



ARBORETUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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A ROYAL EXOTIC:

Quercus dentata, Japanese emperor oak, Daimio oak

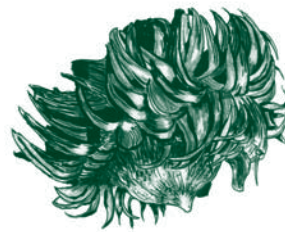
by William Astifan, Arboretum Director

Another oak in our exotic oak collection, *Quercus dentata*, deserves the royalty moniker. Just take one look at the foot-long leaves that make a regal statement; this rather rare specimen stands out in a crowd. Our young tree is difficult to miss as you enter the campus from Lancaster Avenue. It stands at the edge of Merion Field on your right. Introduced into cultivation in 1830, it is a native of Japan, China and Korea. We refer to it as the Japanese emperor oak; however, it is also found referred to as the Daimio oak which means a feudal lord of Japan. A member of the Beech family, *Fagaceae*, the tree is in the white oak sub-species group. *Quercus dentata* is a fast-growing, round-headed tree to 75 feet tall with thick, deeply-furrowed bark and stout branches.

Quercus dentata foliage is remarkable just from the size alone; its leaf is the largest in the oak species. You will see our specimens are now paper bag brown and persist all winter. Then new growth in the spring will push off the old leaves, creating a spring clean-up chore. The thick, undulate leaf will grow to nearly a foot long and 8 inches wide at the obovate, or widest, line. The leaf is attached by a hairy $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch petiole that is noticeably curved. The distinctly tapered leaf base is auriculate, or having several ear-like appendages. The 7 to 9 pairs of coarsely sinuate, or wavy-edged, lobes terminate in a blunt apex. The leaf is dark green above, lighter green and softly pubescent below with both sides hairy gray, or tomentose, when new.



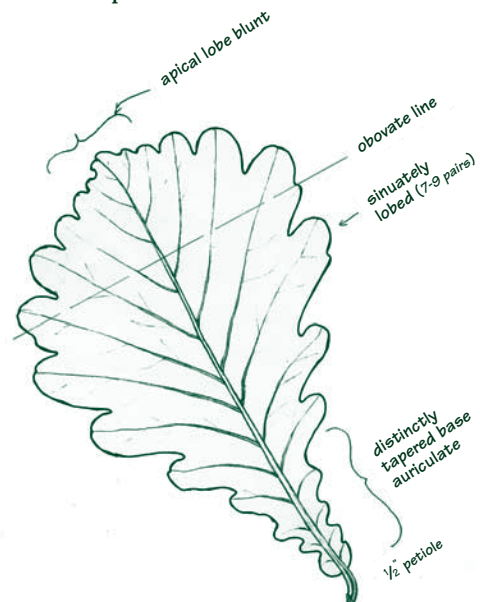
The acorn fruit can be a real show stopper. I thought that the acorn cap of *Quercus macrocarpa*, Bur oak or that of *Quercus cerris*, Turkey oak was fascinating, and then I found this acorn. The botanical description reads: acorns are usually in sessile (attached without a stalk) clusters, oval-rounded about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long, enclosed $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch or more



by the hemispherical cup covered with lanceolate, spreading scales. What it does not mention is the bright reddish orange color of these scales or the spectacular display that the acorns make nestled in among the leaves on the stout branches. I am patiently waiting for our tree to produce acorns as early as next fall.

This is an oak that may be difficult to find but worth the search to add that special interest in the landscape. If you find one to plant, give it room because it has the potential to grow to 75 feet tall and 70 feet wide as a round-headed specimen. A few botanical sources describe it as a small angular-shaped tree or a large shrub. So it is advised to ask your supplier what to expect.

This tree definitely makes a difference in the Haverford landscape with its large brown leaves in the winter and dark green ones in the summer. *Quercus dentata* is deserving of the title emperor.



MANAGER'S REPORT

Many times the question is asked, "What does the staff do outside of the growing season?" Other than helping out with snow and ice detail, we do not spend much time by the proverbial pot-bellied stove. We do spend time planning and purchasing the materials that make the spring special.

Several thousand bulbs were planted this year for the entrances, center campus areas, containers and key gardens throughout the campus. We also planned spring and summer plantings made possible by gifts to the Arboretum. One gift will add about 12 trees to the Pinetum, while another will provide for some two dozen flowering native trees in areas by the Nature Trail. Restoration plantings were completed this fall and winter around Union Hall in the wake of the underground steam line that was installed last summer. With winter pruning and some small tree removals, it all adds up to a very busy schedule. One tree removal of note was the seriously declining Toba hawthorn in front of the Dining Center. Now the staff is working on a Peace Garden that will be dedicated April 4; more about this garden in the next newsletter.

