

Spring Newsletter April 2013

Spring greetings!



Experience a “sense of place” Have you ever been to a place that felt so right, so beautiful, but you couldn’t put your finger on exactly what made it so special? These places have a strong “sense of place.” The memory tends to stick with you. You may have wandered through the arboretum and felt that same thing, that “sense of place.” Depending on the season, it may have been the scent of the crabapples bursting forth, the sound of baby birds, a trickling stream, your feet on the wooden footbridge or the intensity of fall color in the trees and swaths of prairie that flow between them. It is different for everybody, but for me, it is the lay of the land. No matter what the season, I

know I can walk the Native Iowa Trail for an elevated perspective with long vistas and feel the wind in my face. Or I can follow the Valley Trail along the stream for a more intimate, quiet experience. No matter where you are in the arboretum, or in which season you decide to visit, that “sense of place” is very strong. Please, come experience it!

There is much going on.

Accreditation The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program at the Morton Arboretum awarded a Level II Accreditation to the Brenton Arboretum. This is achieved by adhering to a particular standard of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens. We are one of 11 Level II arboreta in the United States.



Nature Play We are proud to announce that we are the first arboretum in Iowa to have a certified Nature Explore Classroom. Nature Explore is a collaboration between the Arbor Day Foundation and the Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Lee Goldsmith, director of education and outreach, is now certified in Nature Explore. Bring a group of students, scouts or grandchildren out for a day of fun at the O’Brien Nature Play Area and enjoy a picnic under the Pavilion. For more information about specific classes and events that incorporate nature play, contact lee@thebrentonarboratum.org or give her a call.

Stine Addition The master plan for the 20-acre Stine addition just south of the arboretum is finally complete! This expansion will offer a variety of experiences for visitors. You will see tight groves of Kentucky coffeetrees and other woodland upland species, long vistas across expansive meadows, a lovely riverine walk leading you to a rustic amphitheater nestled in an oak savanna, and much, much more. We are so very excited, but need to be patient. We will keep you posted on all of these developments. We are grateful to the Eddy Family Foundation for making it possible. Thank you!



Water and Soil Initiative Every time we receive 1 inch of rain, 44 million gallons of water flow across approximately 1,700 acres of our watershed, into streams and ponds, then into Hickory Creek, before finding its way to the Raccoon River—Des Moines' primary drinking water source—taking precious soil with it as it goes. This has created erosion and siltation issues for the arboretum. With the help of Solutions In The Land (www.solutionsintheland.com), we are exploring our options, including a watershed-wide approach that will benefit not only the arboretum, but the surrounding community as a whole. As we meet with city and county officials, surrounding land owners and local agencies, we are mindful of our role as a public entity to help increase awareness of water and soil conservation. We want to foster the idea that plants, air, water and soil are at the heart of a healthy environment—and that benefits us all.

Updated Website Thanks to some dedicated volunteers and our own Lee Goldsmith, we have launched an updated website. New features include an updated map, easier access to classes and events information, a Support page, and much, much more. Check back often to see the latest news about what's happening at the arboretum.

Support Thank you to those of you who recently renewed memberships. You make all of this possible. Membership is one of many ways to support the arboretum. Volunteering is another. For a list of opportunities, go to the Support tab on the website.

Member Feedback Thank you to those who participated in our focus group and electronic survey last fall. You not only answered questions, you passionately offered very useful ideas and suggestions. The information collected suggests that you—the members—value quiet enjoyment, appreciate the educational offerings (but want more of them), and want more cultural experiences that include art, music and food. We heard you and have designed the 2013 calendar accordingly. You can find it on the back page of this newsletter. There is something for everybody.

Save the Dates

Mark your calendars for the 8th annual Membership Gathering: Tree Voices on June 8. This year we recruited board members and others to share their knowledge and personal stories about selected trees. We believe you will enjoy this revamped membership gathering.

Then, get your toes tapping on July 20 during An Evening of Tango. The Des Moines Tango Trio, along with dance instructor Valerie Williams, will delight us. Come ready to join in, or sit by and be entertained.

Join us on September 7 for another memorable performance by Sarah Plum and company at our Chamber Music Event. Don't miss this popular annual event!



Collections/Evaluation/Research

Kentucky Coffeetree As you may know from past newsletters, we are poised to expand our Kentucky coffeetree collection. Thirty are incorporated into the master plan for the Stine Addition, 30 more will be located on the west side of the main road just after you enter the arboretum, and 30 more will be located in another location to be determined. In addition to those 90 trees, we also plan to display Kentucky coffeetrees in tight groves as part of a new Upland Woodland planned for the east edge of the Stine addition. This tree is lovely as a specimen as well as in a tight grove, which is how Andy Schmitz, director of horticulture and general manager, has observed the tree's natural habitat on his numerous collecting trips (13 this past winter alone). Our goal is to provide visitors with two different experiences of this beautiful tree.



