



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.

September 2008 —Volume 19 Number 3

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Arboretum to Receive Major Gift by: Stephen Oliveri

Thelma Swain was a great friend to both the Pine Tree State Arboretum and the Maine State Museum, where she donated many hours of her time. Not many places can boast of an active 99 year old volunteer, but



her friends at both the Arboretum and the Museum were looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday in December. Thelma was as spry and sharp as many people half her age and loved being actively involved in the community when she wasn't off traveling the globe. Those who knew her figured that she would be just too busy to die anytime soon, so we were looking forward to the birthday celebration. Sadly, Thelma did not quite make it to the century mark. Thelma appreciated the Arboretum's education programs and plant collections, but thought it unfortunate that many people could not enjoy them because they weren't able to walk on the trails. She approached me about coming up with some kind of transportation for them and after bouncing around a number of ideas, we finally struck an agreement. Thelma would donate the money for a tractor and a custom built trailer to be towed behind it. The trailer would be low to the ground so that it could be easily accessed and it would have ample, cushioned

benches so the riders could sit in comfort. I would tow it behind the tractor and deliver running commentary about Arboretum plant collections and history. When the tractor was not being used for guided tours, it could be used to tackle a wide range of other tasks. The arrangement worked beautifully. The tractor has been the single most useful tool the Arboretum has ever acquired, and Thelma got to see her friends from the Granite Hill Complex enjoy the fresh air and scenery of the Arboretum. Thelma has left an extremely generous bequest to the Arboretum. It will be well into 2009 before we will be certain of the final amount, but it will be the largest single gift that the Arboretum has ever received. Thelma's gift will make it possible for the Arboretum to hire an operations manager, which will greatly enhance our ability to care for our plant collections and trail system. It will be a very active and practical legacy indeed – much like Thelma herself.

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Special points of interest:

- **CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!** Volunteer Work Day (Trails) Oct. 4th, 9am-12pm
- A particular interest was shown in our Mushroom Workshop in September, so we are offering a Medicinal Mushrooms of Maine workshop on Oct. 12th. Please call or e-mail to register.

This issue of the newsletter is supported by:



Your Arboretum Needs You! by: Susan Cottle

Isn't autumn awesome! It's great to walk around the Arboretum to see the changes to the trees, notice any mushrooms popping up, feel the change in the air, or hear one of the remaining songs in the air—one of the hardy birds that stay through the colder seasons with us. There's lots to do and appreciate here at the Arboretum on a good fall day! There is actually a lot to enjoy here year round at the Arboretum—and there's a lot that needs to be done to make that enjoyment possible. Whether its taking care of trails or plants, helping with educational programs, or working with others on some of the planning and long term issues the Arboretum needs to address as an organization, there is always a long "to do" list for our nonprofit organization. And you are one of the people who help make it happen. Whether you support the Arboretum with your money, with your time, or perhaps with both—it's the energy you share with us that makes it possible for the Arboretum to survive and to thrive. **Thank you!** You probably have received or will receive in the mail shortly a request for our annual fund. We hope you will be able to give generously to our annual appeal so we can continue to

meet the ever growing financial demands our non-profit has to serve the community. But there are other ways you may enjoy contributing: volunteering. And we need volunteers. We especially need help with our educational programs for kids and with the planning for the Arboretum's programs, financial stability, land management, and more. Those who help out with our school programs make it possible for young people to learn about the outdoors and why we all need to understand the natural world and our relationship to it. Those who help out with some of our committee and board work on programs, finances, land management, and other responsibilities help us be ready for the future and remain focused on our core mission: *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.*** So if you value education, enjoy recreation, and/or want to share some inspiration in a beautiful place where your efforts make a difference, please contact Steve or Toni on our staff at 622-0031 to talk about the possibilities. We'd love to have you here!

New Staff by: Stephen Oliveri

The Arboretum welcomed two new staff members in September. Michael Seaton and Loretta Huttman.



*Loretta with son, Elijah

Loretta Huttman is the new Project Canopy Outreach Director. Rhetta replaced Jan Santerre after Jan moved on to be the Project Canopy administrator with the Maine Forest Service. Rhetta will be working with communities throughout the State of Maine to assist them with existing community forestry programs and establishing new ones. She will also be actively involved in fundraising for community forestry projects that benefit towns and trees. Rhetta comes to us from Thomas College in Waterville where she worked as a grantwriter. She is an avid outdoorswoman and has worked as a river guide.



