



Pine Tree State Arboretum

...to promote the knowledge and appreciation of Maine's trees and other flora for people of all ages by offering educational, recreational, and inspirational opportunities.

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Art in the Arboretum by: Stephen Oliveri



These are the comments Steve made at the recent opening of the Project Pathology Art Project at the Arboretum. The display will be up until July 10th.

Welcome to the Pine Tree State Arboretum. Over the past 30 years, the Arboretum has had thousands of visitors and have been featured in hundreds of newspaper articles, magazines, guidebooks and even a few television programs. But somehow, we've managed to hide almost 250 acres of free and open green space within view of Maine's Capitol dome. I honestly don't know how we've managed to do it!

Today, that is about to change. This wonderful public art project will not only put the "art" in the Arboretum, but it will bring in many new visitors, perhaps we will, once and for all, be able to remove the words "hidden" and

"secret" from our identity and become known simply as a "well kept gem".

It is by no means a stretch for the Arboretum to host a work of art like this. We have long had a thriving connection to the world of art. Hundreds of painters, photographers, and poets have come here to capture a little piece of the Arboretum. I need mention only the recent displays of fine photos in our Visitors center by the Capital Area Camera Club, or the lovely tree paintings by Maine artist Linda Murray that graced the same space last year.

But our connection to art goes much deeper than that for the Arboretum is itself a work of art. It is an ever changing palette of color, shape and texture on a canvas so large that it is decorated by thousands of trees; laced with a

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Special points of interest:

- "Project Pathology", University of Maine @ Augusta art show, will be on display until July 10th.
- PTSA Volunteer Appreciation picnic is Thursday, June 25th from 5-7pm. Please RSVP to Toni @ 621-0031 or ptsa-edu@roadrunner.com

This issue of the newsletter is supported by:



Art in the Arboretum (cont.) by: Stephen Oliveri

network of enticing trails; and dotted with an array of birds, butterflies, and other wild creatures, tiny points of brilliance and motion on a background that stretches from a small cluster of wildflowers in a sunlit meadow or a shady woodland to the open vistas that recall our agrarian past. The Pine Tree State Arboretum is delighted to welcome **Project Pathology** and we hope it will be visited and enjoyed by many.

Before I finish, I would like to acknowledge, in addition to all the talented artists who created this project, the Harry Faust Art Fund. When I learned that one of the principal sources of support for the project was the Harry Faust Art Fund, I was even more thrilled to be hosting this

display. Harry was a dear friend. I met him in the early 1990s when he and Charley LaFlamme and Jeff Miller and a handful of other dedicated bicyclists created what is now one of the most successful bicycle advocacy organizations in the country, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Harry was a true renaissance man – a skilled craftsman, a strong proponent of the arts and the environment, and a dedicated organizer and leader. I will smile every time I look down this path and envision Harry, leisurely riding down this path on his bike. He would have loved this. It is with great pleasure, and great affection for its chief patron, that I welcome **Project Pathology** to the Arboretum.

Want to help the Arboretum? by: Susan Cottle

As we've discussed in previous newsletters, the board continues to work on the strategic plan for the Arboretum. Part of that work has been considering what staff resources we need, which led to our redefining future staff roles several months ago and adding a position for an operations manager, which our current Executive Director, Steve Oliveri, has wanted to take on.

With Steve ready to move into that position, we've begun the search for a new Executive Director to help lead the organization's community outreach, fund raising and financial planning, and administrative efforts. That search began late this past winter and went into the spring. As a result we were introduced to some wonderful people with excellent backgrounds and experience. But we have not yet found the match between an individual's special interests and talents and the Arboretum's particular needs. So that search will begin again after the busy summer season winds down. We'll keep you posted on our progress. In the interim, we continue to be most fortunate to have Steve continuing as the Executive Director. As one person with enough work for two or three, he has a great deal on his plate.

We also continue to have a dedicated board endeavoring to carry out the Arboretum's mission to

provide a valuable asset to the community. Carrying out that mission requires some time every month for a board or a committee meeting and sometimes for some other tasks, such as gathering some information for a committee to use to make a decision. Most importantly, though, board members have a strong interest in the Arboretum—perhaps because of their experience enjoying the trails, their interest in trees and green space, or their seeing how much children and adults get from both its landscape and the programs it offers.

