



Improvement Projects

Norway Maple Seedling Control

Take a walk passed the farm pond on the upland trail and you may have noticed small saplings tagged with colored tape on the left side of the trail. The Land Stewardship Committee has been at work with the assistance of Town of Acton Municipal and Conservation staff and Arboretum volunteers over the fall and winter months tagging and removing Norway Maple seedlings. This work has resulted in a rejuvenation of native tree seedlings in the area.

Norway Maples reproduce so prolifically and so vigorously that they crowd out all competing tree species. Continued control of their reproduction has prompted a discussion of removing mature seed-bearing trees in the Arboretum. However, these trees appear on both town and private property, and their removal is controversial. Control of invasive plant species remains a complex issue. For more information on efforts to identify and control invasive species in New England, visit the New England Wildflower Society's website (www.newfs.org) and review the "Conservation" page for Invasive Plants topics.



Trillium grandiflorum dance across the wildflower collection. Visit the garden at its peak now. See Bruce Carley's website:

www.elmpost.org/trail.htm

Rhododendron Meadow Clearing

The meadow adjacent to the rhododendron collection was recently cleared by the town and 9th grade student volunteers. An Eagle Scout candidate will be continuing trail improvements around the rhododendron collection this spring.



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Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum is scheduled for Thursday, June 24, 2004. It will begin at 6:30 pm at the Acton Arboretum at the Reading Circle. An informal walk will follow the business meeting. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be moved to Acton Town Hall and the meeting room will be posted in the lobby. Members of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum are invited to attend.

Education—Arboretum Animal Field Guide

Fifth and sixth grade students at Merriam have traditionally been involved in out-of-school service projects. In past years kids have gone to senior centers and veterans centers in order to interact with elders. Some kids have gone to pre-schools, some have worked at NARA; some have worked in the food pantry, the science museums, art museums, and with puppets geared to kids with disabilities, etc.

Because Merriam fifth graders stay with the same teacher for both fifth and sixth grades, Tom Sibley, Emily Murphy and I decided to take on a fairly big project that would last for two years. We decided to create a field guide to the animals at the Arboretum. We would create this in a pleasing desktop publishing type of format, complete with children's sketches and digital photographs. By June of 2005 we hope also to create a web guidebook to the animals of the Arboretum that would link to our Merriam School homepage (and to Acton's webpage if possible).

This year we will learn the lay of the land of the Arboretum and gather information on vertebrates we find there and keep record of our findings in our individual field journals.

We plan to go to the Arboretum every week (when weather doesn't make it impossible). This year it's Tuesday afternoons. Parents are driving us over from school and staying with us as adult chaperones for small groups of children sent to specific locations at the Acton Arboretum to observe. Locations change for each small group so that children have the experience of working throughout the arboretum.

At first we divided the job up into categories of vertebrates, with Emily's class covering Mammals, Tom's class covering Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, and my class covering Birds. Since we have been in the field though we have changed that so that all kids are looking for all animals (and making note of an occasional pitcher plant or two). We are logging information (time, place, date,

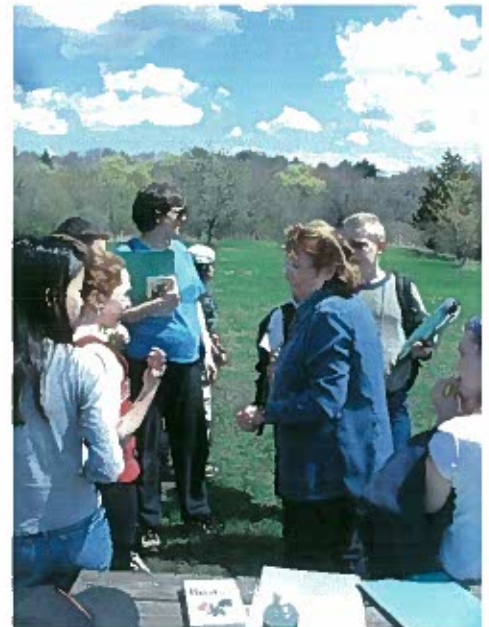
weather, etc.) in our field journals, making sketches, taking photographs and doing in-school research on local species to better hone our observation skills in the field.

Next year, we will design our print guide, create it from our field notes and research, then publish it. When that is done we hope to translate it to a web format - maybe adding recordings of animals and quick time movie clips as well.

Are we ambitious? Yes. But you never get anywhere really nifty without dreaming big. We would like to work with the Friends of the Acton Arboretum volunteers and Tom Tidman as well to be sure we produce a valuable tool for the Arboretum, the town and for ourselves.

*Mary Ann Brandt
5th & 6th Grade Teacher
Merriam Elementary School*

Tom Tidman and Mary Ann Brandt lead students out for walks, recording observations of animals of the Acton Arboretum.



President's Message

I invite you to visit the Acton Arboretum this spring. Volunteers have been working hard to freshen up the gardens and to clean up the Arboretum after the hard, dry winter we had. If you haven't been to the Arboretum recently, it's a perfect time to enjoy its beauty.

Notice the renovated main trail, started with funds approved by Town Meeting and extended using funds from the Friends of the Acton Arboretum. Look for name labels on many of the trees you pass on your walk. Sit on one of the new teak benches installed last fall. Notice the daylily garden recently cleaned by a team of 9th-graders and mulched by volunteers and ABRHS seniors. Check out the hosta, herb, and butterfly gardens as they are cleaned and prepared for the summer season. Look for the work that has been done in the northeast part of the Arboretum to eradicate invasive plant species. Listen to the stream going under the boardwalk on the Wildflower loop trail. Notice the meadow by the rhododendron garden, recently cleared to enhance meadow habitat for plants and wildlife. Later this summer, look for self-guided tour pamphlets in the kiosk and numbered stops around the Arboretum. Test your map-reading skills and find an area in the Arboretum you have yet to explore!

It is membership renewal time, and a form has been provided below for you to submit your annual dues. Look at the address label on this newsletter to see when you last renewed.

Join us for the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc. on Thursday June 24, 2004, at the Reading Circle in the Arboretum at 6:30 P.M. (We meet at Town Hall if the weather is not suitable for an outside meeting.) 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 admire its beauty and to discuss upcoming projects. Please join us.

Cathy Hatfield, President

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Type of Membership	___ New
___ \$15 Individual	___ Renewal
___ \$25 Family	
___ \$40 Supporting	___ Contact me about
___ \$100 Corporate	volunteer opportunities

Commemorative gifts, honoring marriages, births, deaths or other special dates are gratefully accepted and recorded in a commemorative listing.

A courtesy envelope has been provided, otherwise please mail to:

**Friends of the Acton Arboretum
P.O. Box 2607
Acton, MA 01720**

Membership Benefits for Friends

- **A Spring and Fall newsletter**
- **Seasonal walks, talks and workshops**
- **Civic pride in a special gift of land used for enjoyment and education**

The Acton Arboretum is town conservation land managed by the Acton Natural Resources Department and the Acton Conservation Commission.

Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc.
P. O. Box 2607, Acton, MA 01720

Board of Directors

President	Cathy Hatfield
Vice-President	Cathy Fochman
Secretary	Whit Moretti
Treasurer	Brewster Conant
Liason	Tom Tidman
Tree Labels	Julie Coop
Nursery	Darryl Sullivan
Membership	Joan Yatteau
Publicity,	iyatteau@hbs.edu
Education	Cathy Fochman
	fochman@verizon.net

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 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984, as from time to time they are amended.

Arboretum Notes produced by Cathy Fochman and Joan Yatteau

