



HAVERFORD COLLEGE ARBORETUM ASSOCIATION

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PINUS STROBUS, EASTERN WHITE PINE *by William Astifan, Arboretum Director*

I ask myself, what is so special about the white pine? This summer, while traveling through the Adirondack Mountains in Northern New York State, I re-discovered this amazing tree. The most vivid picture in my mind was looking over the breath-taking landscape and noticing these majestic trees towering above all the other trees around them. Then I found pure stands of the old growth pines and truly understood why early travelers across Pennsylvania remarked on how it appeared as night when in these stands. These old growth forests in Pennsylvania are gone, but when I found some in New York, I recounted the stories I read about this tree. I was convinced that everyone would come to the same conclusion as I did, that this tree is truly remarkable.

One of the descriptions that I recall says it is the monarch of the Eastern forests. It flourishes from Newfoundland to Manitoba, Canada, southward through the Great Lakes region into New England and then follows the Appalachian Mountains south into Georgia. The description goes on to say, Eastern white pine is typified by a straight, sturdy, gradually-tapering trunk and an irregular crown supported by whorls of horizontal limbs of blue-green foliage. Old growth trees with 6-foot diameter trunks and heights of 250 feet were reported by early lumbermen. Next to the sugar pine of California, it is the largest pine in the United States.¹ The towering trees I found certainly add validity to these accounts.

The Eastern white pine is classified as a five-needled pine with the 3 to 5-inch needles in bunches of five each that will remain on the tree for one to three years. At this time of year we often get calls asking, "is there something wrong with my pine?" Not to worry, fall into winter is the annual needle drop. Many of the interior needles appear to yellow as they turn brown and fall off. A blanket of needles typically is found under the trees going into winter.

Pinus comes from the Latin for pine. The species *strobus* is derived from the Greek and Latin



Photo by Martha Van Artsdalen

The tapered 6-inch cones are an easy identification key for this pine.

words for pine cone, referring to the cones that are conspicuous and memorable. May and June are the pollination months when the tree produces yellow staminate, pollen-producing blossoms on the new shoots of the lower branches. Meanwhile, small bright pink, cone-bearing ovulate flowers appear on the ends of the young upper shoots. By the end of the first growing season, new green cones have developed to about 1-inch long. As the cones start to grow in the second season, they get heavier and turn downward, eventually tapering to 6 inches and turning brown by the late summer. In September the mature cones open and release winged seeds that are carried by the wind.

Bark on the branches and young trunks is thin and smooth with a greenish color. With age, the bark becomes fissured, darker and up to 4-inches thick. The white pine's mature bark is characterized as broad, flat-topped, with dark gray longitudinal ridges.

Known for its lumber, the Eastern white pine is a useful landscape tree. It is used as an ornamental, a specimen on a lawn, as a screen or a backdrop for other plants. The tree adapts to many planting sites, but prefers sandy loamy soils. However, its low tolerance to salt should be considered when selecting a location, ideally away from roadways.

There are several places on campus to see the larger trees. A nice grove lives in the Pinetum, other specimens can be found by 1 College Circle and Woodside Cottage. After seeing this pine towering in its natural setting, it captivated me.



Photo by William Astifan

The green needles of *Pinus strobus*, Eastern white pine, stand out among the changing fall foliage in the Pinetum.

¹ Descriptions from the American Forestry Association 30th revised printing in 1978, "Knowing Your Trees"

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Landscape designer Larry Weaner gave an excellent presentation October 9 on "Native Wildflower Meadows: Let's Get Real" in Sharpless Auditorium. Larry provided a wonderful insight into the ecological character of the naturally occurring meadows, and how we can have a successful meadow if we understand and do the right things. The keynote speaker at the Arboretum's annual dinner meeting in Founders Great Hall October 20 was William Woys Weaver. The food historian and author talked about the history of the heirloom flower and vegetable Roughwood Seed Collection. Attendees were treated to seeds from this collection as gifts for the evening. Both were great fall programs.

Memberships are holding steady, but with new programs with an environmental orientation and others focused on history, we should be expanding our appeal through these programs. The Executive Committee is working hard to put these programs together.

