

# VOLUNTEER

September 2015



**Morris Arboretum**  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



# Volunteer

## Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania

*Volunteer* is a newsletter published monthly  
for Arboretum volunteers.

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is an historic public garden and educational institution. It promotes an understanding of the relationship between plants, people, and place through programs that integrate science, art, and the humanities. The Arboretum conducts four major activities: education, research, outreach, and horticultural display. As the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania provides research and outreach services to state agencies, community institutions and to citizens of Pennsylvania and beyond.

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Photos: Pilar Rivera, unless otherwise stated



*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca', blue atlas cedar

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*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca', blue atlas cedar



## Letter from the Editor

In 18th century Europe, according to the Smithsonian, the tomato was a feared fruit among aristocrats. Referred to as the “poison apple”, tomatoes would be eaten for dinner and later the unfortunate aristocrat would drop down dead! It wasn’t until years later that the real culprit was discovered: lead poisoning. The pewter plates aristocrats ate from contained a large amount of lead which, when in contact with acidic tomatoes, leached right out of the plate!

Luckily the tomato’s criminal record has been cleared, and today we are able to enjoy them lead-free. Like me, do you have an abundance of garden tomatoes right now? I’ve been trying to figure out what to do with them all! Tomato soup, pico de gallo, and bruschetta are on my list of favorite fares; but I want to share this recipe in particular, because it is a delicious family tradition and so simple to make. I hope you will add it to your list of favorites to serve alongside a main dish!

Ensalada de Aguacate (*Avocado Salad*)  
*makes 4-6 servings*

2 ripe medium tomatoes, diced  
2 ripe avocados, diced  
1/4 Spanish onion, chopped  
2 tsp. balsamic vinegar  
1 tbs. olive oil  
Salt & pepper to taste  
Splash of lime juice (optional)

In a medium bowl, mix together all ingredients and serve immediately.

Buen provecho,  
Pilar Rivera  
*The McLean Contributionship  
Endowed Education Intern*



## *Note from the Guides Chair*

Hello everyone,

As a longtime gardener, I have heard a lot of rules:

1. Do not put tender plants out until Mother's Day or May 15
2. 'FS' means full sun, at least 6 hours
3. Protect less hardy perennials from the north wind
4. Water-in all new plants
5. Plants started indoor need to be hardened off for two weeks before putting in the ground
6. Vegetables need full sun
7. Tulips are deer candy

The list is endless. But there is one rule that I absolutely believe to be true. Never prune more than 1/3 of a plant per year. Below is what happens when you let your husband prune without explicit directions.

Happy Gardening,  
Jody Sprague, *Chair of the Guides*



*photo courtesy Jody Sprague*



## Water Issues In California

*Our long-time education volunteer and friend, Rebecca Conrad, will be sending updates over the next few months about the drought in California. Her first installment focuses on the context of the drought.*

Two years ago, Bruce and I moved from Philadelphia to Davis, California. We soon found that some adjustments in our daily lives were necessary, especially regarding water use.

In order to understand the drought issues in California, some background information is helpful. Davis is near Sacramento in the Central Valley and has a Mediterranean climate. From May until November there is never any rain. Rain can be expected during the winter months most years, although since 2011 the rainfall has dropped from an average of 20" per year to 6" in 2013 and 11" last year. In the winter, storms hit the mountain range on the east side of the state and provide a snow pack that slowly releases water into the rivers as the snow melts. River water is stored in reservoirs and then released as needed throughout the year. Reservoir levels are now alarmingly low (less than half of the usual mid-August level), and the snow in the mountains is gone. This year the snowpack was measured in inches, not feet.

All the water that is needed, May through November, must be obtained from snowmelt coming from rivers, from stored water in reservoirs or from groundwater pumped from ever deeper aquifers. Many areas in California, both urban and rural, have been depending on groundwater for years. Davis has always used groundwater exclusively, but will soon have access to the Sacramento River. Lately, it has become necessary to drill ever deeper wells to reach the water. Without a lot of standing surface water the aquifers will not be replenished, so use of groundwater in excess of the rate of replenishment is not sustainable. (This rate is not precisely known.)