Our website has had a facelift and is now available at www.haverford.edu/Arboretum. Martha Van Artsdalen has worked hard over the last several months to complete this project. We became part of a major overhaul by the college of its website. We then took the opportunity to add new images of campus trees, incorporated our new Arboretum logo, and, most importantly, included the two self-guided tree walks complete with detailed line drawings from the new brochures.

Thomas Schlereth, a professor at the University of Notre Dame, has been writing the history of arboreta in the United States. As it turns out, Haverford College's plan dating back to 1834 establishes that our arboretum is the oldest planned collection of trees in the U.S. I have been supplying information to Tom and reviewing drafts of his work. In September, an article he wrote was published in England in "Garden History, Journal of the Garden History Society" and featured the history of Haverford College's landscape plan. In another year or so, we also will be featured in Tom's book on the history of arboreta in the United States.

We are now offering volunteer opportunities to work in campus gardens. The staff has selected several areas where they will be able to train volunteers to work throughout the growing season. It is exciting for me to offer these opportunities for our members. For more information about these opportunities, contact me at the Arboretum Office.

As we take our last gasps of winter air, the staff and I are poised for the spring, a time when everyone is busy. However, if you are on campus, as always do take the time to stop and say hello. I look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming events; check out the back page. Enjoy the rest of the winter; spring is just around the corner.

Bill Astifan,
Arboretum Manager

TREES AND TECHNOLOGY

How many labeled trees are on campus? How many trees were planted last year? Where is the tree dedicated to my great uncle who was an alum?

We often hear questions like these at the Arboretum, and the staff often has questions of its own: How many trees were planted around the athletic center complex in the past two years? What was the cost of the bed renovations at Ryan and Hall Plaza? What species of *Stewartia* are represented on campus? When were the hemlocks last treated for woolly adelgid?

Computers are part of everyday life. At the Arboretum, a computer inventory helps the staff track our population of trees and their maintenance as well as preserve the history of the many special specimens.

But computer capabilities grow faster than trees. The Arboretum staff is now converting its approximately 15-year-old DOS-based tree inventory to BG-BASE, a database developed specifically for public garden plant collections' management. This system allows querying of information in many different fields, and creates broad and narrow reports to find any plant.

BG-BASE allows detailed record-keeping of tree care: specific treatment applications for pests and diseases, chronological growth measurements; nursery sources and price, reasons for the selection and even a history of trees planted in a certain area on campus.

On-site training launched the BG-BASE installation last July. Tree by tree, Plant Curator Martha Van Artsdalen is transferring data from the approximately 2,500 entries in the old inventory to the new database. The next step will be eventually acquiring BG-MAP, a global positioning system that will map each tree on the computer and link to BG-BASE. Our present map is not computerized and cannot be linked to the inventory.

Haverford's trees represent 174 years of history. We're building on that history, one tree at a time.



With Arboretum Director Bill Astifan at the computer and Plant Curator Martha Van Artsdalen ready to doublecheck reference materials, BG-BASE developer Mike O'Neal outlines the database's possibilities.

RARE WOLLEMI PINE IN RESIDENCE

by Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator

The Wollemi pine, *Wollemia nobilis*, a Jurassic Age survivor known only through fossils until 1994, is perhaps the world's rarest tree. Only about 100 exist in the wild, in a wilderness area of Australia.

After a bushwalker rappelled down a rock canyon and saw a grove of mature trees with bubbly, bumpy bark and fern-like foliage, botanists declared this find a new genus in the same family as the Monkey Puzzle and Norfolk Island pine trees.

To protect the few remaining trees, their location remains a secret. But propagation efforts begun by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney to collect seeds and make cuttings have expanded into a program of distributing the tree worldwide to prevent its extinction.

Two young trees now live at Haverford College.

The Arboretum acquired them through the National Geographic Society, sole source of the tree in this country. Each specimen is less than a foot high, but their branches spread nearly two feet wide and are lined with flat, dark green needles. The tree is naturally multi-stemmed and has a more bushy form compared to its single-stemmed conifer relatives. Cones won't appear until the tree is approximately 10 years of age. A white waxy coating develops on the growing bud tips in cooler months, presumed to be a protective measure that helped the trees survive many ice ages.

The scientific name for the tree honors both Australia's Wollemi National Park where it was found and David Noble, its discoverer, a national parks and wildlife officer. The park covers over one million acres where streams have carved out massive canyons, walls feature prehistoric rock art in places and huge areas remain unexplored.