If you would like to help with the board's work to keep the Arboretum a strong asset to our community, perhaps you'd like to think about joining a committee that focuses on some particular tasks (e.g., programs and volunteers, financial planning, building relationships to support the Arboretum, and land management are the main committees). Or you may wish to become a board member. Board members serve on at least one committee and, as a group, also make policy and decisions concerning the Arboretum's future. If you are interested in doing either, please let a member of the staff or the board know. We'd be delighted to talk to you about your interests, and we can always use another good head and heart to help the Arboretum.

Buttonbush by: Mary Oatway



If you are looking for a long-blooming, summer, native shrub that attracts bees, birds, and butterflies, buttonbush could fill that need. This wetland shrub, *Cephalanthus, occidentalis*, often grows in groups and provides excellent nesting areas for songbirds and escape cover for wetland birds. It can grow 20 feet in height, but is normally 6-8 feet tall and about the same in width.

Buttonbush leaves are late developing. They are mostly arranged in pairs, but some, on the same bush, are in whorls of 3 or 4, originating at the same point on the stem. They are oval, or elliptic, 3-6 inches long, 2-4 inches wide, are untoothed, and end in a point.

Two unusual and desirable features are its fragrance, and the ping-pong-sized white spherical flowerheads that continue blooming through June to the end of summer. The flowerheads are made up of dense tubular flowers, nearly one-half inch tall, with 4 tiny petals at the top. Inside are 4 stamens surrounding the style which protrudes from the throat of the long thin flower. These pincushion-like white balls stand on 2-inch stalks in clusters growing from the stem tips and from leaf axils.

The fruit that follows is a reddish-brown ball, or button, about the size of the flowerhead. It contains the seeds and most of them hang on all through the winter months. Many water fowl en-

joy the buttons for food. Mallard ducks are especially fond of them.

Though buttonbush is a wetland plant, it can be grown in ordinary soils if extra water is furnished during hot, dry spells. But, it is at its best in swamps, marshes, and along streams and ponds from Nova Scotia to Ontario, and from Florida to Mexico, and into California. "The National Champion buttonbush is 20 feet tall and has a trunk diameter at breast height of 20 inches; it grows in (where else?) Buttonwillow, California."

"The Choctaw and Seminole peoples used decoctions of buttonbush bark for treating several internal maladies including stomach aches."

Buttonbush can be planted from seeds or cuttings pushed into sand or potting soil. Unrooted cuttings can be pushed into the soil one foot apart to grow for erosion control or spaced wider for habitat development.

If you would like to check out a buttonbush to see if it is the shrub you want to attract bees, humming birds, and butterflies, and furnish a home for nesting songbirds, and feed the water birds, come visit the buttonbush beyond the Viles Visitors' Center at the Pine Tree State Arboretum in Augusta, this summer!



Sweet Deception by: Stephen Oliveri

When the tree arrived from the nursery, its tag read “Yellow Birch” (*Betula alleghaniensis*). I had no reason to doubt that the tag was correct. In fact, I had received another yellow birch from a different nursery only recently and both of these small trees looked pretty similar. They had all the traits of a young *Betula alleghaniensis*. The bark, the buds, and later the leaves, all looked much the same. They even shared the characteristic wintergreen smell when the bark of a small twig was scratched.

In the spring of 2004, I planted both trees and recorded them as yellow birch. They were incorporated into the Native Plant Collection that was then just being developed around the new wing of the Viles Visitors Center. Both trees also happened to be memorial trees honoring two former members of the Arboretum’s Board of Directors, George Gibson and Bill Mincher.

The trees were planted about 80 feet apart; the George Gibson tree close to the building, the Bill Mincher tree standing alone on the lawn. For five years both trees have grown exceptionally well. In fact, I used the Gibson tree to illustrate an article in a previous issue of the Arboretum newsletter, contrasting its strong and rapid growth with that of yet another yellow birch that had been planted at the same time in a less desirable location without adequate protection from snowplows and lawnmowers (see Vol 17 No. 4)

As the trees grew, I noticed some subtle differences between them that I just chalked up to ordinary genetic variation and slight differences in microclimate. The Mincher tree seemed to leaf out a little sooner than the Gibson tree; perhaps its position on the lawn exposed it to just enough more spring sunshine to awaken its buds a little earlier. The Mincher tree also began exhibiting the yellow tinged, slightly peeling bark that becomes a more prominent feature as yellow birch matures; the Gibson tree’s bark showed no sign of peeling and remained a shiny, greenish-brown. Perhaps the Gibson tree’s genes caused it to retain juvenile bark characteristics longer; genetic variation in maturity is common to almost all species.

