



## THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

# NEWSLETTER, AUTUMN 2020

### ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACIES RUN IN THE FAMILY - Melissa Burdick, Executive Director

Most of our members know that The Brenton Arboretum was founded by Buz and Sue Brenton – scions of families that arrived in Iowa by covered wagon in the 1850s. But you might not know that Buz and Sue’s family members are not the only decedents of the Brenton pioneers still making their philanthropic mark on the Midwest. Specifically, the children of Buz’s sister, Jane Brenton Eddy and her husband John Eddy, have joined with the Arboretum to support Buz’s vision and help achieve our mission *to inspire joy through the beauty and knowledge of the natural world of trees.*

Jane and John Eddy’s adult children—Sara Jane, Bill, Carrie, and Liz—have pledged a sizable charitable fund to sponsor and develop the nearly twenty acres of neighboring land donated to the Arboretum by Stine



*Jane Brenton Eddy and John Eddy*

Seed Farms in 2004. This acreage is distinctly different from the original Arboretum. Rather than carefully placed tree collections, Eddy Woods, as it’s now known, is a wilder woodland that runs along two sides of a lovely brook. The slopes, stream, and adjacent floodplain made this portion of land unsuitable for crops or pasture and preserved it as a charming forest glade.

There, the Arboretum and Eddy family offer visitors another way to be inspired by trees: by presenting them in habitats endemic to Iowa. While the older part of the Arboretum displays artful groves of trees organized by species, Eddy Woods features native communities like oak savanna and upland woodlands.

Truthfully, the habitats represented in Eddy Woods aren’t perfect. Years of environmental disturbance and the encroachment of invasive species have impacted woods that were pristine when pioneers arrived. The family is honoring their ancestors with funding for the ongoing care and rehabilitation of native plant communities in Eddy Woods. One field was converted into a native pollinator prairie, another was planted with 700-plus upland woodland tree seedlings. An oxbow stream habitat was restored in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The woods themselves will subtly change as we plant native overstory trees to eventually replace the less desirable invasive species currently occupying precious canopy space. The goal is to transform non-native woods into authentic habitat, without losing the idyllic forest setting that makes Eddy Woods so special.

None of these plans would be feasible without the commitment of support (both financial *and* hands-on) from the children of Jane Brenton Eddy and John Eddy. When it comes to the Iowa Brentons, it seems that establishing environmental legacies just runs in the family.

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## VISITING TREES - Andy Schmitz, Director of Horticulture

There's one tree that I have visited a lot this year, not because I necessarily wanted to but because I needed to. It's a majestic tree, one all visitors drive by. It grows at the northeast corner of the Lake Homestead bridge. Why have I visited this tree so much, you ask? This is where we pull water from the lake to fill the water wagon. With the drought, numerous loads of water have been driven around the Arboretum in an attempt to keep our newly planted trees alive. The tree is an American sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis* #2002-114. When I planted it 19 years ago, it was only three feet tall and I was wondering if it would ever provide shade as I waited for the tank to fill. Well, this little tree grew and I no longer have to walk over to refresh under its canopy. Standing at over 45 feet tall, it now shades the entire truck and wagon.

Plants out here impress me in all seasons. The Kentucky viburnum, *Viburnum molle* for instance, is a multi-stemmed shrub which always strikes me in the middle of winter as the sun's going down after a long January day of pruning. As the sun is just at the perfect angle, it shines through the stems and lights up the exfoliating paper-thin bark to a coppery red glow. It's awe-inspiring and a great way to end the day.

In spring, it's our spectacular crabapple collection. With over 110 accessions, it's an amazing array of pink, white, and red blossoms. One cultivar, however, always catches my attention, not because it has the showiest of flowers or the most outstanding fruit display but because 'Adirondack' crabapple, *Malus* x 'Adirondack', has such a unique upright growth habit. It's a cultivar I always find myself pointing out on tours, and a perfect small tree to plant in a tight spot.

There are two other trees I visited a few more times this year than in the recent past. The first, a bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa* #1997-090, had a memorial bench placed beside it and is a memorial tree for our beloved landscape architect, Tony Tyznik. Tony always said, "the wind brings the trees to life," and I think of him often as I see this bur oak blowing in the breeze. The other, a swamp white oak, *Quercus bicolor* #1999-023 became a memorial tree for Deke Gliem, a plants person I met through the Iowa Nut Growers Association. Walking with his family to choose Deke's tree gave us all time to remember him.