*Horticulturist Mike Startup cradles a specimen of the world's rarest tree, *Wollemia nobilis*, or the Wollemi pine.*

Scientists believe that as Australia emerged from the ice ages and then dried out, the range of *Wollemia nobilis* shrank until it remained in only one canyon system in the park.

Like the Monkey Puzzle and the Norfolk Island pine, the Wollemi pine appears to be hardy only to Zone 7; Haverford, as a Zone 6 garden, overwinters its two specimens in the greenhouse, but puts them outside in the nursery during warmer months. As the trees mature, we hope to plant one out on campus in a spot protected from severe weather.

To read more about the Wollemi pine, go to: www.wollemipine.com

TOUR THE ARBORETUM ONLINE

A new year means a fresh start for many things. For the Arboretum, the first week of January 2008 brought the launch of a new website. This project, part of an overall revamping of the Haverford College website, completely revised the outdated Arboretum site.

Now the site is easier to find, offers more background and events information, and is chockful of photographs — students planting trees, our majestic Penn Treaty Elm in fall, rare blooming trees, gorgeous summer flowers and the staff at work. Best of all, viewers can take two virtual tours of the Arboretum's collections with just a click of the mouse. Each tour includes detailed drawings of the trees taken from the arboretum's two new self-guided tree tour brochures, as well as descriptive text and photographs.

The Tree of the Month section profiles a new tree on campus each month. In addition, arboretum association newsletters are online and archived.

If you want to enjoy the Arboretum every time you turn on the computer, a new section offers images to download as wallpaper for your computer screen.

To reach the new site directly, go to www.haverford.edu/Arboretum/. Or you can enter the site from the college's main page: www.haverford.edu, then click on the Quick Access line at the upper right of the screen. Under the column headed Administrative Offices and Services, scroll down to Arboretum and click. You're in!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 24 • 1:30 p.m.

Winter Walk

“Winter Structure in the Landscape”

Meet in the South Visitors’ Parking Lot • Free admission

Check out the unique characteristics of trees on campus: lethal-looking thorns on the common locust *Gleditsia tricanthos*, the unusual branching of the not-so-common dogwood *Cornus controversa*, the craggy majesty of our native black walnut, *Juglans nigra*. Along the way we’ll enjoy the red-tinged flowers of the witchhazel *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Firecracker’ and other early bloomers.

The tour will be led by Arboretum Director Bill Astifan.

Sunday, March 30 • 2 p.m.

John A. Silver Memorial Lecture

“Old Is Now New Again:

Lessons from the Tyler Rhododendron Collection”

by Robert Herald, Plant Recorder, Tyler Arboretum

Sharpless Auditorium • Free admission

Over the past seven years, Tyler Arboretum has embarked on a multi-million dollar restoration program for the renowned Wister Rhododendron Garden. Robert Herald will bring the history of this nationally important collection to life, and will show how many of the lessons learned from this collection can be applied to most gardens — large and small.

Rhododendron basics such as: planting, pruning, watering, fertilizing, and companion planting will be discussed.

Sunday, April 20 • 1:30 p.m.

Spring Walk

“State Champion Trees and the Pinetum”

Meet in the South Visitors Parking Lot • Free admission

In 1928, the first of several hundred young conifers were planted along the Haverford Road boundary of the campus by members of the Campus Club, precursor to today’s Haverford College Arboretum Association. This 18-acre site is now a green oasis of meadow and mature trees, many of them rare. Last year, 15 were designated as State Champions, the largest known measured trees of their species in the state.

Join our horticulturists as they point out the champs and many of their neighbors.

Friday, April 25 • Noon

Arbor Day

Come celebrate Haverford’s 108th Arbor Day tradition and help plant a tree by Stokes Hall. Attendees will be able to choose a plant dividend to take home.

Tuesday, May 20 • 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Spring Gardens Trip

Grounds for Sculpture, Trenton, NJ

Members \$70; Non-members \$80

Spend a day at this 35-acre sculpture park and museum that incorporates a landscape of over 2,000 trees. Of the more than 100 species and cultivars, many plants were collected from estates and abandoned nurseries or salvaged from construction sites to enhance what was once the old New Jersey State Fair grounds outside Trenton. We’ll have a guided tour of the garden settings with life-size art, enjoy a box lunch and allow for time on your own to view the museum exhibition Masters of Clay.

New additions to the collection include the sculpture Black Madonna by Christopher Cairns, emeritus professor of art at Haverford College, his second piece at Grounds for Sculpture.



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Fritzi Franks

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Membership: Ann Ashmead

Programs: Martha Van Artsdalen

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