

Arboretum Notes



FRIENDS
of the ACTON
ARBORETUM

May 2014 | Volume VI | 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

President's Tour

PHOTO right: Thirty volunteers from Vertex Pharmaceuticals tore down the failing Wildflower Boardwalk, before reconstruction, funded by CPA.



After a long, snowy winter, the Arboretum looks better than ever this May! Starting right at the Taylor Road entry, one can immediately enjoy the newly planted areas sporting columbine and other spring flowering plants. Daffodils bloom along the new sidewalk and adorn the day lily garden. When you walk towards the Rhododendron Garden, you can notice the newly planted sunny meadow garden planted just last fall that's surrounded by snow fencing to keep intruders out while the plants settle in. In the Rhododendron Garden you can see shrubs and can notice the bulbs and perennials planted among the shrubs last fall. The nearby meadow is much more open after town staff mowed it and after volunteers removed walnut saplings. Continuing towards the boardwalk over Mary's Brook, you see a much wider trail, the result of hard work this spring to remove invasive honeysuckle shrubs. Notice the wildflowers just planted along the cleared area. As you clear the boardwalk and walk uphill towards the Wildflower Garden, you can see an ever-changing variety of plants in bloom, from the early bloodroot with its white flowers to the Virginia bluebells, the yellow wood poppies, and the purple trilliums. May apples and foam flowers will be in bloom soon.

Then you arrive at the newly constructed boardwalk through the Wildflower Garden! Last year the Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting funded the project. Local volunteers from a Cambridge-based company spent their day of community service dismantling the old boardwalk and loading the debris into town trucks. What a blessing it was to have their help getting this project going. A local contractor built the boardwalk and an Acton Eagle Scout candidate is working to level the space between the two sections of the boardwalk so that wheelchair users can get a closer view of the farm pond.

Continuing towards the Lilac Garden, turn left towards the curved benches where some fragrant hyacinths are in full bloom. Many plants are poking up behind the stone wall near the lilacs. The lilacs will start blooming later in May and the other plants in this newly completed Fragrance Garden will bloom during the summer and fall. Return to the trail and head towards the Butterfly Garden where the early spring flowers are evident. This garden is familiar to many of us for its



PHOTO: Magnolia 'Yellow Lantern', near the Herb Garden, recovered from fungal disease.

Grape Arbor & Rhododendren Collection & ArbNet

Grape Arbor

The new wooden grape arbor, built by Eagle Scout, Brandon Sides was completed in May, 2011. Rusty poles and wires from an original grape arbor had been obscured by overgrowth over several decades. Volunteers had cleared the overgrowth in preparation for Brandon's reconstruction. Many of the grape vines growing on the old arbor were reattached, and have made themselves at home on the new arbor, feeding birds and other animals. Town of Acton Natural Resources Crew dug out both a tree stump and an obstinate root last winter, 2013. This spring they also prepared a bed for a new trail with the backhoe. Volunteers dug a trench and buried a drain pipe in the summer. Last fall, Tom Tidman designed the curves of the trail, and helped volunteers get started lining the trail edges with granite cobbles. Layers of stone dust have been shoveled in and tamped down. Boy Scouts helped spread and compact another layer of stone dust before winter. Soon a wooden bench will be installed under the arbor and a flower garden created in the corner. Wetland shrubs will be planted around both the side, and back of the arbor.

A previously overgrown area near the little pond and bridge is being rehabilitated and converted to a meadow for sun-loving wildflowers, grasses and forbs. Last fall, the Natural Resources crew dug out many woody, undesirable stumps of multiflora rose and black walnuts with the backhoe. Morene Bodner and David Carlisle donated and delivered two very generous loads of rich compost from their horse farm! The Friends have donated dozens of plants and seeds, such as little blue stem, butterfly milkweed, purple coneflower, lobelia, bee balm, asters, daisies, digitalis lutea, black-eyed Susan, sunflower, and ironweed.



PHOTO: Grape Arbor improvements.

Salt marsh hay was spread over the garden for the winter, and an orange snow fence was installed to keep dog and people foot traffic out! More native grasses and flowers are being added this spring.

