

# Arboretum Notes



FRIENDS  
of the ACTON  
ARBORETUM

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## Our Mission

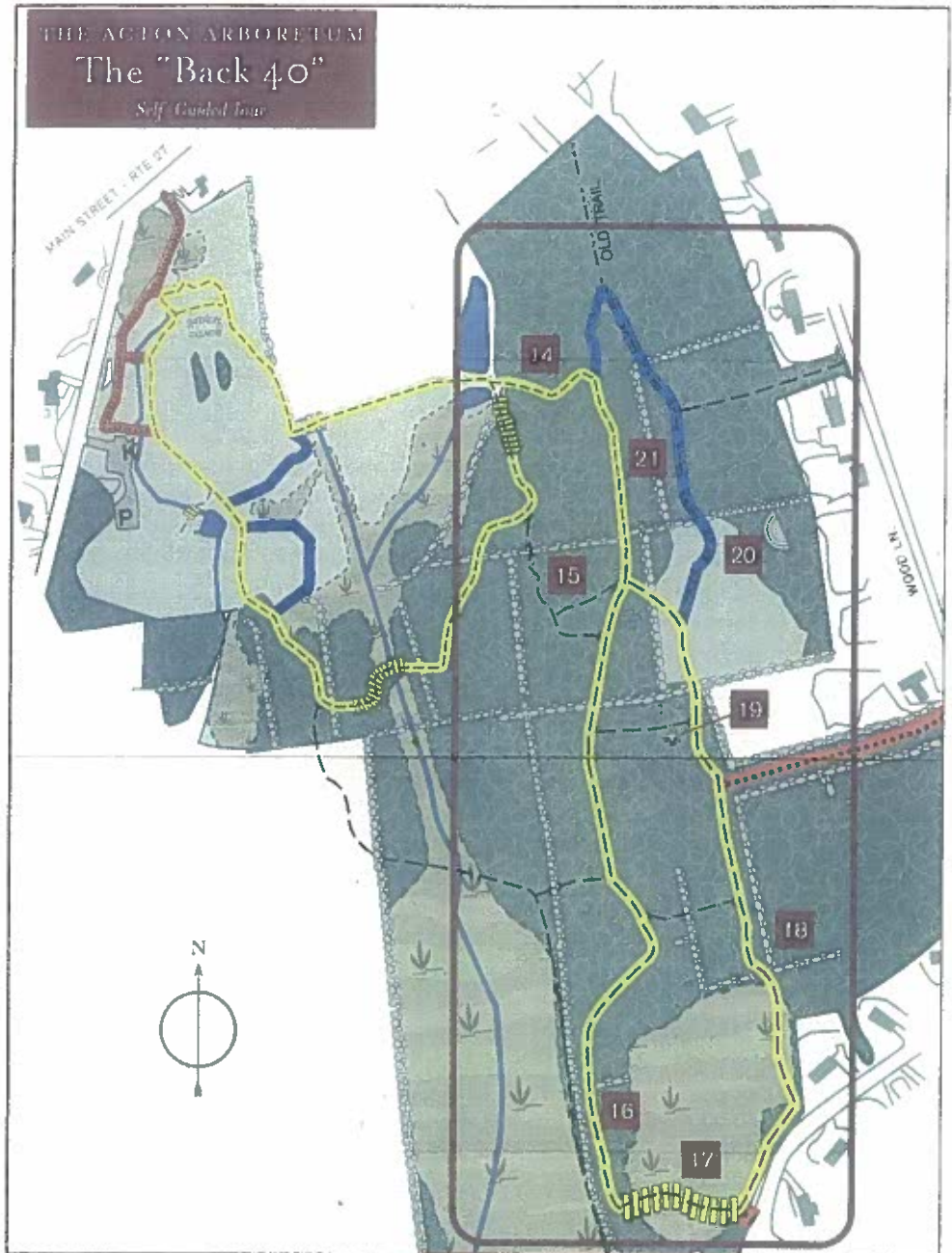
To raise and donate funds, materials and services to the Town of Acton for the development and maintenance of the Acton Arboretum; to educate the community about the unique environmental, horticultural, geological and historical qualities of the Arboretum property, about the process of wetland and field 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

## Self-Guided Tour of The Back 40



This spring, the newest release of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum's Wharton Grant educational materials is becoming available. The new *Self-Guided Tour of the Back 40* explores eight points of interest along the lower trails of the Arboretum that include the pine grove, esker, bog, a farm quarry, ledge outcropping and old orchard. This pocket guide has a labeled color map of the Arboretum on one side, and the flip side contains detailed descriptions of the numbered points of interest. The locations are physically identified in the Arboretum by cedar posts numbered 14 through 21. In addition, four informational cards listing recommended plants for the home gardener from the Hosta Garden, Butterfly Garden, Herb Garden and Wildflower Garden are now available. The numbered plants on each card are correspondingly labeled in these Arboretum collections. Packets of these new materials may be purchased from the Town Clerk's counter at Acton Town Hall for \$5.00.

# How Invasive Plants Affect Our Land in Acton

Have you heard the current buzz about "invasive plants"? Have you wondered what they are, or pondered whether we have any in the Acton area?

Invasive plants are non-native, brought in by settlers, intentionally and unintentionally, mostly during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are bad because they take over and crowd local habitats. Lovely wildflowers, old native trees and shrubs have less space to propagate. Invasives have no enemies, are very hardy and spread rapidly. Our conservation lands in Acton are vulnerable because the land was cleared 150 years ago and has slowly been reverting back to forests. It is important to note that many beautiful fruit trees and vegetable plants now grown in the U.S. were imported. It is only a few non-native species that invade and adversely alter the natural landscape.