Now in their sixth season of growth, the differ-

ences between the trees have become too evident to be attributed any longer to genes and sunlight. The Mincher tree is clearly a yellow birch, and the Gibson tree clearly is not. A closer look at the Gibson tree reveals that it is in fact a sweet birch (*Betula lenta*)!

As seedlings, these two species appear nearly identical. Since I trusted the nursery and had no reason to believe they were different species, I failed to look closely enough until the differences between them became apparent. But for six springs, I have sung the praises of yellow birch to hundreds of visitors, using the Gibson tree as an example of the fine characteristics of this native species and encouraging people to plant it into their home landscape. How embarrassing to realize that the tree I had praised so highly turns out to be not even the correct species!

But, hubris aside, there is an upside to this “sweet” deception. Fortunately, sweet birch is a native species. Though not as widespread nor well known as its yellow cousin, it surely has a rightful (even if unplanned) place in the Native Plant collection. It will provide an example of yet another species for our visitors to consider adding to their own landscape and, with the real yellow birch nearby, it will be easy to compare and contrast the relative merits of the two.

If any of you have come with me on any of the tours I have led in and around the Arboretum over the past 30 years, you will know that this is not the first time I have been mistaken about a species’ identity. Whether it is birds, wildflowers, shrubs, or trees, there are always mistakes to be learned from and an instructive tale to tell.



Sweet Birch

Yellow Birch

Gifts and Donations by: Stephen Oliveri



THANK YOU

A \$500 donation was made for a memorial horse-chestnut tree planted for Gary R. Jones. The donation came from his sister, Lesley Jones.

Bernie Slofer donated a new picnic table

Modern Woodmen donated \$150 that was used to buy a Tulip Poplar for our Magnolia Collection and apple rootstocks for our heirloom orchard.



**Pine Tree State
Arboretum**

MAKE A LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATING MAINE'S CHILDREN ABOUT TREES

You can make sure that the Pine Tree State Arboretum's trees and shrubs will be here to teach future generations about the beauty and value of plants by naming the Pine Tree State Arboretum in your will.

Bequests become a part of the Arboretum endowment, providing a stable funding base to ensure that the plants and grounds will be well cared for and that the Arboretum's educational programs continue.

Check with your legal or financial advisor to help determine the best way to meet your needs.

PTSA Wish List

- Thirty-cup coffee urn for conference rooms
- Heavy duty Cordless drill
- Load of Gravel for trails
- Laptop computer
- Commercial Grade riding mower
- A Fireproof Safe
- New Picnic Table



Special Gardens by: Joe Scott



Photo by: Toni Pied

This article will explore two special gardens. One special garden will supply the food butterflies need throughout their lives; the other (an

herb garden) will supply fragrance, flavor, and beauty.

To have a great butterfly garden, you must get used to a few holes in the leaves of your perennials. It is necessary to let the caterpillars feed in order to keep the adult butterflies around. Many flowering plants listed for butterfly gardens are really food sources (leaves) for the caterpillars. The adult butterflies that are ready to lay eggs are attracted by the plants that will feed their developing larvae. Adults also feed on flower nectar. Plants that have clusters of short, tubular brightly colored flowers are especially popular. Set flat stones in a sheltered, sunny spot for butterflies to bask on. Also place a basin of water in the garden filled with soil. Bury the basin to its top edges. Butterflies are attracted to shallow muddy puddles. Plant flowering plants in groups of like kinds to make a splash of color which is easier for butterflies to be attracted to than a single plant.