Chokeberry We will add eight new chokeberry (*Aronia*) cultivars to our shrub collection just down the hill from the Pavilion. Perhaps you have heard about the health benefits of the berries from this native shrub, including extraordinarily high levels of antioxidants which can aid in preventing cardiovascular disease and cancer. But did you know that *Aronia* is also a most beautiful yet tough shrub for the landscape? Visit the arboretum to learn more about how to grow this useful shrub.

Restoration Chestnut The arboretum is one of many organizations in partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF) to find a hybrid of this magnificent tree that not only resembles the original American chestnut., but also resists the blight, pests and pathogens that plague this tree. The ACF is using a “backcross method” to create these hybrids. Andy will grow the trees from seed, observe and record their growth and other characteristics, and report to the ACF. This is a long-term commitment for the arboretum, and an opportunity to play a role in the preservation of this iconic tree. In the meantime, you can see Chinese chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*) and American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) trees here at the arboretum.

In closing, we want to truly thank you, our members, for your ongoing support of the arboretum. You make all of this possible. And please, visit this spring to experience the unique “sense of place” the arboretum offers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lynn Kuhn".

Lynn Kuhn

Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Buz Brenton".

Buz Brenton

Founder



THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

www.thebrentonarboratum.org 515.992.4211

May – December 2013 events and classes

May

NATIONAL PUBLIC GARDENS' DAY

Saturday, Friday May 10

Enjoy free tours today! Please contact the arboretum to arrange your tour. Visit all 5 participating public gardens between May 10 and June 15 to enter a drawing for 1 of 6 fabulous prizes!

June

BOTANICAL DRAWING

Saturday, June 1, 10 AM to NOON

Create your own botanical illustrations! Instructor Teena Case will teach you the technique. Ages 14+.

Members \$30, Non-members \$40. Fee includes materials.

8TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP GATHERING

A member exclusive

Saturday, June 8, 2 to 5 PM

Members are invited to a special "Tree Voices" tour. Storytellers will share their connections with the trees and discuss the unique attributes of these trees. Friends you bring can join today for just \$15!

July

LEARN YOUR LEAVES

Saturday, July 13, 9 AM to NOON

Explore the many leaf shapes at the arboretum to create stylish works of art. You will learn how to identify common, Iowa tree leaves at the same time!

Ages 14+. Members \$5, Non-members \$10.

AN EVENING OF TANGO

Saturday, July 20, 6 PM

The Des Moines Tango Trio will perform under the Pavilion. Come to enjoy the music and learn a step or two from tango instructor, Valerie Williams! Members \$15, Non-members \$20.

August

SOLAR TOUR

Friday, August 30 - Sunday, September 31

Tour the galaxy with Ames Area Astronomers! Discover the distance between planets and join us for stargazing in the evening. All ages. Day tours free.

Evening tours and events, Members \$5, Non-members \$10

September

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT

Saturday September 7, 3 PM

Listen to inspiring music and enjoy pastoral vistas from our open-air pavilion. Ages 14+ Members \$5.00, Non-members \$10.00.



FOUNDER'S WALK

Saturday, September 14, 10 to 11:30 AM

Tour the Arboretum with Founder Buz Brenton. He will discuss the Arboretum's history and his unique insights.

Ages 10+. Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

WILD CRAFTING

The Gathering, session 1

Saturday, September 28, 2 to 4 PM

Create a dried-floral masterpiece from the arboretum prairie!

Learn how to collect and preserve botanical objects during the first session. This two-part class will meet again, October 12, to create the wildcraft. Families welcome. Fee TBD.

October

MIGRATION BIRD HIKE

Saturday, October 12th, 7:30 AM

Learn how to scout for and identify birds in transit during this annual walking tour. Catch a look before they leave for the winter!

Ages 10+. Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

WILD CRAFTING

Make and Take, session 2

Saturday, October 12, 1 to 3 PM

Create a dried-floral masterpiece from the arboretum prairie! Use what we gathered during the first session and at home to create your wildcraft. All ages. Fee TBD.

November

SHOW AND TELL

Saturday, November 16, 1 to 3 PM

Bring in your favorite wild finding from this year. It might be an artifact or a photo. Be prepared to show it to the group and tell the story of how it came to you! All ages.

Members free, Non-members \$5.00.

December

CONIFER TOUR: "19 PINES"

Saturday, December 7, 10 AM

Take a closer look at the striking foliage of pine trees during this wintertime tour! Ages 10+. Members free, Non-members \$5.00.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone to visit our website for updates and more information.