



# ARBORETUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## H A V E R F O R D C O L L E G E

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## 175 Years: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape

by Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator

It started with beautiful wood. About seven years ago, Arboretum member Tom Pleatman '69 brought us samples of bowls and platters he had turned on his home lathe and treated with a light coating of tung oil. He had collected wood from fallen trees at Haverford. The traditional white oak pieces were not a surprise, but Tom also had a caramel-colored hackberry, orangey sweet gum, handsome brown-toned redbud and warm yellow tulip poplar bowls.

We wanted to share their beauty and considered a small display. Eventually, we found several other Arboretum members who worked with wood and proposed a show for the College's art gallery. Our proposal was accepted, and a far distant date set. Happily, spring 2009 coincided with a very big anniversary year for the Arboretum. It was 175 years ago, in 1834, when the English gardener William Carvill was hired to set out a "Great Lawn" of 60 acres among the new College's nearly 200 acres of farmland surrounding the just-built Founders Hall.

Carvill's original planting plan and list of trees and shrubs still exists. In fact, the College library's Special Collections holds a treasure of paintings, photographs and letters. These not only chronicle the growth of the College, but also the active efforts of many alumni, faculty members and students over the years to maintain the beauty of what started out resembling an English park and today is an oasis of nature containing an incredible wealth of old, rare and just beautiful trees.

The result is a very special exhibition, "Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape" running from February 27 through March 29 in the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, housed in the second floor of the Whitehead Campus Center. A catalogue with photographs and an essay accompanies the show.

Today's State Champion Hinoki falsecypress can be glimpsed as a tiny bit of green in an 1885 photograph of students sledding on Barclay Beach. The fallen 1840 American elm on Founders Green looks like a beached whale in a 1976 photograph. Carvill's great serpentine walk of shrubs was an overgrown jungle hiding Founders Hall in 1886. Ice skaters enjoyed the Duck Pond in a winter scene from the 1950s. When fire struck the Barclay Hall tower in

1946, the mammoth Bald cypress, lost just a few years ago to lightning, can be seen off to one side.

These and many other photographs and pictures will join the display of wooden furniture, bowls, vessels and art objects by several craftsmen: Tom Pleatman '69, William 'Pete' Dorwart '63. Brad Whitman and Dinyar Chavda.

"Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape" opens with a public reception Friday, February 27 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery and will be on display through Sunday, March 29. Regular gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 11 to 5 p.m.; Wednesday until 8 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 5 p.m.

Several additional events are planned in conjunction with the exhibition. Horticultural consultant Marty Kromer will present a lecture on our legacy of trees, Sunday, March 22 at 1:30 p.m. A reception for members and friends to view "Gardens and Grounds" will immediately follow in the gallery. Also, the spring campus walk Sunday, March 29 at 1:30 p.m. will be led by Plant Curator Martha Van Artsdalen and Horticulturist Mike Startup, co-curators of the exhibition. After a quick look at the historic images, participants will head out to the landscape itself and see how much and how little the campus has changed since William Carvill laid out his circles of trees and serpentine path of shrubs 175 years ago.



*Circle of seven American elms  
(Ulmus americana) on Barclay Beach ca. 1950.*

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*It seems today that everyone is talking about the economy and budgets. The Arboretum and Haverford College are not immune to the happenings in the world. Since late last fall, we have been working on a leaner operating budget while still trying to maintain the high quality campus appearance that everyone expects. The staff and I have a plan that will help accomplish that goal. Will budget cuts affect Arboretum programs and membership? Any program changes or savings will most likely go unnoticed by attendees. Our goal is to maintain high quality in program content. As we start this year and needs develop, please keep in mind if you would like to donate to a program or project, the Arboretum will always appreciate the support. Membership is steady; now it is more important than ever to consider increasing your support and asking friends who also enjoy the campus to join. These memberships not only help support programs and plantings, but it is also a great way to give something back to the campus.*

*Now for the good news, the Arboretum exhibition, Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape, in the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery has grown to reflect the landscape's history and the influence the trees have had on that history. The staff has been diligent in the collection of information as you glean from the article on the show. We are all excited about this 175th anniversary opportunity to showcase our Arboretum, the oldest college campus with a landscape plan. The idea for a show started about seven years ago and has grown into a finely tuned offering. If you have a chance to get to campus during March, take in the show; it will be well worth it.*

*The staff always looks to the winter months for time to plan our planting displays for the warm season ahead. We have adjusted our thinking along with our budget and with fewer well-placed displays around campus, we will concentrate on rejuvenation work of some established planting beds. But from what I have seen of work last fall, many new bulb selections will grace areas of campus. Several small and unusual maples also were planted near the Whitehead Campus Center. New shrubs included several cultivars of rhododendron, a handsome nandina and a tough boxwood. There will be plenty for the horticulture team to talk about on upcoming campus walks.*