*Mike & Maisy

Mike Seaton took over as our new custodian, replacing Michael Beaulieu. As custodian, Mike takes care of cleaning and maintaining the Viles Visitor's Center, sets up our conference rooms for meetings and workshops, and keeps our tools and equipment in good repair. Mike comes to us with a background in small engines, having run his own marine shop for a number of years. In addition to his part time job at the Arboretum, Mike is a driver education instructor, teaching new drivers of both automobiles and motorcycles. If you have walked any of the Arboretum trails in the past few years, chances are pretty good that you have already met Mike as he and his wife Peggy frequently walk their golden retriever here.

A Reason for Sneazin' by: Mary Oatway



Photo: J.R. Crellin, 2006

Achoo!
"Achoo," says you,
As you view
The bright September morn.
"Oh my," says I
And I cry:
"A sneeze of pollen borne!"
Ragweed indeed,
-Please take heed-
Is making you wheeze and
sneeze.
It's here, it's there,
It's everywhere,
Until the fall's first freeze.
Those grains are banes,
Respiratory pains,
On such a beautiful day.
So yank the crank
From field and bank,
And throw those nasal strains
away.

Jack Sanders

Are you sneezin' this season? If so, there's a reason. Ragweed is stalking North America from coast to coast, from Canada in the north, to Brazil in South America. "Nationwide, ragweeds spew a quarter of a *billion* tons of pollen in the air each season," says Jack Sanders, in his book, *The Secrets of Wildflowers*. "It is responsible for more hay fever than all other plants combined." Ragweed, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, is a shallow rooted, unpopular annual that grows equally well in cultivated ground, neglected fields, pastures, roadsides, paths, and flower gardens, from June to early October. Plants range in height from one foot to five, with fern-like leaves, above which, wands of green male flowers dangle, to rain pollen on female flowers tucked into axils of the leaves below. With flowers as green as the rest of the plant, ragweed has no markings to attract passing bees, and with no fragrance either, there is no insect pollinating service. "Tiny and light, designed to be borne by air, pollen is manufactured in massive quantities so that at least a few grains will pollinate a female flower somewhere. A single plant can produce several million grains of pollen, and spread by the

wind, they can easily travel many miles from the parent plant." Ragweed pollen is no worse than the airborne pollen of other weeds, but ragweeds are the most common and prolific producers, especially in the central and eastern areas of the United States. "Allergic reaction to ragweed pollen can include repeated and prolonged sneezing, a stuffy and watery nose, redness, swelling, and itching of the eyes, and various breathing difficulties.... In some places, it is illegal to allow ragweed to grow and you can be fined for not destroying plants that appear on your property." But ragweed was not always unpopular. Native Americans used it medicinally in several ways. The Delawares used the plant as a poultice to prevent blood poisoning. Cheyennes made ragweed tea for treating bowel cramps. Nantickes considered it a laxative, and in the 19th century, ragweed leaves were rubbed on poison ivy inflammation for relief. Early in the last century, Mexicans recognized it as a drug for fevers. Another use for its leaves was making a long lasting green dye. "Old herbalists recommended ragweed as an antidote for hay fever." Modern herbalists hardly mention ragweed, but herbalists from the past had the right idea. "Today scientists have developed hay fever treatments that use ragweed pollen. In allergic immunotherapy, a patient is given a series of shots-like vaccinations-with increasingly larger doses of ragweed pollen extract to enable the sufferer to build up immunity to the pollen." Maybe ragweed's greatest values are its soil preserving and conditioning qualities. When open swathes are cut by floods, fires, and bulldozers, ragweed is quick to patch up earth's wounds, helping to prevent erosion. "The nutrients and especially the fibers contained in the above and below ground parts of the plant enrich and condition the soil, paving the way for other plants. Other names for ragweed include, stickweed, stammerweed, blackweed, carrotweed, Roman wormwood, tasselweed, and hay fever weed. The last one is a misnomer because there is neither hay nor a fever involved. When cows eat ragweed, its bitterness taints the milk, and it is called bittersweet. Sheep and hogs eat it, so hogweed is on the list. Through the years, ragweed names may change or be eliminated, but there will always be a pollen season, and that's the reason for folks to be wheezin' and sneezin'.



