



A publication of the Friends of the National Arboretum

ARBOR FRIENDS

WINTER 2019



Thank you to our friends and supporters!

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM:

I'm writing this note as we enter the third week of the Federal Government shutdown, which has closed the gates of the National Arboretum and numerous other sites around Washington. Regardless of one's politics, I think all of us can agree that closing the Arboretum is something we'd like to avoid.

This event clearly illustrates how important our mission of creating a robust and vibrant FONA really is. We're not there yet, but one of our primary goals for FONA is to develop the financial resources and capacity to do things such as funding security guards to keep the Arboretum open to the public during a brief government shutdown.

The good news is that FONA is growing and has a bright future. Support from our members and others has us on a good trajectory. We've got big plans and expectations for the next few years!

As we work to make the Arboretum an important part of the fabric of the city and the region, FONA is focused on a number of needs, such as improving access to the Arboretum for the entire community; providing educational and cultural programs for students, local residents, and visitors from around the world; supporting the Arboretum's horticultural research work; and providing opportunities for thousands of school children to learn about plants, food, and nutrition in our Youth Garden.

You can see that we have an ambitious agenda, and we're excited about what the future holds for FONA and the Arboretum. So rather than being discouraged by the Arboretum's closure, we at FONA prefer to see it as the best of all reasons for pursuing a robust FONA that can help make the Arboretum welcoming and open to visitors all year long.

I'm looking forward to see you here at the National Arboretum soon. Spring is just around the corner. 🌱

Tom McGuire, Executive Director
Friends of the National Arboretum
tmcguire@fona.org
202.544.8733

ON THE COVER Snowdrops, of the *Galanthus* genus, are heralds of new growth in late winter.

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Contributors: Claire Broderick, Tom McGuire, Nancy Moitrier, Pierre Moitrier, Dr. Richard Olsen, Karen Zill

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Sempervirens...



FOUR YEARS of high school Latin classes were my best option for a foreign language, because my hearing is not particularly

fine-tuned and my brain is not wired for the nuances of non-English phonetics. Translating ancient texts satisfied my love of history and culture and, fortunately, prepared me for a life of Latinized scientific names and botanical descriptions, the common language of botanists and horticulturists around the globe.



nized species in North America, perhaps none more relevant than our American holly (*I. opaca*), a common broadleaf evergreen tree native from Texas to Cape Cod. However, 90 years ago, the American holly came to be over-exploited because of harvesting for holiday greenery, logging for its fine-grained white wood, and transporting it from the wild for suburban landscapes. The American Holly Society was formed in part to protect the tree, and the Arboretum was engaged to help collect, characterize, and evaluate American holly cultivars and encourage nursery production rather than harvesting from the wild. Our scientists and gardeners have assembled one of the most compre-

Despite what may transpire around us... the Arboretum goes about its noble work of enhancing American landscapes through long-term research, conservation, and education.

Sempervirens: "Always green" is literal, but "always flourishing" is another translation. Both are applicable to the U.S. National Arboretum. Despite what might transpire around us—much of it out of our control—the Arboretum goes about its noble work of enhancing American landscapes through long-term research, conservation, and education. One of our first and most iconic collections, the Holly Collection, encompasses all aspects of our mission. Hollies (*Ilex spp.*) are important landscape plants, with almost 30 recog-

hensive holly collections in the United States, with more than two dozen novel holly selections for American landscapes, and have contributed treatises on various species, including a new Flora of North America treatment. Although not all hollies are evergreen, many serve as a verdant foundation in our winter landscapes.

Bringing greenery into our homes during the height of winter is an ancient tradition from many cultures. Evergreens are a sign of life and hope for the coming year as the days lengthen and our spirits

are warmed by the returning sun. As the Arboretum enters its 92nd year, we have much to celebrate and look forward to. Our principle stakeholders—FONA and the National Bonsai Foundation—have embarked on ambitious projects that will enhance our infrastructure and improve visitor services over the coming years. Likewise, our industry stakeholders continue to engage in and press for support of our research programs, and we are set to fill several new positions in the coming year.

Holiday evergreens like holly, boxwood, magnolia, the various firs, spruces, and pines, and even rosemary in our herb gardens are valuable collections at the Arbo-

retum, and they lift our spirits as we enter the New Year. Through your engagement and support, the National Arboretum will continue to flourish in 2019.

