



# ARBORETUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

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## AN OAK WORTH VISITING: *Quercus lyrata*, Overcup oak

by William Astifan, Arboretum Director

This member of the white oak group does not get the attention it deserves, perhaps because it initially is a slow grower and its native habitat of wet bottomland makes harvesting the wood difficult. Of all the oaks, it is one of the last to leaf out in the spring. The Overcup oak, however, is a good source of food for many of the smaller woodland creatures, it can grow in full sun or partial shade, and it tolerates wet, poorly drained sites or acid sandy soils.

The tree loves riversides, swamps and the low, moist bottomlands in Atlantic Coast, Gulf Coast, and Mississippi regions. When growing out in the open, this medium to large tree reaches 60 to 90 feet tall despite its short trunk topped by numerous branches. Outside its native habitat, the Overcup oak forms a rounded crown with large diameter limbs supported by what appears to be a twisted trunk. On campus, our specimens growing among other trees have tall, straight trunks and numerous branches that form a tall oval to rounded crown. Trees that reach 100 feet with a 3 to 4-foot diameter trunk usually represent the passage of four centuries or more and are rarely found. They were the target of early lumbermen who eyed the millions of board feet of strong wood to be harvested.

If all the oaks were as easy to identify as this one, we would not need to rely on all of our resources. The chestnut brown acorn is small (under 1 inch) and almost completely covered by a knobby cap. Only a small opening about 1/8-inch in diameter is left to expose the nut inside. The acorns are popular with squirrels, turkeys, wild hogs (not many of these on our campus) and deer. The tree's foliage is almost without rival among the lobed-leaved oaks. *Lyrata* comes from the Greek word *lyra*, meaning lyre-shaped, and refers to the overall oblong shape of the 6 to 10-inch long leaves that narrow down from 4 to 1 inch in width. The leaf base is definitely wedge-shaped and the sinuses, or bays between the lobes, are wide. Of the leaf's 7 to 9 rounded or pointed lobes, the two lowest on each side are much smaller and the terminal or end lobe is typically further trilobed. The prominent veins are accentuated by the

3/4-inch long, orange-yellow leaf stalk or petiole. Leaves are smooth and shiny dark green above but take on a silvery white color underneath from a thick coat of tiny hairs. In fall, the foliage blazes into the colors of yellow, orange and scarlet.

If you walk the Nature Trail in the Pinetum, take a close look and you will see a tree that is almost one of a kind, a specimen I recently noticed that measures nearly 3 feet in diameter. What a wonderful surprise for me that day when the shiny dark green foliage caught my eye. As I admired the find, I noticed the trunk displayed an interesting brownish gray bark fissured into large, irregular plates covered with scaly ridges. If you cannot find this Overcup oak, there are several others along College Lane toward center campus on the same side as the Duck Pond. There is also a very nice specimen right near the corner of College Lane and College Circle. But the tree on the Nature Trail is the prize to behold.

If you want to plant a legacy for future generations, then this is the tree for you.



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*What a time to be experiencing the changes on campus. Who would have thought that Haverford would have an artificial turf field and a green roof! That is exactly what has been accomplished over the last few months. I was very happy to manage the turf project and provide input on the green roof.*

*As the college master plan comes to fruition, the buzz words of the era are sustainability and reducing the carbon footprint. These are issues the Arboretum has been addressing for years. The staff reviews each plant that goes into the ground as to its long-term contribution. Is it the best for the collection and will it help sustain the landscape while reducing the college's carbon footprint? It is an exciting time as always but you will see and hear more about all of this in the coming years.*

*The staff is constantly working on new projects, and I am pleased that the related articles in this newsletter reflect this. It does not matter whether it is a small or large project; the enthusiasm is still the same. A new garden nook was planned and planted to honor a long-time college librarian. This took considerable time to plan and install; it goes to the credit of the quality of the staff. The staff is always finding new ways to educate as well. See the article about the group of Serendipity children planting new trees. Other planting projects came in the way of gifts. We received some plants from several of our nursery suppliers to install and then report on their success in the landscape.*

*Aside from horticultural duties, the staff is contributing to a gallery show on the Arboretum. The effort, headed by Martha Van Artsdalen, will feature works in wood by craftsmen who collected their logs from fallen trees on campus. In celebration of the college's 175th year, it will also display the history of the landscape. There are many stories that the staff has uncovered, so look forward to hearing them on future tours. My hat is off to the staff!*

*It has been a very successful year for the Arboretum. At the annual meeting, I reported on all aspects of the association, including a positive financial report. The evening was a success with an excellent turnout and a wonderful speaker, Bill Thomas from Chanticleer. During the social time of the evening I was able to greet and talk to many of you. This is one major time during the year that our staff loves to entertain. If you did not make it this year, try to plan on it next year.*