In January 2014, Governor Brown declared a drought emergency and asked for a voluntary 20% water reduction from 2013 use. In April 2015 a 25% urban water reduction became mandatory across the state. Some communities that had already cut their water consumption voluntarily, protested vigorously and the mandate was revised so that each community was given its individual goal. Davis's new water reduction goal was increased to 28%. This is a community goal and so far, while the requirement is mandatory, there are no individual penalties. June 2015 was the first month of the regulations, and hooray, a 32% reduction was achieved in Davis in June and again in July.

So how do we manage the water use reductions? In the summer, a decreased outdoor water use makes a dramatic difference. However, if one is a gardener this can be very painful. There are various things one can do to reduce indoor and outdoor water usage, and these will be discussed in the next article.

-Rebecca Conrad



## *Compton Tour with Paul Orpello*

On Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> Paul Orpello, the new Compton Horticulturist, gave the Volunteers a tour and outlined his plans for the area. First of all, we were relieved to learn that the Arboretum plans to preserve the beloved Bender Oak. Following several storms in June, a large branch broke off (during a wedding!) taking part of the trunk with it. Arboretum staff assessed the damage, and Shechtman Tree Care removed about a third of the tree's structure. The plan is for them to remove another third, after which new growth will be pruned to reshape the tree.

Paul then led us to the newly repaved parking lot and talked about renovating the parking beds. He will plant a variety of perennials that require little attention, and that will grow into a tapestry to engage the visitors.

Next stop– the Pennock Walk and Long Fountain. Paul's plan is to redesign the parterre garden to get it back to the original theme of a flower walk. Some of the volunteers were taken aback by the severity of the clearing, but when Paul explained the design plan and how the garden would look in a few years, we were able to picture the renewal. It will take up to three years for the new perennials to grow to a distinctive height, and in the meantime the garden will be planted with annuals to fill in the gaps.

The shrubs surrounding the Long Fountain have grown tall. They grow naturally into a vase shape which shades the lower parts and results in leafless branches, or "holes" as Paul put it. The plan is to reduce the height and prune them so the bottom is wider than the top for the area to receive more sun.

We then headed up the hill to the shade of the Woodland Walk. Here again, Paul is planning to return to an earlier idea, which is to have only native plants on the hill side of the path, and exotics on the lower slope. Paul and other Arboretum staff already undertook a major project to clear out the invasive lesser celandine, which covered the whole hillside. They dug down about 6" over two-thirds of the area (the final third will be done next year) and removed the soil. We all know how quickly and thoroughly celandine spreads, and removing it is not a job for the timid.

Our last stop was the terrace outside Widener Center, and the flower bed on the right hand side. Paul has planted large, dramatic cycads in the tubs, accompanied by beautiful silver-green *Dichondra argentea* 'Silver Falls'. Going down the steps on the right (facing Widener) we were struck by the handsome combination of purple coleus and *Dichondra* grown as a ground cover. Who knew?

Thank you, Paul, for an extremely interesting and informative tour,

Jenny Godwin and Hiram Munger



# Volunteer Opportunities

## Fall Festival: Saturday & Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>

Last year the Arboretum hosted more than 2,200 visitors for Fall Festival! This popular family event requires many hands in order to run smoothly.

### To volunteer during the event:

please contact Michelle Conners, mconners@upenn.edu or 215-247-5777 x109

Available shifts for pumpkin painting or scarecrow supply table:

**Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>:** 10am-12:30pm or 12:30pm-3pm

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>:** 10am-12:30pm or 12:30pm-3pm

### To volunteer before or after the event:

please contact Marie Ingegneri, mmercald@upenn.edu or 215-247-5777 x181  
Opportunities include ballot counting, receiving/returning finished scarecrows, and helping with scarecrow installation.

photo courtesy Susan Crane

## Help Dress the Scarecrows

If you're doing some cleaning out this fall, please put aside the following items for the scarecrow building activity at Fall Festival:

- Jeans and other casual pants
- Long sleeve button down shirts
- Bits and pieces of old costumes

Accessories – belts, hats, ties and scarves  
Craft supplies – yarn, pipe cleaners, fabric

\*Please leave any donations in the blue trash bins on the Widener porch.



photo courtesy Susan Crane

## Design a Scarecrow!

Participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Scarecrow Design Contest! This year's theme is Famous Art & Artists. This popular contest fills quickly, so get your entry in early!