*I am sad to report that the large Scarlet oak on the south side of Chase Hall was removed in January. The tree, planted shortly after Chase Hall was built in 1889, suffered major root damage when the building was renovated 20 years ago. Trimming the tree was an annual event with many main branches reduced to stubs. Last summer a major crack developed in the trunk that became a serious concern. The tree, located along a very busy walk, became a hazard and therefore the decision was made to remove the tree. We had anticipated this day, and in recent years a Red oak and a Pin oak have been planted nearby that eventually will fill in the canopy.*

*Not all news is sad but it is harder to handle in winter. The staff and I are always optimistic and know that soon the plants will be actively growing once again. With that in mind and a warm cup of tea in hand, we are anticipating the arrival of spring. Hope to see you soon on campus.*

Bill Astifan,  
Arboretum Director

## THE DEATH OF AN OAK

**I**t's easy to plant a tree, to set out a sapling that will grow and be admired for decades. On the other hand, it can be very hard to take down a tree.

Soon after Chase Hall was built in 1889, a young Scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*), was planted in front of the entrance. There it stood until earlier this month when we regretfully had to cut it down. A ring count tallied a minimum of 110 years. The trunk, measured at 4½ feet high, was 15½ feet in circumference and 4½ feet in diameter.

Oak trees are long-lived, and form huge, spreading canopies. This tree was doing well, with only pedestrian activity impacting its equally large root system. Although nearby Magill Library underwent several expansion projects, Chase Hall remained untouched until its centennial year of 1989 when the building was completely renovated.

This construction work, with the accompanying months of truck parking and piles of materials stored by the tree, was the beginning of the oak's decline. Damaged roots cannot maintain a healthy tree. The past 20 years have seen a gradual dieback of branches as fewer and fewer leaves produced less and less food. Dead branches were routinely removed, but when a large split appeared high in the trunk, the decision was made to remove the tree for safety reasons.

Those Haverfordians who planted the young oak over a century ago could not have foreseen its demise today. But they could envision how the tree would bring shade and beauty to the campus. The mature trees we enjoy on campus today are because of someone long ago; and so we will continue to plant trees. In anticipation of the Scarlet oak's removal, on Alumni Weekend 2001 the Arboretum planted a Red oak, (*Quercus rubra*), nearby, and then on Arbor Day 2008, a Pin oak, (*Quercus palustris*). The triangle from Chase to Magill and Stokes will once again be shaded by a canopy of oak branches.

— Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator



*Checking the ring count on the Scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*) are, from left, Charlie Jenkins, Mike Startup, and Carol Wagner*

## STATELY AND ECOLOGICALLY FRIENDLY: *QUERCUS PHELLOS*, WILLOW OAK

by William Astifan, Arboretum Director

The Willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), a member of the beech family, *Fagaceae*, gets its common name from the 5-inch long lance-shaped leaves. The tree is native throughout the Southeast from the Mississippi River Valley to Chicago and along the Eastern Seaboard into New York and Connecticut. Willow oaks prefer the transitional area between swamps and upland forests, land that is prone to development which, in turn, impacts the number of naturally occurring specimens. It does not come as a surprise that *Quercus phellos* is on the endangered tree list in New York and Pennsylvania.



The leaves, alternately arranged on the branches, do not have the typical lobes common to other oaks. Close examination, however, reveals a leathery texture characteristic of the oaks, a slightly undulating but smooth leaf margin, hairs along the midrib and a bristle tip which is common to the black oak group. Fall color, determined by growing conditions and weather, varies from a dull yellow to a bronzy red.

*Quercus phellos* is a large deciduous but graceful tree towering some 80 to 120 feet with a straight and slender trunk. Its oblong crown is formed by finer branches and the young tree's smooth and gray bark matures and darkens into regular rough ridges and furrows. The hairless, slender,

and olive-brown twigs have multiple reddish-brown terminal buds that are very small and sharply pointed.

Willow oaks are fast growers. For years they have been a good source for lumber and pulp in the Southeast. The small, nearly round acorns are a good food source for birds (mainly water fowl) and small animals. Blue jays, in particular, like the ¼ to ½-inch long acorns and are partly responsible for distributing the species. As is common among the black oak group, acorns mature in the second year after germination, then drop off and will immediately start to grow.

Since Willow oaks are fast growers, they are commonly used for restoration of wetter sites in bottomlands. They also are good trees for shade and ornamental plantings, therefore they are readily found in the nursery trade.

