

Arboretum Notes



FRIENDS
of the ACTON
ARBORETUM

May 2012 | Volume IV | Issue I

Our Mission

To raise and donate funds, materials and services to the Town of Acton for the development and maintenance of the Acton Arboretum; to educate the community about the unique environmental, horticultural, geological and historical qualities of the Arboretum property, about the process of wetland and field succession, and, in an era of decreasing public funds and natural resources, about conservation, effective horticultural practice; and generally to do all the things permitted to non profit organizations under the provisions of Chapter 180 of the General Laws of Massachusetts and Section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984, as from time to time they are amended.

BECOME A MEMBER

FRIENDS of the ACTON
ARBORETUM, INC.

P.O. Box 2607
Acton, MA 01720

Mother Nature Strikes Twice

PHOTO: On August 16, 2011, Tropical Storm Irene brought down the Littleleaf Linden located past the Arboretum entrance gate on the right.



In August, Tropical Storm Irene blew in and brought down the Littleleaf Linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) near the Arboretum entrance. This specimen (native to much of Europe and western Asia) was very large with low branches. Many communities plant Linden along the streets due to its rapid growth rate and dense, symmetrical crown. The flowers are highly fragrant and attractive to bees. There is another younger Linden at the Arboretum which can be located by walking straight across the lawn from the main entrance and looking to the right just after a bench and bluebird box. Town crews cut up this split tree and re-seeded the lawn. A result of the Linden's absence is that the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) located behind it is more visible. This deciduous conifer is one of three conifer species known as redwoods and is native to China. The Dawn Redwood is fast growing, pyramidal and upright, and tolerant of wet conditions. Its small hemlock-like green foliage turns copper in the fall before dropping. Look for it as you wander down the newly paved trail just past the main entrance on the right.



PHOTO: The Halloween Nor'easter snowstorm, October 29-30, 2011, caused the Zelkova tree located by the Butterfly Garden to split apart.

The severe October "Halloween" snowstorm of 2011 will be remembered for the havoc it caused to our community due to fallen trees and downed power lines. One of the most striking instances of tree damage caused by five inches of wet snow piled on a tree with a full canopy of leaves occurred at the Acton Arboretum. The Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*, native to Japan, Korea and eastern China) was weakened and its multiple leader trunk split apart. Known as "Keyaki" in Japan, this tree has been selected for landscapes in the northeastern USA as a substitute for American Elm because of its resistance to Dutch Elm disease. It grows rapidly and has an appealing vase-shape with a rounded crown. The leaves turn reddish yellow in autumn and the tree can grow to 60' tall. It has doubly saw-toothed leaf edges and winged fruits. It is a hardwood and is valued for making furniture and bonsai in Japan. Other notable characteristics of the Zelkova include: good shade tree; easy fall cleanup; tolerant of heat, drought and urban conditions; easy to transplant; and good street tree. Volunteers who tend the butterfly garden had been concerned about too much shade there in recent years, but now that this Zelkova has perished, the plants in the butterfly garden will experience improved sun exposure. In January, the instructor for a chain saw safety seminar felled the remaining upright portion of the split Zelkova for the demonstration portion of the class.

Arboretum Projects Abound

Wildflower Loop Paving Project Completed; Arboretum Entrance and Herb Garden Renovations; Davis Guard Civil War Encampment



Paving Project 2011

The Town Highway Department was able to prep the new 250 foot section of the upper Wildflower Loop Trail for paving, completing the paved section of trail to meet the gated entrance of the Taylor Rd. parking area. Notorious for washing out with deep gullies after seasonal rainstorms, it was decided that paving this trail would be the most effective way to keep the walkway accessible to visitors with disabilities or pushing baby strollers. The paving makes maintenance much less labor intensive and permits the trail to be used for longer periods of time throughout the year. Prior to paving, deep gullies and trenches would render the corridor hazardous for several months of the year until repairs could be made. Loam and grass seed was spread along the edges and student volunteers used granite cobbles and stone dust to create a smooth transition to the

PHOTO Left: Wildflower Loop paving extended and cobblestone edges finished.