Sempervirens,

Richard T. Olsen, Director
The United States National Arboretum



THE NORTH COURT, also known as the **COURT OF HONOR**, features a mix of plants. The bed around the large central lawn is filled with woody landscape plants, primarily hibiscus and crape myrtle—Arboretum introductions over many years. In these same beds, you will also see several tropical plants, such as palms (*Alocasia*) and elephant ears (*Colocasia*), which are brought into the greenhouse for the winter. A variety of annuals and perennials bloom in succession and provide a steady parade of color throughout the spring and summer. A relatively new addition is a group of hybrid irises (*Iris x pseudata*), a sterile cultivar originally bred in Japan.

One of the first things a visitor sees when entering the Arboretum via the R Street gate is the group of gardens surrounding the Administration Building. Collectively known as the Introduction Garden, this high-visibility area, which contains plants in a wide variety of sizes, textures, and colors, showcases new or underused plants in the Arboretum's collection. Horticulturalist Bradley Evans is in charge, and with the help of interns and volunteers, he oversees the Garden's three main areas.

THE INTRODUCTION

GARDEN

Karen Zill

The beds along the **DRIVEWAY AND VISITOR CENTER CIRCLE** display a mix of flowering and nonflowering plants, low shrubs, and grasses. A standout next to the sidewalk in front of the Administration Building is *Pinus leucodermis* ‘Mint Truffle’, a teardrop-shaped evergreen with dense, finely textured needles whose slow habit makes it an especially good addition to a small garden. Nearby are *Hydrangea quercifolia* ‘Ruby Slippers’, *H.* ‘Queen of Hearts’, and *H.* ‘Munchkin’—all Arboretum introductions. These oak leaf hydrangeas are recognized for their large, striking flowers in the early summer and for their reddish purple foliage in the fall. The two ornamental grasses—Mexican feather grass (*Stipa tenuissima*) and purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)—that dominate the circle give that area a meadow-like appearance. Growing among the grasses are blue sage (*Salvia azurea*) and calamint (*Calamintha nepeta*), both of which are very attractive to pollinators. There are also four bioretention areas in the circle, and future plans are to make these bigger to capture more of the runoff from rain.



PROFILE: BRADLEY EVANS

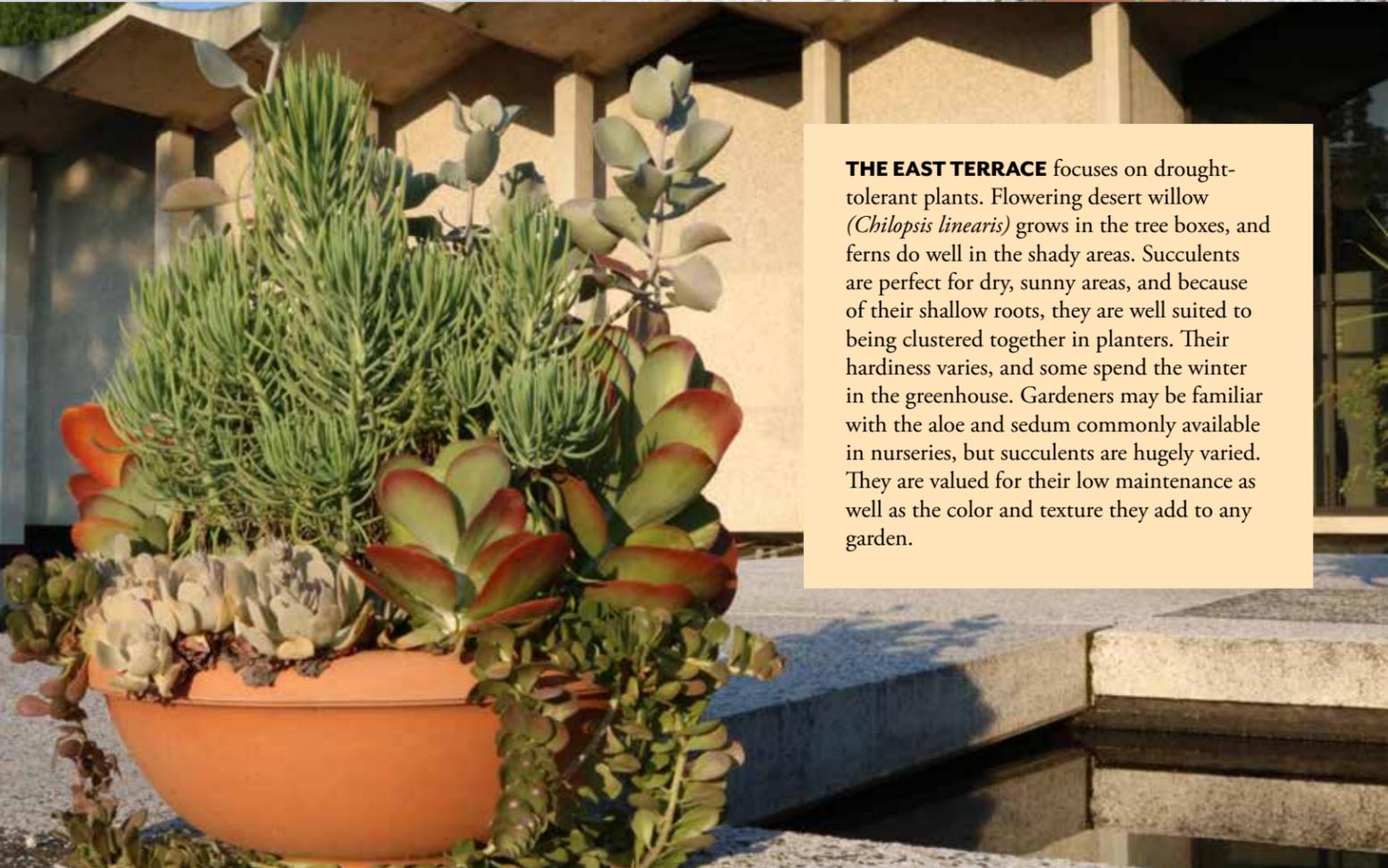
Horticulturalist Bradley Evans began his professional career not working in a garden, but with a desk job at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration where he reviewed ingredient lists to figure out what substances might have caused adverse events reported to the FDA. He joined the Arboretum staff in 2004, working first in the Asia Collection. In 2006, he moved to his current position overseeing the Introduction Garden.