Borers can be a serious pest that affects the quality of the lumber. Butt rot canker also can reduce the tree's life span of 200+ years. At Haverford, specimens along Featherbed Lane are in decline because of this canker. Several healthy mature trees in the area of the Duck Pond, however, significantly contribute to the habitat and food supply for the wintering water fowl. A younger tree now growing on Leeds Green was planted as the Class of 2008 Freshman Tree during orientation week in August 2004.

*Quercus phellos* transplants well and is definitely worth adding to the landscape where it gives not only a stately beauty but an ecological element, too.

## COLLEGE COMPLETES MASTER PLAN

Eighteen months ago, the College hired the architectural firm Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc. (VSBA) to begin a planning process of self-discovery and establish a Master Plan for campus development. The previous Master Plan dated from 1991. A Master Plan Steering Committee was formed with professional and administrative staff, faculty, students, and members of the Board of Managers. This group facilitated discussion and was the point of contact for the campus community throughout the planning process.

The VSBA team and landscape consultants Andropogon Associates guided the College in planning for the future while continuing ambitious academic programs and maintaining the beauty and integrity of existing architecture and the surrounding campus Arboretum.

This Master Plan describes an overall framework and options for development. Critical issues that face the

College in the near term are crowding and lack of social space in dormitories, a need for augmented facilities for the arts and music, and a shortage of office space for projected growth in faculty. These, with long-term agendas such as becoming a more sustainable campus, were all part of the fabric that guided the process. Also incorporated into the plan were scenarios that illustrated how the physical campus would evolve should there be an incremental growth in student enrollment.

While there are steps that will be taken in the near future, the life of the Master Plan will project a vision of the Haverford campus for the next quarter of a century. It will serve as a living document and decision-making tool, providing guidance for the development of the college.

The Arboretum's position and significance were held in high regard throughout the planning process. Efforts were made to identify significant trees, State Champion

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, February 27 through Sunday, March 29

### Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape

Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Whitehead Campus Center  
Opening reception • February 27 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The environment that is Haverford extends beyond academic walls to a landscape that is as old as the college itself. To mark the 175th year since English gardener William Carvill laid out the campus, the Haverford College Arboretum is mounting an exhibition to showcase the beauty of this, the oldest college arboretum in the country. Included will not only be historic photographs and documents from the college library's Special Collections, but also the work of several craftsmen including Arboretum members Tom Pleatman '69, Pete Dorwart '63, Brad Whitman and Dinyar Chavda. Through their bowls, vessels and furniture, they show the beauty of the trees and give new life to what once grew at Haverford.

Sunday, March 22 • 1:30 p.m.

### John A. Silver '25 Memorial Lecture

The Quaker Legacy of Trees by Marty Kromer  
Sharpless Auditorium

Sunday, March 22 • 3:00 p.m.

### Members' and Friends' Reception

Gardens and Grounds Exhibition  
Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery

Sunday, March 29 • 1:30 p.m.

### Spring Walk

Gallery to Grounds  
Meet in front of the Whitehead Campus Center

Join Horticulturist Mike Startup and Plant Curator Martha Van Artsdalen to compare the pictorial record of the college landscape as shown in the exhibition "Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape" on its closing day in the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery. Then head outdoors to see how today's Arboretum has changed over 175 years.

Friday, April 24 • Noon

### Arbor Day

Come out and help plant a tree and take home a plant dividend of your own to mark the Arboretum's 109th Arbor Day celebration. We'll meet at Leeds, Walton Road side.

Tuesday, May 19 • 9 to 5 p.m.

### Spring Gardens Trip

Nemours Mansion and Gardens;  
Delaware Center for Horticulture

Join us on a visit to nearby Wilmington for a day of contrasts. We'll step back to 1910 and tour the newly renovated mansion of Alfred I. du Pont and enjoy gardens laid out in the formal French style of Louis XVI. Then we'll visit the Delaware Center for Horticulture along Brandywine Park, where we'll tour the pocket garden and learn about efforts to keep our urban environment green.

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### COLLEGE COMPLETES MASTER PLAN

*(continued from page 3)*

trees and trees dating to the original 1834 landscape. Some of our most treasured trees were identified as "non-renewable resources." Looking forward, the Arboretum has a potential, important role as a bridge between facilities and grounds, the academic community and the local neighbors.

According to the final document presented to the Board of Managers in February, "The plan will help the College's need for physical space, preserve its most memorable buildings and landscapes, and enhance the beauty and utility of the campus. It weaves the College's past, present and future into a more integrated system of landscape and buildings — one that is explicitly and intentionally HAVERFORD."

— Mike Startup, Horticulturist



#### Executive Committee

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