*In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to Katharine Fisher, Marshall Walthew and Gillian Wiedorn for their service on the Executive Committee. I know that I will still see them at events, volunteering or just around campus. I welcome three new committee members at-large; Agnes Moncy, Laura Patterson, and Tom Pleatman.*

*As we anticipate the winter months our thoughts are aimed at the spring and discovering what new displays we will see this year. Enjoy the holidays!*

Bill Astifan,  
Arboretum Director

## BENCH GARDEN HONORS LIBRARIAN

This fall students, staff and faculty have been enjoying a new sitting area by Magill Library, across from Chase Hall. Its centerpiece is a teak bench donated by the family and friends of Esther R. Ralph in celebration of her 90th birthday last August. Esther was associate librarian from 1941 to 1985. The area receives both sun and shade during the day, so Horticulturist Carol Wagner was able to design a planting plan that incorporated both sun-loving roses and many shade perennials. After the flagstone path was laid up to the wooden bench, she planted roses along the front of the beds, with hydrangeas, hostas and ferns in the shadier corners.

She chose the shrub rose Brilliant Pink Iceberg, Tequila rose and samples of the very disease-resistant blushing and double blooming Knock Out roses.

Her hydrangea selections all favor partial shade, with the dwarf Oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Little Honey,' tolerating the most sun. Her other choices were the hydrangea cultivars 'Lady in Red,' 'Mystical Ruby,' 'Princess Lace' and 'Pia.'

Filling in the shady spots among hydrangeas are the evergreen Japanese tassel fern, *Polystichum polyblepharum*; the more upright Japanese beech fern, *Thelypteris decursive-pinnata* and the Cinnamon fern, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, with its tell-tale brown on the undersides of the fronds. Carol added several hostas, one of her favorite plants; the fall blooming Toad lily, *Tricyrtis hirta* 'Samurai'; and the summer blooming Coral bells *Heuchera* 'Citronella', whose chartreuse foliage punctuates the darker corners of the planting bed. And then, to see if you're paying attention, she planted a hardy banana on the side, just for fun!

— Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator



*Roses enjoy the sun, while more shady-loving perennials fill the remainder of a new garden area beside Magill Library.*

## ROOFTOP GOING GREEN

The newest garden at Haverford, while aesthetically pleasing, has a higher purpose — and a higher elevation. This fall the college installed its first green roof. Seven different species of low-growing sedums are now rooting in a 3-inch layer of special soil on the north end of Stokes Hall across from the Dining Center.

While the concept of a green roof, a planted garden on top of a building, is relatively new in this country, Europeans have been installing them for years. Concern over global warming and water quality has brought the practice more visibility. A thin layer of soil and plants on top of a roof brings many ecological, aesthetic and financial benefits, explains Claudia Kent, sustainability coordinator for Haverford, who oversaw the college project in October.

A green roof immediately reduces building temperatures in summer and insulates it in the winter, thereby conserving energy. It reduces the wasteful flow of storm water into drains, and instead returns it to the atmosphere where it cools the air. The plants create a wildlife habitat, reduce sound reflection in an urban environment, improve the view and even extend the life of a roof.

A 5,735-square-foot section of the Stokes Hall roof was scheduled to be resurfaced this summer. The decision was made to take the project one step further because a garden here could be seen from inside a third-floor hallway window. The Philadelphia firm of Roofscares Inc. did the design, and it was installed by the Green Roof Division of JIG Inc., also of Philadelphia.

“The importance of using local companies is all part of sustainability,” Claudia notes.

The first step was to lay down a polyethelene root barrier custom fit to the roof and heat seal the seams to

prevent the plants’ roots from growing into cracks. To maintain the new roof’s warranty, a protective unwoven felt layer was added on top. Then a drainage mat, which allows water to move toward a triangular conduit that will channel away excess water, was installed, with textile fabric covering the slits in the conduits to prevent blockage by the soil.

Three inches of this special soil — mostly heat-expanded clay and a small percentage of organic matter — was then spread, saturated with water and covered with sedum cuttings. Over the next two years these cuttings will root in and grow to a height of 6 inches. May and June will be the peak season of bloom. Low-growing sedums were chosen because the roof of Stokes can handle only 21 pounds per square foot; and sedums, versus grasses and other larger plants, don’t require a soil layer deeper than 3 inches.

Large pebbles were laid around the edge to stop any wind erosion created by the parapet-style roof. A stone pathway also was laid for access to the sky lights and mechanical equipment in the center of the roof.