The following are several perennials suggested for a butterfly garden:

Monarda didyma (bee balm)

Gaillardia grandiflora (blanket flower)

Chrysanthemum superlum (Shasta daisy)

Symphotrichum novae-angliae (New England aster)

Achillia filipendulina (fern-leaved yarrow)

Sedum spectabile (showy stonecrop)

Echinacea pupurea (purple coneflower)

Astilbe arendsii (Astilbe)

**There are other perennials and also annuals and shrubs that attract butterflies.*

Another special garden is an herb garden. There are many different ways to have an herb collection, such as container gardens, herbs in your vegetable garden, and raised beds. If possible have your garden located in the sun and near your kitchen for easy harvest. Many herbs can be enjoyed for their various scents; or for their use in cooking or crafts. Also you may dry the herbs in the fall and keep them throughout the winter for cooking. Allow ample room for herbs to grow without crowding. Mints are notorious for spreading rampantly. To keep them from taking over the rest of the garden, bury open bottomed buckets in the garden and plant mint inside. This prevents the roots from reaching out and sending up new plants; if not controlled mint can cover large areas. Make sure the soil is well drained and work in some compost as you turn over the soil. The compost will supply the nutrients butterfly plants and herbs need.

There are many choices of herbs, but the following is a list of a few that many people desire:

Hyssopus officinalis (hyssop) – evergreen leaves and blue flowers; culinary, tea.

Lavendula angustifolia (lavender) – scented gray leaves and purple flowers; crafts, culinary.

Salvia officinalis (garden sage) – scented gray leaves and blue flowers; culinary, tea.

Melissa officinalis (lemon balm) – lemon-scented leaves and white flowers; tea.

The mints (peppermint & spearmint) – fragrance, tea.

There are also many annual herbs that you can plant in the summer such as chamomile, cumin, dill, marjoram, coriander, parsley, rosemary, basil, thyme, summer savory, mustard, and borage.

Now is the time to really enjoy the many special gardens and beautiful areas of wild flowers at the Pine Tree State Arboretum. Remember to keep a watchful eye out for butterflies and make note of the variety of plant they are choosing.

Hosta Auction by: Bernie Slofer

The Maine Hosta Society will again hold its annual fundraising auction at the Pine Tree State Arboretum on Saturday, June 27th. A silent auction will start at 10:30am. The public is invited. Come and add some select Hosta species to your garden collection. They are the #1 selling perennial in the United States!

For more information, call Bernie Slofer at 395-4641.



Photo by: Larry Harty



The Pine Tree State Arboretum would like to extend sincere thanks to Longfellow's Greenhouses for sponsoring this issue of the quarterly newsletter.

Thank You!!!

Did you know that our newsletter is available online?!?!

If you are interested in receiving a *color* copy of our newsletter via e-mail, please contact Toni Pied at 621-0031 or ptsaedu@roadrunner.com.

Choosing to receive your copy of our newsletter via e-mail will help us save on printing and postage costs, as well as saving paper!

Would you like to receive our monthly e-newsletter???

Every month we send out an e-newsletter which highlights *events* and *programs* at PTSA. If you would like to receive our e-newsletter,

please contact Toni Pied at 621-0031 or ptsaedu@roadrunner.com.

Or, you can sign up online at www.pinetreestatearboretum.org.

Thanks & Gratitude

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and made donations toward our **2nd Annual International Migratory Bird Day Festival!!!**

~ Augusta Bird Club ~ Maine State Museum ~ Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife ~ Avian Haven ~ Liberty Graphics ~
~ Knight's Farm Supply ~ Shaw's Supermarket ~ Hannaford Supermarket ~
~ Bernie Slofer ~ Dean Corner ~ Gaby Howard ~ Jay Adams ~ Mike Smith~

You can see a list of the birds spotted during the festival when you click on the "Latest news" section of our website. www.pinetreestatearboretum.org

***We hope you will join us next year for our Third Annual International Migratory Bird Day Festival on Saturday, May 15, 2010**



Children's Bird Walk



Free posters and info. about birds



Sophia Oliveri dissects an owl pellet



Avian Haven's display about using lead-free fishing tackle

Businesses Supporting the Pine Tree State Arboretum in 2009

Augusta Fuel Co.

Knowlton & Hewins Funeral Home

Auclair Cycle & Ski

Limington Lumber Company

Basham Tree Service

Longfellow's Greenhouses

Dyer, Goodall, & Dennison

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Joel D. Davis and Associates

Smart Eyecare Center

an Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisory Practice

Jon Phillips—Arborist

Superior Cleaning Services

Kennebec Savings Bank

Treekeepers LLC

The Secret Garden by: Diane Jerome



Diane Jerome is one of the Arboretum's many dedicated volunteers. She heads up a team of Master Gardeners and others working to revive the Arboretum's Rock Garden.