**Registration Deadline:** Thursday, September 24

**Entry Fee:** \$30

**Early Bird Fee (before September 11):** \$25

[Visit our website](#)

for prizes and more information.



photo courtesy Susan Crane



# Volunteer Opportunities

## - Save the Date! -

### Sunshine & Roses

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Evening

**Thursday, September 24 | 5-7 pm**

e-invitation to follow



*Rosa sp., rose*

*photo courtesy Paul Meyer*

## - Small Trees Tour -

*Guides, mark your calendars!*

**Thursday, October 1 | 10:30 am**

Join your fellow guides as the Great Plants Committee presents the 'Small Trees for Small Spaces' tour. This special tour highlights a selection of trees at the Arboretum that are suitable for small landscape settings. These specimens provide multi-seasonal interest in the garden with a wide array of fantastic flowers, foliage, fruit and bark.

Attend this session to enhance your guiding repertoire. You may get great ideas for your own garden. Meet in front of Visitor Center.

## - Fall Gardening Day at the Governor's Residence -

Join Arboretum staff and volunteers for our annual work day in the Governor's Residence garden in Harrisburg. This will be the 8<sup>th</sup> time that the Arboretum has participated in this activity. As the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth, it is one way that we help one of Pennsylvania's most important public gardens. Your help would be most appreciated.

Seats are limited. If you are interested in participating, please contact Pam Morris Olshefski by Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>: [pamela@upenn.edu](mailto:pamela@upenn.edu) or (215) 247-5777 ext. 188

**Monday, October 5**

Rain date: Monday, November 2





# Volunteer Workshops

## - Fall Refresher Training Workshops -

Take advantage of these special opportunities to sharpen your skills, share touring tips and add another tour (or two) to your guiding repertoire.

### **Thursday, September 17 | 10:00am - noon | Widener Upper Gallery**

The Education Committee will introduce a brand new tour for middle school students, 'Sustainable Practices'. The goals of this tour are to raise students' awareness of sustainable practices, show how these practices benefit current and future generations, and get students thinking about what they can do to help protect the earth's resources. Please join us for this pilot presentation. We welcome your feedback!

### **Monday, September 21 | 10:00am - noon | Widener Classroom**

Join us at Morris for a refresher training session on the 'Secrets of Seeds' tour. We will also review the Interdependence Web of Life activity. (Practice makes perfect!)

## - Tour of Mill Grove, Audubon's Estate -

Our tour will include the house, a live owl presentation, and an optional canoeing adventure. Pack a brown bag lunch for yourself. For canoeing, please wear closed-toed shoes that can get wet. Flip flops are not recommended as there are some jagged rocks. Wear clothing that you do not mind getting wet or muddy, and you may want to bring a towel or blanket. While the water is not very deep, sometimes people get a little wet from the splashing of the oars. Vans will depart from Morris kiosk area promptly at 9:15am and return by 2:30pm. Be sure to reserve your space on the van by logging onto the [online calendar](#).

### **Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> | 9:15am | Meadow Parking**



*Audubon, J.J., Birds of America [double elephant folio edition], t. 87 (1826-1838) [J.J. Audubon]*



# Volunteer Workshops

## - Trip to the High Line and Battery Park -

Dance down Broadway, or at least walk near that famous street in NYC along the High Line, an elevated park developed on a defunct rail line that runs from Gaansevoort Street to the West 34th Street rail yard. We'll disembark at W 34<sup>th</sup> St and walk south on the High Line, stop for lunch at the Chelsea Market, and then take our bus to the southern tip of Manhattan for a tour of Battery Park. Bus will depart at 7:45am and return to the Arboretum at 5:30pm. Trip price is \$40 per person. Please contact Michelle Connors to reserve a spot for the trip, [mconnors@upenn.edu](mailto:mconnors@upenn.edu) or 215-247-5777 x109.

**Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> | 7:45am | Meadow Parking**



*photo courtesy Paul Meyer*

## First Wednesday Workshops

Join us the first Wednesday of every month for exciting workshops, talks, and tours.  
*Meet at 12:30pm at the Widener Terrace, unless otherwise noted*

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| September 2 <sup>nd</sup> | <b><i>Garden Writer's Presentation</i></b> with Louise Clarke<br><i>*meet in the Upper Gallery</i> |
| October 7 <sup>th</sup>   | <b><i>Tour of the Grist Mill</i></b> with Ted Bell<br><i>*park at Bloomfield Farm</i>              |
| November 4 <sup>th</sup>  | <b><i>Ornamental Grasses</i></b> with Lucy Dinsmore  |



## *Continuing Education*

### *Approved Classes for Education Volunteer Workshop Hours*

Fall registration is open! We offer a variety of classes that are eligible for Education volunteer workshop hours. Below is a list of upcoming approved courses. To register, call 215-247-5777 x125

#### **Twilight Adventure Walk on the Autumn Equinox**

September 23, 6:30 p.m.

#### **Stories from the Archives**

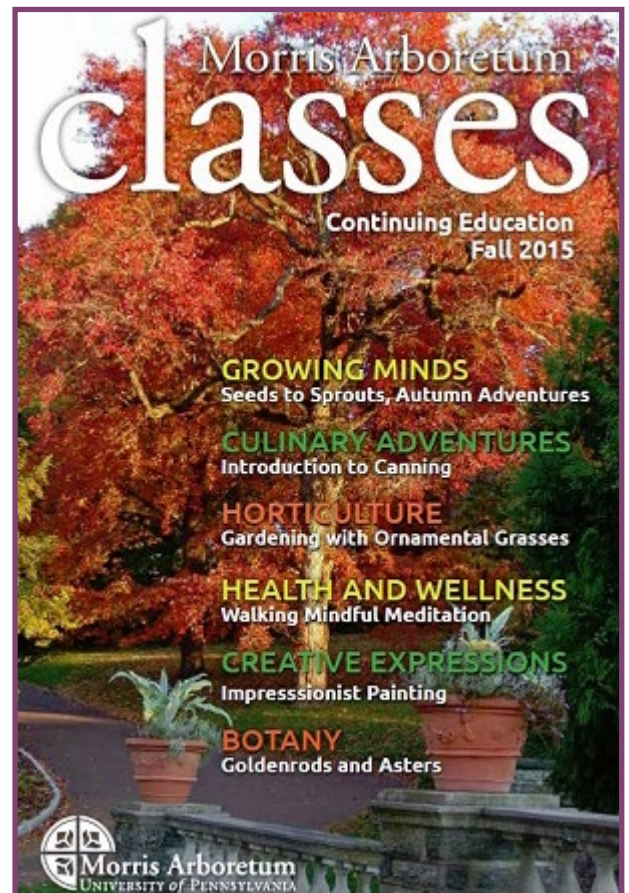
October 21, 7 p.m.

#### **Winter Tree Identification**

November 3, 10 a.m.

#### **Morris Treasures at the Penn Museum**

November 6, 9 a.m.



Volunteers who have given a minimum of 30 hours over the past year may take these and any other courses at a discounted price. Please refer to the Volunteer Price Spreadsheet in the Education office for a list of the discounted course prices available to Arboretum volunteers.



## Story From the Archives

### *Maples, and Iris and Pines – Oh my!*

Rarely does Louise Kellner's diary of John and Lydia Morris's trip around the world contain information related directly to Compton or the Arboretum. Here's an entry that's a triple play!

June 1890 - Yokohama

*"We went to the Bank this morning to draw some money, and then Mr. & Miss Morris took the eleven A.M. train for Tokio [sic] to see their teahouse, which was reported as being finished... in the afternoon we had another ride around the beautiful Bluff, stopped at the gardener's, and enjoyed his handsome ferns. Mr. & Miss Morris made a selection of some maples to be taken to America, and gave an order for several dozens of Iris of different colours and of enormous size."*