Schedule of Events

- Oct. 1—**Pond Study** with Tamara Whitmore from the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed. 10-11:30am, ages 6-16. Pre-registration required, \$4/student.
- Oct. 8—**Electricity and the Environment** with Stefany Arsenault from the Maine Energy Education Program. 10-11:30am, ages 8-16. Pre-registration required, \$4/student.
- Oct. 12— **Medicinal Mushrooms of Maine Workshop** w/Greg Marley. 9:30am-12pm. Pre-registration required, \$20/\$30 PTSA Members/Non-Members.
- Oct. 22—**Skins & Skulls** with Lisa Kane from the Maine DIFW. 10-11am, all ages. Pre-registration required, \$4/student.
- Oct. 23 - **Maine Author Series:** John Bunker, Author of "The Apples of Palermo". Food sold by Cony Boosters, 6pm, free.
- Oct. 29—**Owls** with Lisa Kane from the Maine DIFW. 10-11am, all ages. Pre-registration required, \$4/student.

October 2008

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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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Schedule of Events

- Nov. 5—**Find a Space & Show Your Face** with Lisa Kane from the Maine DIFW. 10-11am, all ages. Pre-registration required, \$4/student.
- Nov. 20 - **Maine Author Series:** Kate Braestrup, Author of "Here if You Need Me. A True Story". Food sold by Cony Boosters, 6pm, free.

*Please Call Toni Pied, Education Director, to Pre-Register for events at 621-0031, or e-mail at ptsaedu@roadrunner.com

November 2008

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30						



Please go to www.pinetreestatearboretum.org for more information and the most up-to-date schedule.



Schedule of Events

- Dec. 18 - **Maine Author Series:** Neil Rolde, Author of "The Interrupted Forest: A History of Maine's Wildlands". Food sold by Cony Boosters, 6pm, free.

*Please Call Toni Pied, Education Director, to Pre-Register for events at 621-0031, or e-mail at ptsaedu@roadrunner.com

December 2008

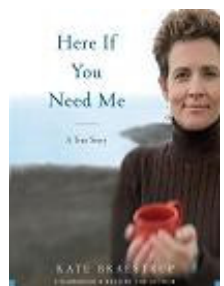
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Maine Author Series at PTSA by: Toni B. Pied

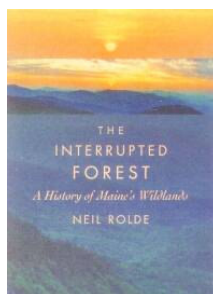
During the months of October, November, and December, the Pine Tree State Arboretum will be hosting a *Maine Author Series*.



October's author is John Bunker, author of the book "The Apples of Palermo". John will have copies of his book for sale, will be available to sign books and will also try to ID apples that are brought in by attendees.



In November, the Arboretum will welcome Kate Braestrup, author of the book "Here if You Need Me. A True Story". Kate is the Chaplain for the Maine Warden Service.



December's author is Neil Rolde, author of the book "The Interrupted Forest: A History of Maine's Wildlands".

Cony Boosters will have food available for purchase prior to the lectures. All lectures will take place in the Arboretum's Viles Conference Room. Food will be available starting at 6pm and the lectures will start around 6:30pm.

These are three truly remarkable authors, and the Arboretum is grateful to be able connect these local authors with the people of Central Maine.

We hope to see you there!!!

Outstanding Flowering Plants by: Joe Scott

In the June 2008 issue of the Pine Tree State Arboretum newsletter, I had an article entitled Ornamental Grasses in a Pathway Garden. Now I would like to mention several additions of beautiful plants that would be very attractive among the various varieties of ornamental grasses. There are many new perennials, shrubs, and trees; now available that are hardy in Maine. These new varieties give us a much greater color variation and also greater disease resistance in some instances. We will look at the beauty of the perennial hibiscus, phlox, and the shrub hydrangea.



Certainly the hardy hibiscus with their bright flowers would be a wonderful addition to the Ornamental Grasses in a Pathway Garden. Large lush flowers bloom continuously from midsummer to fall and are so special with their 6 to 12 inch diameter blossoms.

Hardy hibiscus flowers are limited to white, pink, and red, but blossoms range from quilted to smooth, solid colored to veined or striped, and others may have a lighter or darker eye. Following are some suggested varieties of hibiscus: "Kopper King" is 4-5' tall with a light pink, 12" blossom with darker pink lines coming from the center to the outer edge of the flower, the maple shaped leaves are copper red making a wonderful contrast with the Ornamental Grasses. "Blue River" is 4' tall with a 10" white flower and has light green foliage. "Cherry Brandy" is 3.5' tall, with 8" red flowers and light red stems. "Pink Elephant" is 5-6' tall with 12" ruffled pink flowers with a red eye. "Lady Baltimore" is 6' tall with an 8" white and pink flower.