Many gardens have histories, and this one seems especially intriguing. It is located at the Pine Tree State Arboretum in Augusta, at a site that used to be part of a working quarry providing stone for the building of the original Augusta State Hospital.

In the mid 1980's, Marjorie Walsh, who owned a local nursery, specializing in rock garden plants, was asked to start a garden at the newly acquired PTSA. A lovely NE facing, gently sloped ledge area above the small quarry was chosen for the site. Mrs. Walsh led a group from the ME Chapter of the North America Rock Garden Society, and together they planted a large variety of rock garden plants and shrubs in this area. Plantings were done over a period of approximately 10 years, at which time Mrs. Walsh retired. The garden area was basically neglected for the ensuing decade. The signs identifying it as a point of interest at the arboretum were removed.

Despite the years of neglect, there remained evidence of some surviving plants and shrubs amidst the sod and overgrowth. This made it seem like a

worthwhile project for restoration. In 2007, with the support and assistance of Caragh and Liz from the U of M Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program, and in conjunction with Steve Oliveri, director of the PTSA, a 5 Year Plan was created and volunteers agreed to work on this project. We created what has become known as "The Rock Garden Team", working to restore and enhance this unique garden area. The team uncovered over 150 old plant labels, along with some barely surviving plants and shrubs. Many plants, especially the heathers and sedums, have made an amazing come back. (Our greatest challenges are drought and deer damage.)

Through meetings during the non-growing season, the Rock Garden Team has been able to research, organize and plan in a way that should help ensure the viability and longevity of this project. We now have GPS mapping with landscape design available to help identify plant location. Our goals for this year include plant ID, labeling, as well as educational outreach. Efforts to monitor plant survival, create a balance of colors, textures, bloom times.....and, of course, weeding will be ongoing. In keeping with the new arboretum mission statement, we will strive to incorporate more native and naturalized plants to the site.

The next time you are in the Augusta area, be sure to stop by and explore all that it has to offer. Be sure to take a walk up through the Hosta Garden to the Quarry Ledge Rock Garden, because, although it is still a work in progress, our Secret Garden is no secret anymore!

If you are interested in visiting, learning more about this project, or helping out, MG volunteers are usually available on site Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to noon. VISIT, VALUE, VOLUNTEER.

All PTSA volunteers are invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on Thursday, June 25th. Watch for your invitation!

I want to help support the Pine Tree State Arboretum's Plant Collections, Trails, & Education Programs!!!

Please _____ renew my membership for 2009 _____ become a member _____ give a gift membership

Please make any necessary changes to your mailing label on the other side, or write the full name and address for a new or gift membership in the space below:

Name: _____

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Balsam fir (Individual) \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$100 |
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*Please make your check payable to: PINE TREE STATE ARBORETUM
153 Hospital Street, Augusta, ME 04330

or

Visa Mastercard Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

or You can donate online @ www.pinetreestatearboretum.org

The Arboretum is a 501(c)(3) corporation. Membership fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Calendar of Events



| <i>July 2009</i> | <i>August 2009</i> | <i>September 2009</i> |
|--|--|---|
| <p>There are no programs or events scheduled at this time. Our trails are open 7 days/week from dawn until dusk.</p> | <p>There are no programs or events scheduled at this time. Our trails are open 7 days/week from dawn until dusk.</p> | <p>Sept. 23rd: The Pine Tree State Arboretum and the Augusta Rotary Club will host the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce "After Hours" event.</p> <p>Sept. : School programs start back up in September and October. If you would like to schedule a program, please call Toni Pied at 621-0031 or e-mail ptsaedu@roadrunner.com.</p> |
| <p>You can go to www.pinetreestatearboretum.org for the most up-to-date schedules</p> | | |



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We're on the Web

www.pinetreestearboretum.org

The Pine Tree State Arboretum Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Pine Tree State Arboretum, a nonprofit corporation. Subscriptions are available through membership. The Arboretum is dedicated to promoting the knowledge and appreciation of trees. The Pine Tree State Arboretum is located at 153 Hospital Street and is open during daylight hours to the public, free of charge.

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