Bradley says he’s always been interested in plants. Growing up in Maryland, he planted seeds in his parents’ garden each year to learn how they grow. He also experimented with growing various tropical plants and was able to use his own dendrobium orchids for a corsage and boutonniere for his high school prom. Currently, he supplies the orchids that grace the desk in the visitor center.

He majored in biology at Towson State University with a concentration in botany. As greenhouse manager at Towson, he inherited a moribund banana tree, which under his care, came back to life, blooming and producing fruit. He also made sure the biology office always had fresh healthy plants.

Gardening is never far from Bradley’s mind. He enjoys visiting other gardens to gain new perspectives on what can be planted and how plantings can be arranged. He finds his small garden at home a challenge because “It’s not easy to make a small spot interesting.” It’s important to him to provide something beautiful to passers-by and he strives for that, both at home and at the Arboretum. 🌿

—KAREN ZILL



THE EAST TERRACE focuses on drought-tolerant plants. Flowering desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) grows in the tree boxes, and ferns do well in the shady areas. Succulents are perfect for dry, sunny areas, and because of their shallow roots, they are well suited to being clustered together in planters. Their hardiness varies, and some spend the winter in the greenhouse. Gardeners may be familiar with the aloe and sedum commonly available in nurseries, but succulents are hugely varied. They are valued for their low maintenance as well as the color and texture they add to any garden.

The Introduction Garden is in a period of dormancy now, but for Bradley, it is hardly a season of rest. At this time of year, he works mostly indoors, propagating the many cuttings he has taken from select annuals and nonhardy succulents and keeping pests at bay. Plants that are moved into the greenhouse for the winter often have scale or mealy bugs that must be eradicated; plants that are dry dormant in winter, such as the elephant ears, must be monitored to maintain proper storage conditions.

For Bradley, the winter months also provide more time for planning. “It’s interesting to have different plants each year,” he says, “and I’m always thinking about new ways to use various plants.” Some garden designers work out their ideas on paper, but Bradley does a lot of designing in his head. During the winter and at other times of the year, he plots ways to make the Garden more attractive and inviting. The Arboretum is preparing to host the annual meeting of the American Public Garden Association in June, so he is thinking of ways to make the Garden look its best.

