, silver, gold, and auburn. In autumn, the wavy, flowing effect of blooming grasses

gives way to perhaps a more static appearance in the winter months, but is no less effective in its contrast to the surrounding landscape.

Tall switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*, is still holding on to its large seed-filled panicles, waving them to hungry birds as they fly by. The clumping nature of this native grass also offers cover and easy maneuvering for ground birds such as bob-white quail as they make their way through the meadow. Its beautiful open seed heads are also quite delicate looking and contrast with its coarse and hardy texture.

Big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*, is one of the tallest grasses in the meadow at 4–6 feet and is also known as “turkey foot” because its seed heads do indeed look like a turkey’s foot. The South Meadow provides an ideal environment for this prolific plant. Like switchgrass, big bluestem also grows in a bunching or clumping nature, and its leaves turn from green to gold to auburn to blonde as the seasons change. There’s nothing static about that!

Of the taller grasses, I have to admit that Indian grass, *Sorghastrum nutans*, is my favorite. This is an upright grass with greenish blue leaves and is found here and there throughout the South Meadow. When it blooms, in late summer to early fall, beautiful copper and bright yellow panicles open loosely on tall wavy stems that are quite lovely as they shimmer like gold on a sunny day. In the winter, these flower heads become very narrow and upright and develop a light chestnut color.

Just as the forest has its layers of plants, with canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, the same can be said of the meadow. The tall grasses make up the canopy and throughout the meadow you will find more than just grasses, as the herbaceous perennials and groundcovers make up the understory. Two of the most prevalent shorter grasses, growing 2–4 feet, are little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, and broom-sedge, *Andropogon virginicus*.

A striking display of little bluestem can be found in the landscaped gardens near the Visitor’s Center parking lot. Planted under several large trees and in the butterfly



Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*

## Arboretum Offers Internship Opportunities

Adkins Arboretum offers paid summer internships in environmental science, natural resource management, horticulture, or related disciplines for college students and recent graduates. Interns work with staff on garden maintenance, all aspects of nursery management, invasive plant control and land management, research projects, trail maintenance, special events, and can do their own independent projects. This is a great opportunity to learn about native plants, land stewardship, and ecological conservation, and to learn about the operation of a small nonprofit. Field trips to other local parks and botanic gardens will be offered. Applicants must demonstrate that they are self-motivated, independent, professional, and enthusiastic about working outdoors and learning about the environment.

Summer housing is needed for interns. If you have an extra room or apartment available, please contact Land Stewardship Coordinator Sue Wyndham.

Applications for internships are due March 7, 2009. For more information and application instructions, visit the Research link on the Arboretum's Web site or contact Sue Wyndham at [swyndham@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:swyndham@adkinsarboretum.org) or 410-643-2847, extension 24.

garden, this grass has gray-blue leaves with a tint of red-purple on the stems. During the winter months, the leaf color varies from light straw to almost orange-red. Planted among the bluestem are several stands of blazing star, *Liatris spicata*, and their spent bottle-brush seed heads offer a pleasing contrast.

For a really tough and drought tolerant grass, broom-sedge is at the top of the list. This hardy 2- to 3-foot grass can be easily spotted in the winter landscape for its upright, clumping form and striking golden leaves. Because it thrives in poor, dry soils, it is a good plant for those difficult-to-grow spots. When cut, it also makes a lovely addition to fall and winter flower arrangements.

Purple lovegrass, *Eragrostis spectabilis*, is a small grass of only 8–18 inches and is at its best in the early fall. Growing in drifts, its beautiful panicles create a low cloud of reddish purple. In the winter, the whole plant turns to light tan, and as it holds on to its seed heads it creates a real photo-op when covered in morning dew or icy droplets. It is rather short lived, but because it reseeds prolifically, you can find it in various spots, usually along the edges bordering taller plants.

These beautiful grasses offer much in food and cover for wildlife as well as structure and form for the meadow and our own landscaped gardens. Drifts of these plants create a pleasing and open effect. In pondering your own garden this winter, pay attention to what is occurring naturally in the fields, forests, and thickets you pass by every day.

It takes a different set of eyes to appreciate nature in its bare form, but what a lovely form it is! 



ADKINS ARBORETUM

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

By becoming a member of the Arboretum, you are making a significant contribution to the conservation of the Delmarva Peninsula's natural heritage. For your convenience, you may join online at [www.adkinsarboretum.org/members\\_online.html](http://www.adkinsarboretum.org/members_online.html).

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## Damika Baker Joins Arboretum Staff

While working as a camp counselor, Damika Baker brought groups of summer campers to the Arboretum for programs. But while she knew of its existence and had visited many times, she was unaware of all the Arboretum has to offer. It's fitting, then, that in her new position as Visitor Services Assistant, she works to teach volunteers how to welcome Arboretum visitors and show them there's more than meets the eye.

"I had always known the Arboretum was here," she says. "But the job, the place, and the people here have exceeded all my expectations."

As Visitor Services Assistant, Damika handles visitation both online and face-to-face. She trains and advises front desk volunteers and will create resources to assist both staff and volunteers in welcoming and orienting Arboretum visitors. Since joining the staff in October, she also has expanded the Arboretum's reach online, launching a blog ([adkinsarboretum.blogspot.com](http://adkinsarboretum.blogspot.com)), working on the team to upgrade the Arboretum Web site, and creating profiles on the Facebook social networking site and the premier online encyclopedia, Wikipedia.



"As the Arboretum grows, it becomes more important to present a unified 'face' online," she notes.

Executive Director Ellie Altman says that Damika "joined the staff and hit the ground running. She has quickly achieved an understanding of the Arboretum's mission and has mastered a myriad of details regarding programs and logistics. In addition, she is furthering the effort to bring the Arboretum into the 21st century."

A native of Starr, Maryland—a community right in the Arboretum's backyard—Damika earned a degree in Afro-American studies with a concentration in cultural and social analysis from University of Maryland-College Park. A self-described pop culture fanatic, she boasts an insatiable love for research. She most recently worked as a college advisor, and finds the Arboretum's natural vista a welcome change from cubicle life.

"The Arboretum is a treasure, but it's still hidden," she reflects. "But if people come here, they fall in love with it. I love it. In other jobs, I never felt a vision, as though I could do more. Here, I see the Arboretum growing. I'm happy to be part of it, cultivating it and helping it grow."

Damika can be reached at 410-634-2847, ext. 23 or at [dbaker@adkinsarboretum.org](mailto:dbaker@adkinsarboretum.org)



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