Educating the community is the best way to reduce the spread of invasives on individual properties. Agricultural organizations, nursery professionals and public resources have all been working together to develop and circulate lists of plants in hopes of banning their sale and importation. You can get lists of these invasive plants from many different sources such as:

- The New England Wildflower Society located in Framingham and at their website, [www.newenglandwildflower.org](http://www.newenglandwildflower.org);
- IPANE – The Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (just type this into a search engine);
- The USDA National Agricultural Library, [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov)

These lists will vary from state to state and region. Acton residents can get directly involved by removing these

plants from their own yards and properties, and by replacing them with alternative, underused, native species. Purchase and grow only native ornamental plants (also listed in the above-mentioned resources). If your property abuts any of Acton's conservation lands, make it a priority to remove invasives to prevent their encroachment.

Many areas in New England are so inundated that it would not be cost-effective to attempt total eradication. The term Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) developed by the IPANE conservationists at the University of Connecticut refers to a plan for vigilance and quick action to stop new invasions while they are still small. This system can be applied to prioritize important areas that communities wish to protect.

There are many methods of removing plants. Use manual labor such as clipping, digging and hand pulling. Suffocation with plastic sheeting is another. Repetitive, persistent cutting and mowing for several years can be effective by interrupting photosynthesis. Herbicides can be used on your own property—but you must read labels and directions carefully so you don't harm your health or the environment. Be sure to properly dispose of the removed plant material by burning (follow your local safety laws) or hauling to a landfill. You don't want to relocate your infestation! Remember that any projects in aquatic ecosystems are under the jurisdiction of the Wetlands Protection Act and require permits.

Please join us on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:00 pm as local conservationist, Jim Snyder-Grant, will lead a 30 minute walk, then a

question/answer period through the Acton Arboretum, pointing out examples of invasive species growing there. Jim is the chairman of Acton's Land Stewardship Committee. These folks often schedule "clean-ups" on Acton's conservation lands and welcome volunteers! Go onto their website [www.Acton-ma.gov/lsc.com](http://www.Acton-ma.gov/lsc.com) or contact them by email: [lsc@town.Acton.ma.us](mailto:lsc@town.Acton.ma.us). Please meet us at the main entrance of the Acton Arboretum, near the kiosk on Taylor Road on Saturday, June 9, 2007 to learn more about this important issue.

## Specimen Tree Franklinia

The exquisite *Franklinia alatamaha* tree, which boasts late summer blossoms, striking fall foliage, and an extraordinary history, is the most famous discovery of American botanists John and William Bartram. The father and son explorers discovered a



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

*Around each bend may be a discovery, an adventure.*

—DARRELL GOMAN

## 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

## Franklinia (continued)

small grove of this unknown tree along the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1765. On a later trip, William gathered seeds to propagate at their Philadelphia garden. They named the tree *Franklinia alatomaha* in honor of John Bartram's great friend, Benjamin Franklin. The tree was never seen in the wild after 1803, but fortunately, Franklinias still exist thanks to the Bartrams. All Franklinias today are descended from those propagated and distributed by the Bartrams, who are credited with saving it from extinction. The Franklinia tree is gaining an increased popularity among gardeners enticed by its delicate beauty, marvelous story of survival and even perhaps its reputation as a challenge to grow!

A Franklinia was donated to the Acton Arboretum by Christine and Daniel O'Connor in memory of Judy Donald and may be seen in the Rhododendren collection, located at stop number 8 of the Self-Guided Tour of The Upper Grounds. The two photos show this tree in bloom during late fall of 2006. Visit <http://www.bartramsgarden.org/franklinia> for more information.

1. John Bartram Association website



## President's Message

Dear Friends,

There are two upcoming opportunities to experience a guided tour on the property. Please join us on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:00 pm as local conservationist, Jim Snyder-Grant, will lead a 30 minute walk, then a question/answer period through the Acton Arboretum, pointing out examples of invasive plant species growing there. The Recreation Department is advertising and hosting a tour of three gardens maintained by the Acton Garden Club on Wednesday, June 13 from 10am - 12pm. Acton Garden Club members will discuss the plants in the Herb, Butterfly and Hosta Gardens, their maintenance and encourage you to grow some of them. Meet at the Acton Arboretum Taylor Rd. parking lot kiosk for both free events.

It is dues renewal time. Your mailing label date now reflects the expiration date of your membership. Please check your mailing label to determine if your membership is due for renewal. We appreciate your continued support, which we wish to acknowledge by sending you a free packet of our newest guides to the Arboretum. Renewing and new members of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum will receive a free packet of these high quality publications in a future mailing.

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc. takes place on Thursday, June 28, 2006, at the Reading Circle in the Arboretum at 6:30 P.M. (We meet at Town Hall in case of rain). A two-part business meeting will follow a short social. After the meeting, as daylight allows, we will take a walk through the Arboretum to discuss upcoming projects. Please join us.

Cathy Fochtman, President



## What's Happening



## New Educational Materials & Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Acton Arboretum are releasing their latest self-guided tour, "The Back 40". Recommended plant lists are now available for the Wildflower, Hosta, Butterfly and Herb gardens. These publications will be provided free to 2007 new and renewing members. They may be

purchased as a packet of five items for \$5 from the Acton Town Clerk at Town Hall.

Please join the Friends of the Acton Arboretum for their Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 28 at 6:30pm at the Acton Arboretum Reading Circle. Rain location will be at Ac-

ton Town Hall. A two-part business meeting will follow a short social. After the meeting, as daylight allows, we will take a walk through the Arboretum to discuss upcoming projects.

*Photo: Lilac in bloom, Lilac Collection*