June 19<sup>th</sup>

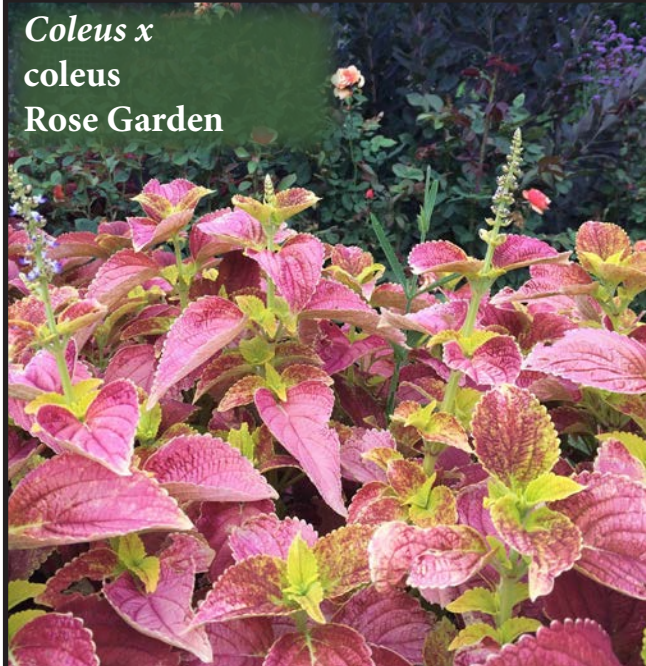
*"Miss Morris and I went shopping this morning, and a lovely time we had. She ordered some very pretty Menu-cards, bought two lovely cheap fans, could not find the kind of funny Japanese paper napkins she wanted, stopped at the Pharmacy, bought some novels, and then we went home for Luncheon. The afternoon was devoted by [sic] washing her hair with interruptions of different people from different stores, who delivered goods, brought messages, and represented bills. For the evening, just before dinner, Mr. Morris returned from Tokyo in the best of spirits, and with the loveliest little pine trees that can be imagined, which he bought for the most ridiculous price. Both Miss Morris and I, judging by what the gardeners generally ask here, guessed at the same figure, '\$15' – when we heard that the money Mr. Morris had paid for them was but 98 cents."*



*Japanese Tea House, photo courtesy Morris Arboretum Archives*



# Garden Highlights



*Coleus x coleus*  
Rose Garden



*Adenophora paniculata*  
bellflower  
Visitor Center



*Rosa roxburghii*  
chestnut rose  
Rose Garden



*Magnolia obovata*  
whiteleaf Japanese magnolia  
Springhouse



*Clethra alnifolia*  
'September Beauty'  
Springhouse



*Tricyrtis dilatata*  
toad lily  
Visitor Center



# Upcoming Events

## September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Hort Volunteers with Vince  Garden Writer's Presentation 12:30 pm	3 Education Committee 10:30am- noon  Guides Council 1:30pm	4	5  Discovery Series 11am-3pm
6	7  Garden open, offices closed	8	9  Hort Volunteers with Lucy	10  Volunteer trip to Audubon 9am-2pm	11	12  Mill Volunteer Work Day
13	14	15	16  Hort Volunteers with Paul	17  Guide Refresher 10am-noon	18	19
20  Mill Demonstration	21  Guide Refresher 10am-noon	22	23  Hort Volunteers with Kate	24  Sunshine & Roses 5-7pm	25	26
27	28	29	30  Hort Volunteers with Louise	27	28	29
30	31					

### Weekly Volunteer Events

**Wednesdays:** Horticulture Volunteers 8:30am- 12pm

**Saturdays and Sundays:** Regular Tour 2:00pm - 3:00pm

**Saturdays and Sundays:** Welcome Cart 11am - 3pm



# Upcoming Events

## October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Small Trees Tour 10:30am  Guides Council 1:30pm	2	3 Fall Festival 10am-3pm
4 Fall Festival 10am-3pm	5 Gardening Day at Governor's Residence	6	7 Hort Volunteers with Tracy  Tour of Grist Mill 12:30pm	8	9	10 Mill Volunteer Work Day
11	12	13	14 Hort Volunteers with Lucy	15	16	17
18 Mill Demonstration	19	20	21 Hort Volunteers with Louise	22 Trip to NYC High Line 7:45am- 5:30pm	23	24
25	26	27	28 Hort Volunteers with Kate	29	30	31

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