PHOTO Right: Herb garden shrubs are rehabilitated.

adjacent trail along the swale garden.

Arboretum Entrance is Replanted

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School students worked hard all summer beautifying the Arboretum. Kids traveled assiduously to dig out huge old junipers. Volunteers and Town crews sprayed and hand-pulled poison ivy from around the entrance sign and delivered compost and mulch to be spread among the plantings. Replacement plants include epimedium, hosta and day-lilies.

Herb Garden Renovation

Student volunteers also weeded, mulched and planted new blueberry bushes at the herb garden where the old bayberry was removed. Three blueberries were planted: 'Cory Chippewa', 'Little Giant' and 'Polaris', all purchased by the Town from Weston Nurseries. Additionally, two new Ginkgo biloba trees were planted. One located near the Hosta Garden will provide more shade with its rounded crown and is replacing a dead Kousa Dogwood. The other has a more columnar shape and is located on the grassy portion of the swale near the bridge. The two ginkgo's were purchased by the Town of Acton and by the Friends of the Acton Arboretum.

PHOTO left: Arboretum entrance is replanted with tough attractive plantings.

PHOTO right: A Civil War encampment August 14-15 celebrates Anniversary of Davis Guard march to Baltimore, MD.



Reenactors depicted the Civil War by creating an encampment at the Acton Arboretum the day before Hurricane Irene arrived in New England! Members of the Fifth Massachusetts Artillery and Sixth Massachusetts Militia presented a living history display, recreating life in camp during the Civil War with artillery and musket drills throughout the day. The event was sponsored by the Acton Memorial Library, which was dedicated in 1890 as a memorial to the Acton men who served, and in some cases, died in the Civil War. The first of these to serve were the Davis Guards militia company who were called up as Company E of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment after the fall of Fort Sumter. On their way through Baltimore, the Sixth was attacked by a mob and suffered the first casualties from hostile fire of the Civil War, with four men killed and dozens wounded.



The charm of a woodland road lies not only in its beauty but in anticipation.

Around each bend may be a discovery, an adventure.

:: DALE REX COMAN

Membership Application

Friends of the Acton Arboretum

WHO ARE THE FRIENDS?

We are a group of citizens who care about the natural world and share a vision of preserving and enhancing our natural resources for educational purposes. Friends contribute time, money, plants and other gifts and talents in support of the Acton Arboretum in order to achieve these goals.

Membership benefits for Friends include: a biannual newsletter, seasonal walks, talks and workshops, and civic pride in a special gift of land used for enjoyment and education.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ I am a NEW MEMBER RETURNING MEMBER

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (CHECK ONE)

INDIVIDUAL | \$15 FAMILY | \$25 SUPPORTING | \$40 CORPORATE | \$100

CONTACT ME FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Commemorative gifts, honoring marriages, births, deaths or other special dates, are gratefully accepted and recorded in a commemorative listing.

PLEASE DETACH AND MAIL TO: FRIENDS OF THE ACTON ARBORETUM, INC. | P.O. BOX 2607 | ACTON, MA 01720

President's Message

Join us on Thursday, June 28th for the Friends Annual Meeting

Dear Members,

We have had another busy year at the Acton Arboretum. From paving to pruning to planting, the Town and our volunteers were very busy.

The Friends of The Acton Arboretum, Inc. continued to support the Town's effort to pave the most heavily used and most easily eroded section of the main loop trail. Now visitors can walk on an even surface from the gate at the Taylor Road parking lot almost to the woodland Wildflower Garden. Partially funded by the Friends, the paved trail means less erosion, controlled run-off, and safer surfaces underfoot for young and old alike.

The area around the Herb Garden underwent a major rejuvenation last summer when lilacs, quince, and bayberry shrubs received major "haircuts". We cleared one outer corner of the garden and added blueberry bushes for a more controlled-growth plant. The Herb Garden was also the site of a lovely garden social and tea party hosted by the members of the Acton Garden Club who maintain that garden.