Come spring, gardeners who are looking for new ways to enliven their planting beds or their overall garden design might check the displays in the Arboretum’s Introduction Garden. In the meantime, without the distractions of flowers in bloom and busy pollinators, visitors can see the Garden’s “bones” and imagine what introductions they might make in their own gardens. 🌿

KAREN ZILL is a DC-based freelance writer. Her work includes discussion guides for film and public television programs, memoirs, essays, and nature writing.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

From regular volunteers coming to the Washington Youth Garden every week to one-time volunteers at special events and on planting days, FONA is fortunate to have help from many volunteers throughout the year. We wanted to shine the spotlight on a couple of amazing volunteers.



Joyce Chandler

Q: WHAT FONA PROJECTS HAVE YOU WORKED ON?

A: Many! Fall and spring plantings for Springhouse Run, water-sampling at Springhouse Run and Hickey Run, the annual FONA Garden Fair and Plant Sale, the annual Dinner Under the Stars, and the Washington Youth Garden's Strolling Supper.

Q: WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH US?

A: How addictive volunteering at the Arboretum can be. The staff and other volunteers create such a relaxed, productive atmosphere. People are very knowledgeable, dedicated, and willing to share their expertise. When we transitioned from the weekly water sampling during the warmer months to monthly sampling during the colder months, I missed the outings.

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM YOUR WORK WITH FONA?

A: When Melinda, the volunteer coordinator, asked me if I would be interested in a water sampling project. After working several years on national environmental issues related to drinking water, being offered a hands-on opportunity that would have a direct impact on the streams and rivers that supply our drinking water was too good to be true. Plus I had a chance to return to the laboratory.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE NEW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

A: You definitely receive more from volunteering at the Arboretum than you give. You can see the difference that you can make in the city landscape by volunteering. I have learned immeasurable amounts of information and techniques on gardening in the DC area that I am now applying in my own backyard. If nothing else, spending time outdoors and around plants and trees will lower your stress level and blood pressure.



Kevin McIntosh

Q: HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED?

A: I started off as a volunteer salesperson for the FONA Garden Fair and Plant Sale about 5 years ago and then was asked to join the Garden Fair Committee. Once on the Committee, I jumped at the chance to run the Collector's Corner which features rare and unusual plants. Soon after that, I was asked to chair the Garden Fair. I have also served on the FONA Board of Directors for 3 years. I retired from the Board this year because I wanted to be more "hands on" in helping the Arboretum. I joined the Water Monitoring team, which samples water quality (pH, temperature, oxygen level, turbidity, bacteria) at intervals (mostly every week) to track how the enhancements to Springhouse Run are affecting water quality.

Q: WHAT IS A MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM YOUR WORK WITH FONA?

A: If I had to pick just one, it would probably be the moments after the first Garden Fair concluded when I realized that we had done it! Many thanks are owed to the superb committee members, most of whom have a long history with the Committee and do an incredible job.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE NEW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

A: Go for it! FONA desperately needs volunteers. You are wanted, you are needed, and you will be appreciated! Give it a try. You can always quit if you don't like it—what have you got to lose? My experience has been extremely positive: I get to work outside with plants, shape plant habitats, and meet wonderful, giving people. 🌳

Consider joining us. E-mail volunteer@fona.org to learn more.



Nancy and Pierre Moitrier

Winter Garden Tips

With only the plant's "bones" in view, the dormant season is the perfect time for pruning. Devoid of foliage, a plant's natural growth tendencies are more visible, and blunders are more obvious. Take this time to get out to the garden and refine your plants' forms with pruning.

DETERMINE GOALS

- Do your new plants need formative pruning?
- Is your plant old and in need of being replaced?
- Has the plant outgrown its space and needs to be reduced?
- Would you like to increase flower display?

TECHNIQUE

- Observe the naturally occurring growth patterns of plants in need of pruning.
- Evaluate plant responses to previous pruning efforts. Notice whether pruning cuts are harmonious or obvious. The presence of the gardener's pruning hand should be invisible.
- Different plants have different growth patterns, and therefore, each will benefit from pruning techniques specific to its type. Do some research before pruning.
- Do not twist your hand, your arm, or your back in an attempt to make all cuts from one or two positions. As you prune around the plant, reposition your body to help prevent injuries and to facilitate making the perfect cut at the proper angle.
- Know when to stop. Sometimes, only a few well-chosen cuts are necessary to improve your plant's performance and appearance. Avoid removing more than 25% of the plant's mass.