As the trees grow and our landscape design matures, fascinating little spaces are created. One of these is north of the Administration Building in the collection of common baldcypress, *Taxodium distichum*. The sense of being in this space is so strong as I stand amongst these young but stately trees. It's peaceful and relaxing to hear the breeze blow through their feather soft foliage. The five upright Shawnee Brave® Common Baldcypress, *Taxodium distichum* 'Mickelson', stand like gentle guards watching over all visitors to this place.



New mockernut hickory



Andy fills the water tank

New trees I planted this year include the mockernut hickory, *Carya tomentosa*, west of the front gate and the common hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*, in the prairie. Both are less than a foot tall now, but in 20 years, I'll be reminiscing about them when they were small.

I could go on forever talking about the trees I visited this year. We haven't even talked about Kentucky coffeetree yet. But you all know too well that all trees here are my favorites for one reason or another. The next time you're out at the Arboretum, whatever the season, I hope you find the trees or shrubs you like to visit often.

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!



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*Donor listing continued on page 7.*

## PRO TIPS FOR TEACHING OUTSIDE - Kelly Clime, Education & Outreach Manager

The Arboretum has long been a favorite education destination for seasoned home school families, and the word is getting out to our newest home school families this year that outdoor education at the Arboretum can provide cross-curriculum applied learning that is easy and fun. We've had two wonderful home school weeks that featured online packet downloads allowing self-guided exploration, learning, and fun, and now we're sharing our top tips for getting the most out of your year-round outdoor education here.



Before you venture to the Arboretum for an outdoor learning session, establish a clear “why” behind your visit. Do you want to teach specific content? Or do you want to hold space for learning through play? Establishing a “why” can help you plan your “where” once you get to the Arboretum. A frog life cycle lesson would best be taught at Lake Homestead, whereas learning cooperation through play might be better at the Nature Play Area. Other lessons may be less location specific. The “why” can change the “when” for your visit, too. If you want to study animal tracks, visiting in the winter after a fresh snow can produce great results.

It is also helpful to prepare well in advance for all-weather learning. As the Scandinavian proverb goes, “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.” All-weather outdoor learning provides a great benefit in teaching children resiliency. Comfort is key to learning outdoors, so good outdoor gear is a worthwhile investment for outdoor education in all seasons. Windproof, waterproof, and warm are the three Ws of dressing well for outdoor learning. When you are dressed for the weather, even “summer” activities like geocaching and birding can go on year-round at the Arboretum.

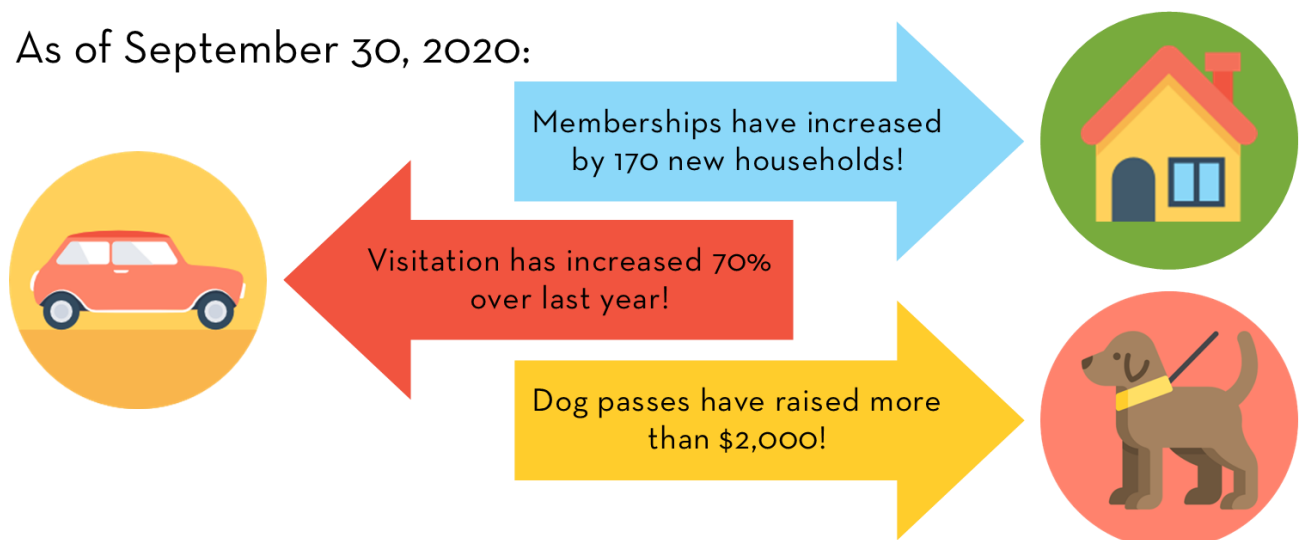
Finally, make use of nature journals to give your learners ownership over their outdoor education by allowing them to record their observations and wonderings in their own words and sketches. Nature journals can also be a great tool for embracing an emergent curriculum that allows your students’ interests to guide your studies. Know your “why” and have a plan, but be flexible and responsive to new ideas and experiences as they emerge through your interactions with the outdoors. As you practice teaching outdoors more, you will become more skilled in blending your planned lessons with these emerging experiences in the moment, and the results will often exceed the expected outcomes of the original lesson.