In addition, volunteers renovated the Swale Garden last fall, removing invasive plants and adding new native species. Look for cardinal flowers near the bridge going over the swale. Volunteers also added more wildflowers along the paved trail through the woods. The Friends have also been adding trees near the Hosta Garden to increase the shade for that garden. We now have three Ginkgo trees near the Hosta Garden!

This past fall, volunteers thinned the Stella d'Oro daylilies in the Daylily Garden and sold them as excess inventory during two West Acton Farmers' Market days to raise money for the Friends. This thinning process was the start of a much-needed renovation to that garden. Look for more "excess inventory" at future Farmers' Markets.

The Arboretum was not immune to storm damage this year. A few large trees in the main lawn area were heavily damaged and subsequently removed opening up new vistas in one case and providing more sun to the Butterfly Garden in another. Town staff worked hard to help clean up the messes.

Another change in the landscape near the entrance resulted when Town staff removed grey dogwood and invasive multi-flora roses along the swale behind the Taylor Road kiosk. The resulting lawn opens the view into the Arboretum from the entry area.

Two recent Eagle Scout projects are also noticeable additions to the Arboretum: Kevin Ren elevated a section of the trail through the Rhododendron Garden to make it easier to mow next to the trail and Brandon Sides has installed an arbor for native grape plants near the swale end of the Butterfly Garden.

The bog boardwalk needed extensive repairs this spring to keep it from falling apart. Bettina and George Abe spent precious weekend time rebuilding some sections to make it safe enough to reopen. Plans are underway to redesign and ultimately rebuild the bog boardwalk making it wider, safer, and handicap accessible with a paved ramp extending down from the Minot Avenue sidewalk.

We are looking for new groups of volunteers to help in the Arboretum and to have fun. Teams, families, single individuals, and student teams can assemble on a regular basis and mobilize to weed, mulch, and generally beautify the Arboretum. No experience is necessary, just a desire to give to this special place your gift of time. For more information, please contact Bettina Abe via email: abe125@verizon.net

Thanks to everyone who has donated time and effort to help make the Arboretum the wonderful place it is. From the Town staff who mow the lawn, clear overgrown areas, and remove problem plants to the Acton Garden Club members who maintain the Hosta, Herb, and Butterfly Garden – the Arboretum would not be the sanctuary it has become for so many without your help. We also have a cadre of regular volunteers who don't belong to either group – from those whose avocation is gardening to those who watch over things when walking their dogs. High school crews work after school and during the summer months.

Thanks also to a special group of people – the folks who agree to serve on the Board of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum. Not only do they attend the meetings that provide the framework within which this group operates, but they also spend many hours helping at the Arboretum, doing everything from staining bridges, repairing boardwalks, setting up sprinklers and watering plants, to supervising at work days and getting down and dirty when something just needs to be done.

We are especially grateful for the time and effort of Tom Tidman, the Natural Resources Director in Acton. It is his crew who help maintain the property and it's his vision that inspires many new projects. The property would not be what it is without Tom's influence and leadership.

We hope you can join us at the upcoming annual meeting on Thursday June 28, at the Arboretum Reading Circle at 6:00PM. Thanks to all for helping to make this a bit of paradise in Acton Center!

Cathy Hatfield, President



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Arboretum Notes



What's Happening



Mother Nature Strikes Twice

Arboretum Projects Abound

*Reenactors Depict Civil War
Encampment*

*Membership Application and
President's Message*

PHOTO: Crabapple Allee Carpet

Inside this Issue:

*Join us for our Annual Meeting on
Thursday, June 28, 6PM, Arbo-
retum Reading Circle. Rain loca-
tion is Town Hall; room will be
posted at entrance.*

*Volunteer Opportunities
Can you and a friend spare an
hour per week lending a hand at
one of the Acton Arboretum gar-
dens? Tasks will include basic
gardening techniques, mulching,*

*weeding, and adding compost. It is
helpful if you can supply your own
tools. There are several gardens at
the Arboretum that could benefit
from your TLC!*

*If interested please email:
abe125@verizon.net*

*Arboretum Notes was produced by
Cathy Fochtman; contributions by
Bettina Abe and Cathy Hatfield.*