Rhododendren Collection

This garden is located along the paved trail. Take the second trail on the left just past the stone reading circle. Last June, the Town of Acton Natural Resources crew dug out witch grass and poison ivy at the back of the garden, deposited new loam and spread it. The thick mat which had been presenting gardeners with an enormous weeding challenge was now eliminated. A thick layer of mulch was added to keep weeds down. Faithful volunteers weeded all summer. A new *Franklinia* was planted at the front of the garden in addition to some *epimedium sulphureum* and *pubigerum*, lavender, Christmas and maidenhair ferns, *omphaloides verna* (creeping forget-me-not), wild columbine and European ginger as attractive ground cover. The Friends

purchased one *Enkianthus 'Showy Lanterns'*, two '*Golden Showers*' fragrant azaleas, and a *Calsap* rhododendron, which will have white flowers and a purple blotch inside. Most exciting was the generous donation of seven rhododendrons by Mr. Fred Knippel last fall! The rhododendron collection now boasts two big (20 year-old!) rhododendron '*Ken Janeks*,' a mist maiden pink parasol, a hybrid between the *bureavil* and *yakusianum* (nicknamed "*Bureyak*"), a rhododendron *degronianum*, *boroviae* and *hyperthrum*. Thanks to the Natural Resources crew for helping dig and transfer the big ones. The Rhododendren collection is spectacular this spring!

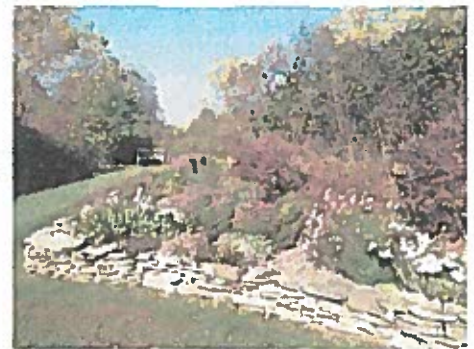


PHOTO: Fragrance Garden, on the trail to the pond.

The Fragrance Garden is beautiful all season, thanks to dedicated volunteers! Come see the lilacs in bloom.

The ArbNet Arboretum Program and the Morton Arboretum are pleased to announce that the Acton Arboretum has been awarded a Level II Accreditation. By achieving particular standards of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens, the Acton Arboretum is now recognized as an accredited arboretum in the Morton Register of Arboreta. More information is available at www.arbnet.org.

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

Around each bend may be a discovery, an adventure.

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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 Tour (con't)

Join us on Thursday, June 26th for the Friends Annual Meeting

beauty lasting from spring through fall. The nearby magnolia trees and lilacs show us their blossoms this spring and frame the Herb Garden. It will be in its full glory in mid-summer. Pass by the Butterfly Garden to the new Grape Arbor, this year gracing a cobble-edged stone dust path and a space for a bench in the future. Head towards the Hosta Garden and notice a path somewhat wider than in the past as we ready the area for the next section of the Taylor Road sidewalk that will pass through the Arboretum. Many people make this circuit of the Arboretum each day. Some also pass the Swale Garden that parallels Taylor Road and lies between the crabapple trees on one side and the lawn on the other. You can see the plants in the swale more clearly this spring after last year's work to thin plants and remove weedy growth. Plants in this area like a wetter environment; the water is surely flowing this spring.

Volunteers do all the work to make the Arboretum as beautiful as it is each season, from weeding to planting, from buying new plants to donating many plants from their own collections, from organizing workdays to getting hot and sweaty with the workers; all of it. Some volunteers devote their time to one particular garden after signing up for "Adopt-a-Garden" last year. Town staff helps tremendously mowing lawns and meadows, cutting downed trees, removing large debris, installing benches, delivering load after load of wood chips, mulch, compost, and stone dust. I want to thank everyone for your efforts and hard work. We are especially grateful for the time and effort of Tom Tidman, Acton's Natural Resources Director. His crew helps maintain the property and it's his vision that

inspires many new projects.

This coming season we face a few challenges. Two long-anticipated projects received funding from the Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting this year: rebuilding the bog boardwalk making an accessible trail and creating a new parking lot with a nearby rain garden to treat runoff. Town staff will create a ramp from Minot Ave to the new bog boardwalk that meets guidelines for accessibility. Plans for the structure include using a special decking that allows more light to pass to the plants in the bog. The parking lot will have one entry drive and another exit drive, helping to ease the congestion frequently happening near Taylor Road. Also, the town's highway department plans to complete the Taylor Road sidewalk and the last section enters the Arboretum near the carved sign at the intersection of Taylor Road and Main Street. It continues through the Arboretum, through the Hosta Garden and the crabapples to connect with the section built last fall. We will need your patience and understanding as the circumstances change during the construction process.

In addition, we continue to make efforts to conserve our water use by honoring the Town's watering ban by not watering every day. We also carefully select native specimens for gardens whenever possible because they tend to require less water when they are established. During the hottest weather we request that visitors bring drinking water along for your visits and bring water for your dogs too. If you need to use our water supply, please be sure to close the taps tightly and refrain from using the hoses to clean off muddy dogs. Together we can conserve water here too.