The final step was to tie down a biodegradable blanket composed of coir, or coconut husks, to keep in moisture and encourage root growth.

This new garden, which was funded by an alumni donation, hopefully will be opened for small groups to tour once the plants are established.

— *Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator*



*Claudia Kent and Howard Steinberg of JIG Inc. survey the newly planted sedums on the roof of Stokes Hall.*

### *A Closer Look . . .*



Photo by Mike Startup

*The lavender Saffron crocus *Crocus sativus* opens to the fall sun in the planting bed beside the Bookstore entrance.*

## CAMPERS DIG IN

**T**ake 6 trees, 60 campers and a sunny day. Add plenty of shovels, piles of mulch and a garden hose. Toss in a brief list of instructions and what do you have?

In the short term you have improved a wooded campus parking area. In the long term you have taught a child how to plant a tree, a lesson that hopefully will last a lifetime.

This summer, the Arboretum staff led a session in tree planting for older children in Camp Serendipity, a day camp organized by Haverford students for young residents of the neighboring community. First, an area behind the Dining Center was cleared of underbrush and holes were pre-dug in the somewhat rocky soil. Large oaks and tulip poplars dominate the upper story in this wooded area, but young growth has been confined to weedy Norway maple seedlings.

Counselors, led by organizer Jacob Blanton '09, then arrived with eager campers. All were ready to share tree planting chores in a shady corner of the campus on a hot, July day. Staff went over the simple steps of how to plant and described the spring flowers on each tree. The campers went to work with the assistance of Arboretum summer student workers Andrew Bartolomeo, Grant Scribner '08, Emma O'Neill '08 and Graeme Harcourt '10. Soon two dogwoods, two fringe trees and two redbuds were in the ground, and the start of a new understory of native trees was established.

— *Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator*



*Campers pose proudly besides a fringe tree they just learned how to plant.*

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## ARBORETUM MARKS 175TH YEAR WITH ART GALLERY EXHIBITION

**T**he environment that is Haverford extends beyond academic walls to a landscape that is as old as the college itself. Generations have enjoyed the beauty of this, the oldest college arboretum in the country. Several trees on the original landscape plan, planted by English gardener William Carvill in 1834, still stand. Over the years they've been joined by many, many others — some rare, some very large and some just beautiful.

To celebrate 175 years of this historic landscape, the Arboretum staff is mounting a special exhibition in the college's Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery. The show will open Friday, February 27 and run through Sunday, March 29, 2009. In addition to the campus-wide opening reception February 27, Arboretum Association members will be invited to a special reception to view the show following a lecture by Marty Kromer on Sunday, March 22.

The exhibition, *Gardens and Grounds: A Celebration of Haverford's Landscape*, will offer a photographic history of the college landscape with documents from

the library's Special Collections as well as a display of the work of several wood workers. Each has taken logs from Haverford's fallen trees and revealed a new beauty in the wood as they fashioned it into furniture and functional vessels that become pure art. Every variety of wood responds differently under the hand of the craftsman. Individual trees grow differently, with resins and mineral impurities giving the wood special colors, and insect damage or traces of rot adding artistic interest.

Through their bowls, vessels and furniture, Arboretum members Tom Pleatman '69, Pete Dorwart '63, Brad Whitman and Dinyar Chavda have given new life to what once grew at Haverford.

— *Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator*

## TURF TURNS ARTIFICIAL

Until this fall athletic season, Haverford was the only college left in the Centennial Conference without an artificial turf field. Alumni donations, however, made it possible to install a 360 by 330-foot playing surface this summer, one field down from the Observatory. Because of the new field's location alongside the Pinetum and a portion of the Nature Trail, Arboretum Director Bill Astifan oversaw the million-dollar construction project.

The field is now used for lacrosse and field hockey games as well as soccer practice. Six tall poles with complex lights, controlled by computers to confine illumination only to the playing surface, allow athletic teams to extend practice time into the evening. The Dana Swan Field, named in honor of the men's lacrosse team founder, former football coach and athletic director, was dedicated Sept. 6 with a hockey game.

To gain construction access, a temporary 12-foot-wide road was built through the center of the Pinetum. Geotextile fabric was first laid down over the meadow grasses and then about 700 truckloads of gravel spread to reduce soil compaction and protect tree roots. The material all has been removed, and the Pinetum meadow returned to its natural state.