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## AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR - Gail Turner, Membership & Volunteer Manager

It has been an extraordinary year at The Brenton Arboretum with the ongoing pandemic, drought, and the derecho that surprised everyone in central Iowa this August. We were fortunate, losing only a few trees to the derecho. Andy and our two groundskeepers, Lyle and Scott, spent two full days helping the Iowa Arboretum clean up their substantial tree damage. Yes, we were lucky, indeed. We continue to be humbled by the generous support of our friends and neighbors.

As of September 30, 2020:



## UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS

### OCTOBER

#### **Timber, TRAILS, & Twilight**

Saturday, October 31; 9 am to 6 pm

Come out to the Arboretum for a Halloween drive. You'll see spooky scenes at trailheads around the gravel road and scenic fall vistas in between. Costumes encouraged, all ages welcome!

*Registration required by October 29; Members & Non-members \$5 per car.*

### NOVEMBER

#### **Wellness Series: Intro to Human Design**

Sunday, November 8; 2 to 3 pm

There's no better place than nature to explore your Human Design! You will learn about living according to your design, helping you live your best life effortlessly. Alison Van De Pol, RN and holistic health coach will provide each participant with a personal human design chart prior to class.

To register, email: [vandepolwellness@gmail.com](mailto:vandepolwellness@gmail.com).

*Registration required by November 5; Members \$3, Non-members \$5.*

#### **Nature Club: Thankful for Nature**

Friday, November 13; 10:30 to 11:30 am

This program offers your youngest explorers a thematic sensory discovery with a simple lesson and an activity, game, or craft. Class will be held outdoors—be sure to dress for the weather!

*Registration required by November 11; Members Free, Non-members \$5 per child.*

#### **Black Friday Sunrise Stroll**

Friday, November 27; 6 to 7:30 am

Skip the stores and enjoy a peaceful, guided sunrise stroll at the Arboretum as you #optoutside this Black Friday. Appropriate for ages 16+. Sorry, no pets.

*Registration required by November 25; Members Free, Non-members \$5 per person.*

#### **Black Friday Walk & Play**

Friday, November 27; 9 to 10:30 am

We will go for an energetic and educational guided walk along the Arboretum's liveliest trails and discover what's happening with the plants and animals in preparation for winter. All ages welcome. Sorry, no pets.

*Registration required by November 25; Members Free, Non-members \$5 per person.*

### DECEMBER

#### **Curbside Craft Kit: "Gingerbread" House**

Saturday, December 5; 1 to 3 pm

When you pick up your kit, you'll receive a chipboard house form, assembly instructions, a light, and an assortment of natural materials for decorating a gingerbread-style house that will last for years to come.

The kits are to be done at home. Glue is not included, hot glue is recommended. 15 kits available.

*Registration required by November 21; Members \$15 per kit, Non-members \$20 per kit.*

#### **Light the Night**

Monday, December 21; Drop in from 5:30 to 8:30 pm

Celebrate Winter's official arrival and the longest night of the year. Bring a thermos of cocoa and your cozy blankets to enjoy a fire under the stars as you set your intentions for the new year. Natural take-and-make ornament kits will be available for \$2 each. A great event for families!

*Drop-in event, no registration required. Free for members & non-members.*

Please visit our website for up-dates and new class additions: [www.thebrentonarboretum.org](http://www.thebrentonarboretum.org). Unless otherwise noted, to sign up for a class, either go to our website or leave a message at 515-992-4211, extension 5.