TOOLS

- Choose a bypass-style hand pruner with a sharp blade to prune branches up to 1 inch in diameter.
- Folding pruning saws with 6-inch blades can tackle almost any precision pruning up to branches 3 inches in diameter.
- Loppers are perfect for rough cuts and cutting debris. This tool is not for refined pruning cuts.
- Telescopic long-reach pruners are best for tip-pruning soft woods up to ½ inch in diameter, from a distance of 4 to 6 feet.
- Pole saws or pruners are awkward to use and make it hard to achieve the perfect cut. However, this tool eliminates the need for a ladder.
- Chain saw pruning should be left to professionals. Call an ISA-Certified Arborist.

DESIGN

- Choose plants appropriate for the scale of the space and drastic pruning will not be a necessary, nagging chore but rather a holistic garden care task.
- Know the ultimate size of your plants and space them appropriately, allowing for 5 years of growth by reserving a "personal bubble" for each plant or mass.
- With few exceptions, most plants do not prefer to be forced into geometric shapes. When plants are force-pruned into balls, boxes, or cones, maintenance needs increase, and unrealistic and unforgiving expectations are created. 🌳



NANCY AND PIERRE MOITRIER operate *Designs for Greener Gardens*, a boutique gardening company that specializes in designing, creating, developing, and maintaining distinctive gardens of all styles. Pierre hails from France and brings the charm of the Old World to their garden creations. Nancy's 40 years of gardening experience combined with her design knowledge and innate artistic eye add a superior dimension to their garden projects. Follow *Designs for Greener Gardens* on Facebook.

2018: The Year in Numbers



3,748 students participated in over 115 field trips at the United States National Arboretum

2,517 students engaged in five partner school gardens



15 Green Ambassadors increased their knowledge of agriculture by 78%



28 teachers from 11 schools attended the first annual Summer Institute for Garden Based Teaching



 **1,000+** lbs of produce harvested

 **21** weekend programs introduced for families and Arboretum visitors

 **75 tons** of the city's food waste diverted and made into compost for the garden

428 pounds of produce donated to hunger relief organizations



39 community events hosted at the Youth Garden and partner school gardens



115 amazing volunteers gave over 1,155 hours to the garden



20 Full Moon Hikes enjoyed by over 500 adventurous hikers



3,573 revelers at our eight Summer Evenings concerts



27th annual Garden Fair and Plant Sale



21,000 native trees, shrubs, and grasses planted along Springhouse Run



610 attendees at our 24th annual Dinner Under the Stars



6,457 youth served through Washington Youth Garden's education programs



489 runners over two 5k events through the Arboretum paths



4,613 hours worked by our USNA interns



DONORS

Thank you...

This list reflects gifts dated through 12/31/2018. During the government shutdown, we have been unable to collect our mail, and we realize there may be year-end gifts yet unaccounted for. We will include any omitted donations in the next issue of Arbor Friends. We apologize for any error. Please contact Claire Broderick to correct our records: cbroderick@fona.org or 202.544.8733.

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The David Fairchild Society, FONA's highest level of membership, is a group of exceptionally dedicated supporters of FONA and the U.S. National Arboretum.

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In honor of Debbie Bowles
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In honor of Barbara Bullock
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In honor of Vicki Campbell, Christine Spencer, Barbara Shea, and Liz Shriver
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In memory of Jean Bowen Houck
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 The family of Jean Jones



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 The Garden Club of Alexandria

In memory of Stephen Reyner Steinbach
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The Heritage Society

With appreciation to those who have generously supported FONA through estate gifts:
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HAPPENINGS

For more information, visit usna.usda.gov or fona.org

ANNUAL LAHR SYMPOSIUM AND PLANT SALE

Saturday, March 30, 8:30am–3:30pm

Join the nation's top practitioners of landscape design, ecology, and resource management to learn how you can apply their approaches, insights, and techniques. Registration required. Registration should open on the Arboretum's website in February.

NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, March 30, 8:00am–2:30pm

Sponsored by Friends of the National Arboretum



Dates to Save

MARCH 30

Lahr Symposium and Native Plant Sale

APRIL 27-28

FONA's Annual Garden Fair and Plant Sale

MAY 12

World Bonsai Day

JUNE 11

Dinner Under the Stars
More details online at fona.org/dinner



CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE 2019 GARDEN FAIR

FONA is on the lookout for volunteers to help during the weekend of the Garden Fair, April 27–28. We'll need help directing visitors, moving carts, and at checkout. No experience necessary. Please email volunteer@fona.org for more details.

RESUMING SOON: Watch the Arboretum Bald Eagles through the Eagle Cam. See 24/7 streaming video of the nesting pair available at eagles.org/dceaglecam