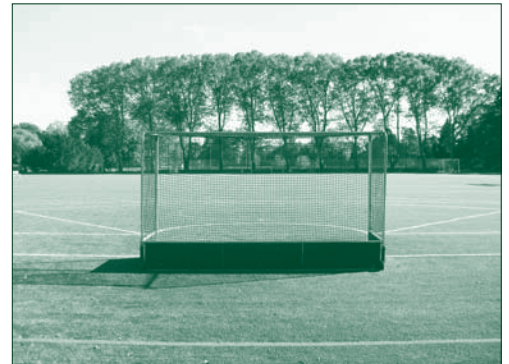
The actual area for the playing field was excavated 18 inches down. A drainage system was installed to minimize storm water runoff and to allow the permeation of rain water through the artificial turf directly into the ground. A field base of gravel was leveled by scrapers so sophisticated that they were directed by lasers and satellite commands. Once the field was perfectly smooth, the green carpet of tufted fibers was laid in a carefully orchestrated sequence, stitched in place and filled 2 inches deep with first sand

and then crumbled rubber recycled from old tires. The exposed blade length is 5/8-inches high.

The new artificial turf field does not need mowing or periodic treatment for insect pests or fungal diseases, but it still requires maintenance. Leaves from the nearby line of 11 mature London planetrees and the adjacent Nature Trail have to be swept away, and the field needs to be brushed frequently with special equipment.

This fall, the horticultural staff planted low-growing junipers, *Juniperus conferta* 'Blue Pacific' along a sloping border of the field to prevent erosion and four *Prunus* 'Okame' cherries and five white pines, *Pinus strobus*, near the new scoreboard. These trees are the beginning of a new planting buffer to enclose the Nature Trail as it runs between the field and faculty housing. Next year, additional trees and shrubs will start the rejuvenation of this area which is heavily used by walkers, joggers and college track team members.

— Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator



A line of London planetrees, *Platanus x acerifolia*, overlooks the newly installed artificial turf field.

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## ARBORETUM TO EVALUATE PLANTS

Each year, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society designates several shrubs and trees as Gold Medal Plants in recognition of their exceptional adaptability to various cultural and environmental conditions. Over 100 plants, often undernoted and underused, have been evaluated since 1981 and chosen for home gardeners because of appearance, performance and hardiness in the growing region of Zones 5 to 7.

The plant collections at Haverford College Arboretum, located in Zone 6, include many of these Gold Medal Plants ranging from the 1988 winner *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' to 2006 winner *Maackia amurensis* 'Starburst', Amur maackia.

Now, thanks to the generosity of Arboretum member Steve Mostardi of Mostardi Nursery in Newtown Square, PA, Haverford is assisting in the evaluation of potential future winners. Steve, a member of the Gold Medal Plant

Award Committee, has donated samples of eight potential Gold Medal plants to test on campus. These are plants, he explains, that appear to perform well in the home garden but the committee needs more feedback on their long-term hardiness and overall appearance.

Under evaluation are: the holly *Ilex* 'Red Beauty,' the variegated boxwood *Buxus microphylla* 'Wanford Page,' a coral-colored heavenly bamboo *Nandina* 'Sienna Sunrise,' the tea olive *Osmanthus* x 'Carl Whalen,' the compact *Viburnum obovatum* 'Densa,' the wide-spreading *Cotoneaster* 'Streibs Findling,' the heavy-flowering anise tree *Illicium floridanum* 'Halley's Comet' and the dark-leaved mimosa tree *Albizia julibrissin* 'Summer Chocolate.'

For the complete list of Gold Medal Plants, log onto [www.goldmedalplants.com](http://www.goldmedalplants.com).

— Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 8 • 1:30 p.m.

### Winter Walk

**Silhouettes in the Winter Landscape**  
**Meet in front of the Whitehead Campus Center**

Winter is a wonderful time to see the beauty at the Haverford College Arboretum in a different way. Join Director Bill Astifan in exploring the outlines of trees and shrubs in the landscape.

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 Mary Kromer**  
**Sharpless Auditorium**

Sunday, March 22 • 3 p.m.

### Members' Reception

**Gardens and Grounds Exhibition**  
**Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery**

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.

### FRESHMAN CLASS TREE



*Incoming freshmen started their first semester at Haverford by planting a Scarlet oak, *Quercus coccinea*, at the North Dorms. Each year, the Arboretum sponsors a Freshman Class Tree as a welcoming gift.*



#### Executive Committee

##### Officers

*President:* Lathrop B. Nelson, Jr.  
*Vice President:* Jacki Delaney  
*Arboretum Director:* Bill Astifan  
*Secretary:* Anne Donnell  
*Past President:* Pat Turner

##### Members at Large

Fritzi Franks  
Agnes Moncy  
Nancy Pasquier  
Laura Patterson  
Tom Pleatman

##### Committee Chairmen

*Membership:* Ann Ashmead  
*Programs:* Martha Van Artsdalen

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