**All classes to be held outside. Please meet at the Administration Building.**

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Stephanie and Ben Poole	John and Deb Seeman	Teresa Kay Strum	Randall Wanke	
Summer and Tim Portzen	The Senne Family	Mandy and Brad Stuber	William and Jana Warren	<b>TRIBUTE GIFTS</b>
Megan and Adam Pothoven	Craig and Kimberly Shadur	Fay Sullivan and Bob Link	Ray and Cindy Wasilewski	<i>Gifts received between</i>
Kris and Mark Powell	Shawna Ferm Photography	Summer Alisabeth	Tina Weber	<i>3/1/20 and 8/31/20.</i>
Melissa L. Primus	Jeannie Sheldon	Photography	Vince Weber and	<b>In Memory Of</b>
Brandi Prindle	Jean and Ken Shepherd	Amelia Renee Photography	Sharon Lesan	Deke Gliem
Skyelar Purchase	Beth and William Shields	Mark and Maria Sweet	Tom Weisbrod	James Mishler
Chris and Laura Purdue	Clara Shoemaker and	Vicki and Charles Teas	Fritz Weitz and	Fred Mueller
Quick Smith Photography	Caleb Long	Mary Textor	Cynthia Thorland	Thomas N Urban, Jr.
Shannon Ramsay	Deborah Shoning	Curtis and Connie Thienes	Matt and Rebecca Weller	Ding
Megan Ann Rapp	Doug and Julie Siedenbug	Catherine and Brian Thomas	Jim and Carol Wendl	
Gordon and Katy Reeder	Jason Silkenbaken	Tiatrali Photography	Mark Wentz and Jeni Nash	
Hope and Kyle Reeves	Shanna Simpkins	Kathy Tindall	Leigh and Kylen Whitaker	
Ryan and Penny Reimer	Simply You Photography	Jean and Don Tool	Carol and Patrick White	
Meghan and Luke Reingardt	Colleen and Jason Sites	Nancy Toom and	Martha and Richard White	
	Emily Smith	Patrick Tinker	Diana Whited	

List shows gifts received 8/1/19 through 7/31/20. We apologize for any unintentional error or omission. Call 515-992-4211, ext 2 so that we may correct our records.

*Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic  
The Brenton Arboretum has remained open to the public.*

In these uncertain times, we are grateful to provide our community with an oasis of calm and serenity. Our grounds provide lowans much-needed respite, meditation, and exercise in a safe environment. It's no wonder that visitation has increased more than 70% over last year!

This increased visitation, while whole-heartedly welcome, is not without stress. Everything from printing, grounds security, labor, and supplies needed to increase as well. Combined with a steep reduction of income from rentals and programs, these increases mean that your charitable support is more important than ever.

*Your support is crucial to our mission to inspire joy through the beauty and knowledge of the natural world of trees.*

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY!**

To make a donation online visit [www.TheBrentonArboretum.org](http://www.TheBrentonArboretum.org).

To make a donation by check, please send it to

The Brenton Arboretum; 25141 260th St; Dallas Center, IA 50063.

**SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS** - Gail Turner, Membership & Volunteer Manager

We want to thank these generous volunteers, along with our volunteer Board of Directors listed on page 1, for donating more than 800 hours of their time and talents to the Arboretum during the past year:

Ron Belew  
Mark Benson  
John Bissell  
Carol Bockhaus  
Sue Brenton  
Jim Carty  
Ronalda Dick  
Kali Downs  
Kim Edsen  
Denise Essman  
Phil Estaver  
Ali Faulkner  
Jan & Ed Freese  
BJ Frideres

Dam German  
Teresa Hall  
Bob & Karen Henderson  
Rebecca Hillmer  
Kim Holland  
Mark Kane  
Janelle Ketelsen  
Rosemary Killmer-Thornley  
Ali Locker  
Steve Loy  
Lynette Mason  
Vicki McCarthy  
Kay Meyer  
Pauline Niebur

Kelly Norris  
Dean Peyton  
Patricia Prjatel  
Elsa Rasmusen  
Traci Reineke  
Bob Rennebohm  
Ron Schulz  
Craig Shives  
Alison Van De Pol  
Audra Warmuth  
Teresa Wichtendahl  
Roger Winterhof

Jan Freese has been keeping our perennial beds at the front entrance and kiosk looking beautiful since 2017. She comes out a couple of times a month to weed and dead-head the beds with occasional help from her husband, Ed.

Jan is an Iowa native and retired in 2018 from a career in the healthcare industry. She is a Dallas County Master Gardener and has lots of hobbies including genealogy (she discovered she's a direct descendent of the Pilgrims!). She has a lifelong love of science and enjoys bird watching, rock collecting and managing two family farms in Dallas County.

When asked what she enjoys the most about volunteering at the Arboretum, she responded, "Nature is my retreat. I love hearing quail and pheasants and enjoy the solitude."

Thank you Jan! We are thrilled to have you as part of our volunteer team.





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## THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

25141 260th Street, Dallas Center, Iowa 50063

[www.thebrentonarboretum.org](http://www.thebrentonarboretum.org)

Return Service Requested

A record number of visitors have enjoyed the serene open spaces of The Brenton Arboretum since the pandemic began in March. We are honored to serve such a vital role for the people living in the Des Moines metro and beyond.



Photos courtesy Craig Shives.