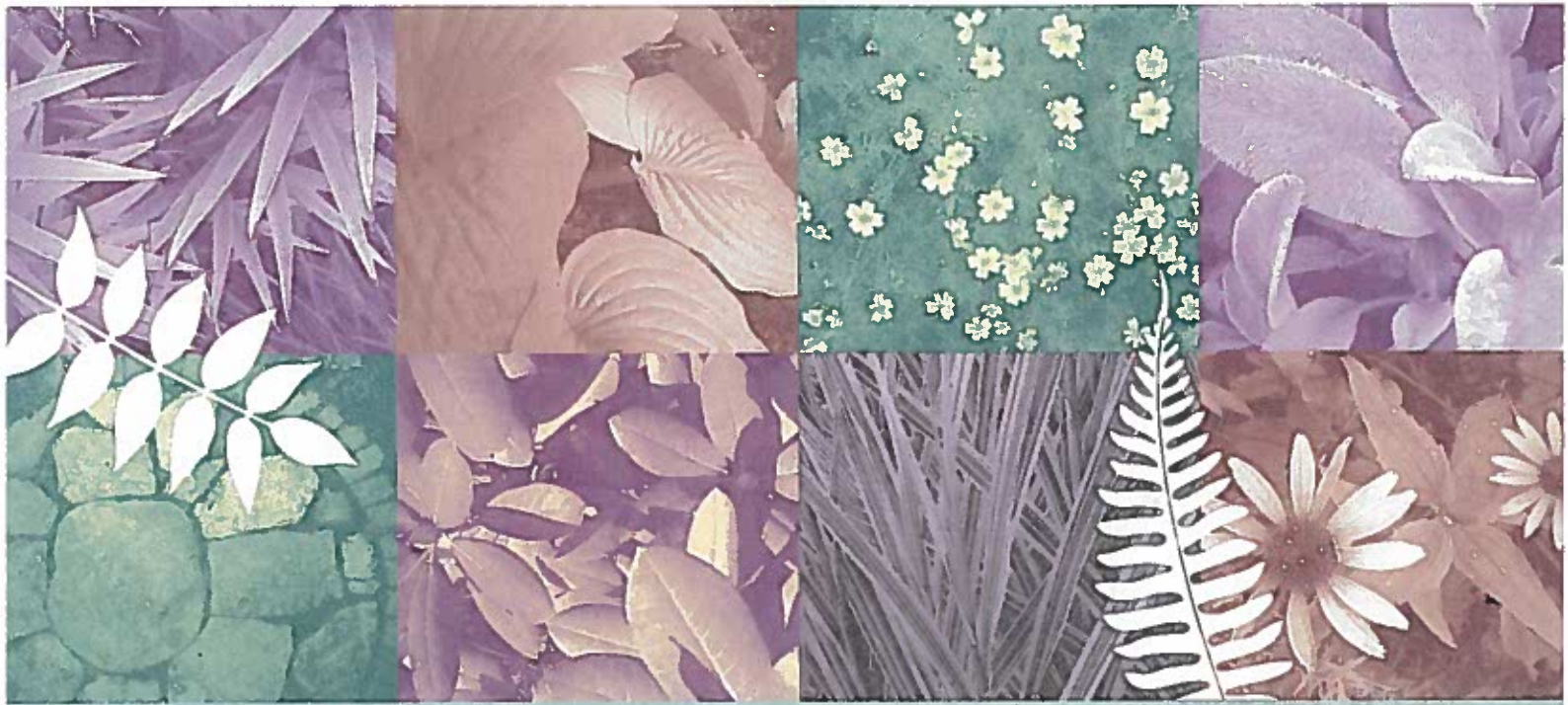
Our annual meeting is June 26th at the Arboretum at 6:00 PM. Please join us at the Reading Circle for light refreshments followed by the annual and monthly meetings.

Catherine Hatfield, President



P.O. Box 2607 | Acton, MA 01720

Arboretum Notes



What's Happening



President's Tour

*Grape Arbor, Rhododendron
Collection, Arboretum*

*Membership Application and
President's Message*

PHOTO: Fern

Inside this Issue:

*Join us for our Annual Meeting on
Thursday, June 26, 6pm, Arbore-
tum Reading Circle. Rain location
is Town Hall; room will be posted
at entrance.*

WATER ALERT!

*Due to irrigation issues under-
investigation, water has been shut off
at the Arboretum until further
notice. Bring water for yourself*

and your pets.

*2nd Annual Horticultural Hat
Show & Yankee Plant Swap, June
1, 2:00-4:00pm at the Arbore-
tum. For more information
contact babe@acton-ma.gov.*

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