After the hot summer weather, fall arrived in a drought. With little rain, the trees are holding on but as the leaves turned we noticed signs of stress on many trees. I am hoping for a period of snow cover to help the trees tolerate the harsh winter winds. It gives me the chills thinking about winter. If all goes well and spring arrives with some nice soaking rains, the trees should respond nicely. Sad news as we go to press: the State Champion red oak by Stokes Hall, upon doing an assessment to determine the wood's health, has reached a point of deterioration that the only safe route to take is removal. This is late-breaking news, and more will be written about it in the next newsletter.

The staff is always diligent in finding new and exciting things. The new offering this year is the *xGordlinia grandiflora* described in Martha's article on Page 4. There have been several tree donations this year, and there are still a few more to follow upon before the end of this year. Giving a tree or bench or both is a great way to remember loved ones or as special gifts. Contact us and we can give you guidance.

As this year draws to a close, I think back and remember all of the committee members, volunteers, members and staff who truly make the Haverford Arboretum special. I want to thank all of them, and wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

Bill Astifan
Arboretum Director

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Allison Hacker '17



Having lived on Haverford's campus for the past three and a half years, I've grown accustomed to plants being labeled. It's gotten to the point where I'll find a striking tree on another campus or along the street and automatically look for a plaque or tag, only to remember that such labels are not the norm.

For me, having names on trees adds to their appeal. Many of the trees I like most on campus are my favorites because of their names and the images and memories they bring to mind. Bonfire sugar maples remind me of huddling with friends around crackling, hot fires on cold nights, which make the trees' warm, fiery tones in the fall seem even more vibrant. Dawn redwoods evoke memories from two summers ago when I awoke at 5:30 every morning to run in the soft light before the sun drowned out the quiet pinks and purples of the sky. With their gentle needles and graceful limbs, these redwoods mirror those sleepy mornings. Firs are stately and regal trees. Their Latin genus name *Abies*, from the word *abire* meaning to rise, is a reminder of how they rise above the hard earth and outlast endless winters. Umbrella leaf magnolia, lacebark elm, dragon spruce, swamp white oak — all these trees and so many more are made more complex and alluring in my mind because of the connotations their names carry.

As a biology major, part of me thinks it's silly to assign trees these arbitrary names because, in the end, all these different names tell us is that two trees are genetically dissimilar enough to be in different species or genera. But as a person who loves poetry and art, I see tree names as expressions of both poetry and art for the simple way they convey meaning, beauty and emotion. For me, the following poem sums up the poetic nature of names.

Adapted from *The Names* by Billy Collins, poet laureate 2001–2003:

*Names printed on the ceiling of the night.
Names slipping around a watery bend.
Twenty-six willows on the banks of a stream.
In the morning, I walked out barefoot
Among thousands of flowers
Heavy with dew like the eyes of tears,
And each had a name —
Names written in the pale sky.
Names rising in the updraft amid buildings.
Names silent in stone
Or cried out behind a door.
Names blown over the earth and out to sea.
In the evening — weakening light, the last swallows.
A boy on a lake lifts his oars.
A woman by a window puts a match to a candle,
And the names are outlined on the rose clouds.*

WINTER RIVALRIES



Photo courtesy of Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections

Back in the winter of 1892, competition was keen between freshmen and sophomores. When the snows came, each class pulled out a wooden bobsled for races down Barclay Beach. And huge snowball fights, or “rushes,” took place across campus. Here the freshman Class of 1895 chased the sophomore Class of 1894 across Meetinghouse Bridge to ultimate victory. The exact rules of the game have been lost to history.

LEST WE FORGET



Photo by Martha Van Artsdalen

Gene Hough, center, in uniform, led the American flag unveiling at tree planting ceremonies on Veterans Day. The Arboretum donated a *Quercus bicolor*, swamp white oak, along College Lane. A former corporal in the Pennsylvania National Guard, Gene Hough represents the Saving Hallowed Ground Foundation in efforts to restore monuments to World War I soldiers. He also is the son of the late William J.H. Hough Jr., Class of 1950.

SEASONAL ZINGER

by Mike Startup, Horticulturist

The season is fast approaching. In my childhood, that meant baking with my mom and grandmother. The delights of cinnamon, peppermint, allspice, vanilla, cloves and ginger formed that seasonal aromatic memory.

Ginger has many ties in the culinary, medicinal, literary and pop culture arenas. In its many forms, ginger has been called on in works by Shakespeare, ee cummings, Emerson and Thoreau. The popular musical and big screen hit *Shrek* employs a riotous gingerbread man character.