The next suggested perennial for planting individually or in groups is the garden phlox. The older varieties of garden phlox had a great problem with mildew. The new varieties suggested are almost 100% immune to mildew, but retain their great fragrance of the old varieties. Because of its fragrance and its popularity with butterflies and humming birds, phlox have always been a much loved perennial. Following are just a few of

the many varieties available at garden centers: "David's Lavender" is 4' tall, has a lavender blossom, and the height makes it great for the background of the garden. To keep phlox shorter, pinch the tips when they are a foot tall and get many more flowering branches. "Peppermint Twist" is 16" tall with fluorescent pink and white striped flowers, very fragrant. "Goldmine" is 28" tall, and has magenta-red flowers with leaves that have bright gold edges. "Phlox paniculata" or "Rubymine" is 4' tall with a dark eye, pink-red flowers that open from red buds, and blue-green foliage that is variegated with cream margins. Blooms June to August.

The next suggestion is one of the showiest summer and autumn flowering shrubs, the hydrangea. All are shade tolerant or happy in full sun. "Hydrangea arborescens" or "Annabelle" produces 12" globe-shaped snow white flowers, starting in mid July and increasing in size as the season progresses into fall. "Limelight" is about 6-8' tall with very heavy blooming, setting masses of 8" clusters that first open lime-green color, then mature through all shades of white, pink, and rose from July to November. "Hydrangea paniculata" or "Pinky Winky" is 6-8' tall, and sets masses of blooms that open white and mature to pink. The stems are a vibrant shade of red. "Hydrangea macrophylla" or "Endless Summer" is 3' tall, and has a mounding compact habit, with 8" bright blue flowers. In acid soil the flowers will be blue, in alkaline soil the flowers will be pink.



Hibiscus, phlox, and hydrangeas will contribute a great amount of interesting flower color to the ornamental grasses in a pathway garden from mid June to October as well as differences in foliage, shapes, and color. This fall, be sure to enjoy the gardens at the Pine Tree State Arboretum. The beautiful hosta pathway, the native plants garden, and the many varieties of trees and shrubs throughout the Arboretum.

I want to: _____ renew my membership for 2008 _____ 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: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Balsam fir (Individual) \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juneberry (Family) \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar maple (Supporting) \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$1,000 |

*Please make your check payable to: PINE TREE STATE ARBORETUM
153 Hospital Street, Augusta, ME 04330

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.

Special Gifts and Memorials by: Stephen Oliveri



In addition to the significant gift the Arboretum is to receive from Thelma Swain's estate (see article), the Arboretum has been especially blessed this summer with a number of gifts in memory of several beloved and long time friends.

Pamela Morrill was a frequent visitor to the Arboretum where she enjoyed walking the trails with her dog. She was also an avid motorcycle rider and after her death this past winter,

her family and friends erected a granite bench in her honor. The bench sits on the knoll that harbors our community forestry collection and looks out over the trail that stretches between the flowering crabapples and pears. It is a stunningly beautiful view in May when the trees are in full bloom. To celebrate Pam and dedicate her bench, motorcyclists from across the state gathered in Gardiner for a "Blessing of the

Bikes" ceremony, then rode to Augusta to enjoy a cookout in her honor. Donations poured in to support both the Arboretum and the Kennebec Valley Humane Society – two of the organizations that Pam was most fond of. The Arboretum extends a special "Thank You" to Isaac McLaughlin, Sr., Pam's loving companion, who organized the event and who returns regularly to take care of the bench.

Dr Betty Cottle and the Cottle Family Foundation donated \$5,000 to the Arboretum. Dr. Cottle was pleased to make her gift in support of our plant collections, trail system, and education programs.

David Dick, who along with his father-in-law Cliff West was a frequent volunteer at the Arboretum, was killed in an accident while volunteering at another location. Many people have enjoyed the Pine Tree State Arboretum's trails and plant collections thanks to David's hard work. Though most of our visitors did not know him, they enjoyed the results of David's selfless dedication. David never sought recognition nor asked for anything in return for his work here. A heartfelt thank you was all he would accept. Next spring, the arboretum will plant a grove of birches and place a granite bench in his honor.



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We're on the Web

www.pinetreestatearboretum.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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