

Arboretum Notes



FRIENDS
of the ACTON
ARBORETUM

May 2009 | Volume IV | Issue I

Our Mission

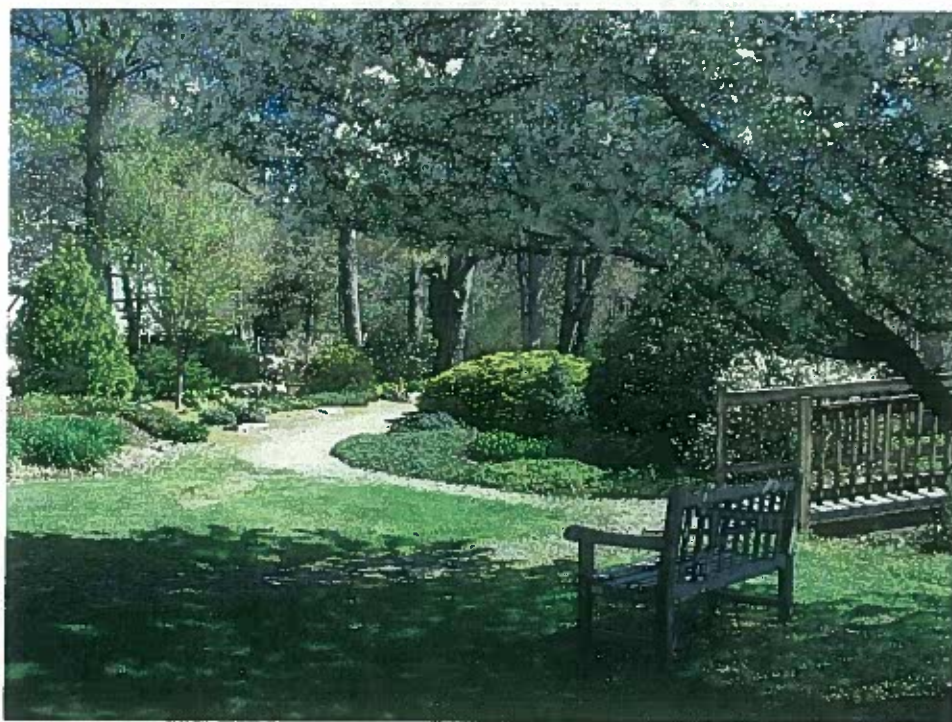
To raise and donate funds, materials and services to the Town of Acton for the development and maintenance of the Acton Arboretum; to educate the community about the unique environmental, horticultural, geological and historical qualities of the Arboretum property, about the process of wetland and field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

The Hosta Garden



The Friends of the Acton Arboretum would like to show their appreciation for the dedicated work of Judy Dembsey, founder of the Acton Arboretum Hosta Garden. Donated by Judy in memory of her mother, Emily A. Paul, the hosta display garden was established in 1991 and designed by Mabel-Maria Herweg.

It is a collection garden, showcasing a wide variety of hostas, over 150 cultivars in all. The hosta is a member of the Liliaceae-lily family and is perennial in our northeastern U.S. climate. It is native to China, Japan and Korea and was named after Nicholas Host, Austrian biologist. Hostas have been grown in the U.S. since the 1750's.

The beauty of the hosta garden design is enhanced by the incorporation of a wide variety of companion shrubs and trees. They offer contrasting height, color, and foliage texture to the hostas and provide 4 season interest—berries, colored twigs and evergreens. Equally important in the vision of the hosta collection is the educational opportunity that it provides. Each plant is labeled and related cultivars are grouped together in the garden layout. The Friends of the Acton Arboretum consulted with Judy and developed a list of recommended plants for the home garden, which is included in the Friends "Pocket Packet." Each of these plants are specially marked in the garden.

The maintenance of the hosta garden has been carried out since its inception by a loyal group of volunteers under Judy's capable leadership. Seasonal cleanup, pruning, weeding, and fertilizing with organic amendments is performed on committee workdays and committee members sign up to do weekly monitoring of the garden, including watering if there is insufficient rain, weeding and dead-heading. The hosta garden flourishes due to the careful oversight that Judy and her committee have offered consistently from year to year.

Judy has recently retired from active management of the maintenance committee, and has passed the responsibility on to Joan Yatteau, who continues to organize the committee.

Recent Donations and Projects

Friends and family of local photographer Dottie Hilbert gathered in the Fragrance Garden to dedicate two curved benches and a yellow magnolia that they donated in Dottie's memory on June 21, 2008. The area has since been planted with azaleas donated from Wayne Mezitt from Weston Nursery and spring bulbs.



Friends of Pat Macmillan donated a bench overlooking the upper grounds lawn, next to the footbridge that crosses the swale. Within sight of the bench, hundreds of bright yellow daffodils have been planted along the lawn edge of the Herb Garden and surrounding crabapple trees. This daffodil planting will be expanded and the planting will continue in the fall.