Zingiber officinale (family *Zingiberaceae*) is native to Asia and is now only known in cultivation. The underground stem (rhizome) of ginger is harvested and peeled in preparation for being used either raw, cooked, steeped or dried. Its pungent flavor overpowers many other spices. A little goes a long way! According to the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, it was obtained by the Greeks and Romans from Arab traders and was one of the first oriental spices to arrive in Europe. Co-authors Rebecca Katz and Mat Edelson’s book *The Cancer-Fighting Kitchen*, cite the American Cancer Society: “In addition to helping with nausea and motion sickness, ginger might slow tumor growth.”

I’ll share two fresh ginger recipes I make with my family. Cinnamon ginger tea is an easy hot beverage for chilly winter nights. Bring four cups of water to a boil; add four half-inch slices of ginger, one cinnamon stick and two teaspoons of honey; cover and simmer for ten minutes. Secondly, I use a juice extractor to prepare a refreshing cold drink. I simply juice five apples, five carrots and one thumb-sized peeled piece of ginger and serve it over ice.

Every December, Arboretum Horticulturist Carol Wagner bakes a small army of gingerbread men, one for each of the grounds and arboretum crew members, their children and student workers — a number that is approaching two dozen highly-decorated 6-inch tall minions. There once was a report of one particular gingerbread man jumping out of the oven and proclaiming, “You can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man.”



Cooks have used the underground portion of the ginger plant for centuries.

Photo by Mike Startup

A BOLD BEAUTY

by Martha Van Artsdalen, Plant Curator

F*ranklinia alatomaha* is a beautiful small tree with camellia-like flowers blooming in late summer and handsome red foliage in the fall. Coupled with the fact that it's considered extinct in the wild, gardeners love to grow this tree, discovered and named by John Bartram for his friend, Benjamin Franklin.

But it's a finicky tree that all too often fails to thrive.

Enter plant breeder Dr. Tom Ranney of North Carolina State University.

Ranney has crossed the deciduous *Franklinia alatomaha* with the evergreen *Gordonia lasianthus*, or Loblolly bay, and created the new intergeneric hybrid *xGordlinia grandiflora*, the Mountain gordonia. The resulting tree is a more vigorous plant with larger flowers than either parent.

Both parents are in the *Theaceae* Family. But while the *Franklinia alatomaha* is hardy throughout our growing zone of 6, it often grows poorly or even dies a few years after planting. The second parent, *Gordonia lasianthus*, lacks hardiness above Zone 7. Each tree has a shrubby growth habit and prefers a sunny, moist location with light afternoon shade. They also share the delightful trait of late summer and early fall ivory-colored blooms.

The new tree's hardiness has expanded northward to Zone 6, yet, since both parents are from the Southeast, it also has good heat tolerance. Ranney expects the new intergeneric hybrid to reach up to 30 feet tall and half as wide. Strong red and orange foliage takes over as the 3 to 4-inch wide flowers peak in early fall. The slightly cupped flowers are white with yellow centers and give off a delicate scent.

Researchers at North Carolina State also have developed a polyploidy form of the tree with extra sets of chromosomes, *xGordlinia grandiflora* 'Sweet Tea.' The showy flowers are even larger, but the tree is a less hardy specimen than the simple hybrid.

In keeping with the Arboretum's mission of diversifying as well as preserving its tree collection, this fall two Mountain gordonia trees were acquired. One was planted in the playground area below Magill Library in memory of long-time Arboretum supporter Betty Cary and the other will find a new home near the Observatory.



Photo by Martha Van Artsdalen

New to the Arboretum's collection is the intergeneric hybrid *xGordlinia grandiflora*, or Mountain gordonia planted near the Climbing Tree by horticulturists (kneeling) Mike Startup and Carol Wagner. Looking on with shovels at the tree's dedication to the late Elizabeth (Betty) Summers Cary are Louise Tritton (left) and Dorothy Cary.

A Closer Look . . .



Photo by Mike Startup

Each fall, the unusual color of fruit bunched along the stems of *Callicarpa japonica*, Japanese beautyberry, always captures the attention of walkers on campus.

"The recent snowfall in the city made me think about how the greenhouse was such a nice refuge from the cold winter storms, and imagining the plants all cozy and completely ignorant to the snowfall outside was always so soothing!"

Class of 2015 alumna, now living in New York City



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arbor@haverford.edu
www.haverford.edu/Arboretum