The family and friends of Carol Lopiccolo donated a *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip tree, pictured right) in the Fragrance Garden. It is located along the center of the oval area on the outer edge, near the surrounding woodland.

Eagle Scout Andrew Peterman revitalized the Butterfly Garden this past fall by installing a new post and rail fence, providing visual and physical support of the Arboretum's Butterfly Garden. The biggest challenge was the clearing of invasive plants that formerly engulfed the butterfly garden fence. This clearing opened a vista that was obscured, revealing the open wet meadow. Drainage improvements were also made to the informal trail leading to the butterfly garden from the Hosta Garden. What used to be a muddy crossing is now on solid ground.

Growing Hostas

Successfully growing hostas requires three important ingredients: a shady location, a soil rich in organic materials, and proper and sufficient watering.

While hostas are shade loving plants, in the North the variegated and gold-leaved cultivars perform well in partial sun. In the South, where for many years hostas were an unknown plant, they need heavy shade, preferably under hardwood canopies, to offset the higher temperatures and brighter sun.

A good garden soil mixture of loam, sand, and humus (about one-third of each) suits hostas; however, even better



performance will result from the addition of peat moss, leaf mold, compost, or well-rotted manure. Hostas need these

organic amendments not only because they are heavy feeders, but also because they do better in well-drained soils that retain some moisture.

Since hostas are foliage plants, they require careful watering. In periods of drought, water them slowly and deeply, long enough for the water to penetrate six inches into the soil. Avoid watering in the heat of the day or late afternoon. Early morning is best so that the hosta leaves can dry before night when slugs, the hostas' most serious pest, are active.

Most hosta gardeners apply well-rotted compost or composted manure as a top dressing around their hostas in late spring. You can also use a slow-release fertilizer or a very weak (one-eighth to one-twelfth strength) solution of foliar fertilizer every two to three weeks during the growing season. Again, avoid fertilizing during the hottest part of the day. Do not apply fertilizers until hostas have emerged and begun growing in the spring.

For the most part, hostas do not need regular transplanting; they will only grow larger and more beautiful as they age. However, growers should be aware that there will be differences between North and South in hostas' longevity and mature sizes. In the South, where hostas will not grow as fast or as large as they will in the North, moving them every four to five years may be necessary as they deplete the soil of nutrients. Nevertheless, the hosta is a magnificent shade plant, North or South.

Reprinted from published article, source unknown.

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

Around each bend may be a discovery, an adventure.

—DALE REX 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

Arbo Aid Day

The Arbo Aid Volunteer Workday at the Acton Arboretum is taking place from 9:00 AM—noon on Saturday, May 30. Participants will be dividing daylilies and offering them for sale; weeding and mulching trees and gardens; spreading stonedust on trails, and doing trail maintenance.

Any level of expertise is welcome, high school-aged kids and adults. You bring your own sunscreen, water bottle and proper attire (work boots, work gloves, hat) and organizers will provide water, Gatorade and snacks.

If you have your own wheelbarrow, shovel, bow or stone rake, hand weeding tools—please bring those with your name labeled on them. Organizers will work in light rain or shine. Drop-ins are welcome if you cannot come for the entire session. Student groups and scouts are welcome to work together. Please RSVP to info@actonarboratum.org.



Wild Blue Phlox blooms along Wildflower Loop

President's Message

Dear Friends,

The Friends of the Acton Arboretum have developed a website that provides a necessary link to our members and the public. Please visit www.actonarboratum.org and send correspondence to info@actonarboratum.org.

The Arboretum has recently been the setting for a recorded episode of dog training for the popular television channel Animal Planet and will be featured in an article written by CNC Newspapers Acton-Boxborough Beacon editor Bobb Burgess entitled "Hidden Treasures."

Please read the article on this page about the upcoming "Arbo Aid" day. Your volunteer help to maintain the Arboretum is most important and appreciated by all who enjoy this unique property.

It is dues renewal time. Your mailing label date 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. The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc. takes place on Thursday, June 25, 2009, 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



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What's Happening



Friends of the Acton Arboretum Annual Meeting

Please join the Friends of the Acton Arboretum for their Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 25 at 6:30pm at the Acton Arboretum Reading Circle. Rain location will be Acton 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.

The Arbo Aid Volunteer Workday at the Acton Arboretum is set for 9:00 AM—noon on Saturday, May 30. Come help tend a town treasure. Lots of projects are planned and ready and all

that is needed is you. Friends of the Acton Arboretum "Pocket Packets" are available at the Town Hall Town Clerk's counter. Each \$5 packet contains two self guided tours of the Arboretum and recommended plant lists from the Hosta, Butterfly, Herb and Wildflower Gardens to grow yourself.