



THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

A Vision for Youth Education at the Arboretum —Melissa Burdick, Executive Director

Remember the excitement of “field trip day” back in school, getting on that big yellow school bus and going someplace completely new? The magical moment when the bus door opens and a whole new world unfolds at your feet? At The Brenton Arboretum, we get the joy of that magical moment many times throughout the year. As soon as the bus rolls up we hear the muted roar of excited children. We brace ourselves, the door opens, and a tide of rowdy youngsters rolls out brimming with curiosity and wide-eyed enthusiasm. It’s one of the purest joys in this profession to share our love of trees with kids.



Environmental education isn’t easy; capturing attention, encouraging observation, and making connections is challenging. Whether it’s a skittish child worried about “gross bugs” or chronically underwhelmed tween, there’s something special about the power of nature to break through boundaries and open minds to the world around us. That’s why field trips to The Brenton Arboretum will always be free to any school that wants to come.

Over the past year we’ve paid a lot of attention to our youth education programs. We want to teach as many youngsters as possible about the amazing world of trees. It may seem like “more field trips” is the answer; but after thoughtful conversations with educators we’ve found it’s not that simple. Field trips demand a lot of resources, but funding isn’t necessarily the pinch-point. Teachers must ensure students get a certain number of hours of instruction on specific subjects weekly. Taking a day off for a field trip means that those lost hours of instruction have to be made up on other days. That’s hard to do more than once in a year.

We’re also learning that schools put a lot of thought in crafting their curriculum from grade to grade to satisfy broad state standards. Environmental topics may not be in the curriculum at every grade level. A visit to the Arboretum might only fit the curriculum once in a student’s career, whereas field trips to museums, a play, or the zoo are a better fit in other years.

So, how do we get the mission of The Brenton Arboretum in front of as many kids as possible? We meet them where they are. We work with the schools to craft traveling programs specifically tailored to each district’s curriculum. As opposed to a field trip, it’s much easier to carve time out for a classroom visit from an expert to present a program that enriches the student’s learning experience and bolsters the teacher’s lessons.

We also want to forge stronger relationships with our local schools and teachers. We’re exploring opportunities to offer continuing education credits to help teachers integrate environmental science into everyday lessons. By reaching teachers, we’ll impact students too. As a bonus, these closer relationships will allow us to gain insight into teachers’ needs so we can tailor our programs to be as complementary as possible.

Our end goal is always to inspire joy through the beauty and knowledge of the natural world of trees. We want to plant the seeds of environmental stewardship in the next generation of Earth’s caretakers. We hope to play some role, however small, in making the world a better place.

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RECORD KEEPING —Andy Schmitz, Director of Horticulture

Record keeping! Who likes record keeping? Maybe you really only have to do it during tax season when you're pulling together all your donation receipts, 1099's and W-2's to complete your taxes but most of my winter months are spent record keeping and I love it. Now, it's not tax stuff. It's gathering hand written notes on trees we planted or died this year, digging through old emails, searching through the yearly overflowing file folder of nursery invoices, printed correspondences and typed up phone conversations, along with rummaging through my brain to gather all I can for the plants we gave accession numbers to this year. Once it's all laying out on my desk, I can compile it into one computer record for each tree or shrub we planted this year at the arboretum. I want to make the records as detailed and accurate as possible such that Director of Horticulture 100 years from now can fully understand what I was attempting to convey about a specific tree. And once this information is in the database, we can quickly search for whatever we are looking for. Maybe that's how many oaks we have planted at the arboretum since the beginning or of the oaks we have planted, how many have died?

So, what fields are in the database? Every tree or shrub gets its own individual accession number, a seven-digit number with the first four numbers representing the year it was planted or given a number in a container and the last three digits are a specific number for that tree. For example, bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, 1997-096 was planted in 1997 and given the number 096. No other tree at the arboretum has this exact seven-digit accession number. The common and botanical name are in the record, along with when it was planted, is it alive or dead, who we received the plant from and where it's located at the arboretum. Notes on the trees health or if someone ran it over with a tractor are recorded along with its growth measurements at planting to see how much the tree grows over the years are included in the database as well. The most important field in the database however, is provenance. For a classic car, the provenance will be, where was the car built?, who has owned it? or was it in a movie? For a rare antique, the provenance will be, how old is it?, what country was it manufactured in? and what is its value? But for an arboretum, especially for wild collected trees we have, provenance is where was the seed which the tree was grown from collected, including country, state or province, locality, latitude and longitude of the collection site along with the habitat the seed mother plant was growing in and the associated plants growing in the area. The collector's name and institution they are affiliated with along with the date they made the collection are also included in the provenance field. Depending on the accession, the provenance can be filled with all sorts of nuggets of information and the more details the better to tell the history or story of a plant.

With all this detail, our database is a wealth of information. Back in March, a colleague sent out an email asking several colleagues, what hazelnut, *Carpinus* species have you tried? With a quick search of our database, I was able to say, we have planted six species over the years. Some have died and some are still alive. One species that has died is the Yeddo hornbeam, *Carpinus tschonoskii*. One tree was planted in spring of 2020 and never leafed out in 2021. Iowa's cold winters could have been the culprit here. This tree was wild collected in Sichuan Province, China at a specific set of coordinates. Knowing its collection location and that the tree died tells us the next time we plant a Yeddo hornbeam the seed source needs to be from a more northern area in China, Japan or Korea. So, dead trees are just as valuable to our work here. By knowing what has died and why, will help us adjust our plantings in the future to hopefully accommodate our ever-changing weather patterns with plants that can tolerate wetter springs, drier summers or the up and down temperatures of Iowa's winters so we always have trees to enjoy.

When you are out to the arboretum this year and you stop to look at a tree and its tag, notice the seven-digit number in the upper left corner and know there is more to that tree. Its history is in the computer database and even when the tree dies, its story will live on forever providing valuable knowledge to the arboretum for centuries to come.



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UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS

If a class has to be cancelled or postponed, registered participants will be notified via email. Classes are being added throughout the year so check our website regularly: www.thebrentonarboretum.org/events. Email mail@thebrentonarboretum.org if you have any questions.

MONTHLY Each week will cover a different topic and will be held outdoors unless otherwise noted; Pavilion

Kids' Nature Club Tots (ages 2-5)—1st & 3rd Thursday (unless otherwise noted); 10:30 to 11:30 am

Kids' Nature Club Kids (ages 6-10)—1st & 3rd Thursday (unless otherwise noted); 9 to 10 am

Kids' Nature Club Teens (ages 11-15)—1st & 3rd Thursday (unless otherwise noted); 12 to 1 pm

We have three great options for children and teens to learn about nature at the Arboretum this year.

Members \$1 per child—Non-members \$5 per child

MAY

Floral Design with Adel Flowers and Gifts Sunday, May 21; 1 to 3 pm; Vista Room

Join Floral Manager, Marie from Adel Flowers and Gifts for a fun hands on floral arranging class. We'll provide the container, filler flower and a few other colorful stems to help kick off your design.

Program suitable for 12+. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Each ticket allows one arrangement.

Members \$35 per person—Non-members \$45 per person

JUNE

Outdoor Foraging with Polk County Conservation Monday, June 5; 6 to 7:30 pm; Start at the Vista Room

Join Polk County Naturalist Heidi Anderson for an exciting outdoor adventure. Learn about the abundance of wild edible plants in your landscape. Recipes will be shared and everyone will get a chance to sample a variety of wild edibles. This program will have indoor class time as well as outside class time. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes.

This program is suitable for ages 12+. Sorry no dogs allowed for this program.

Members \$10 per person—Non-members \$15 per person

Outdoor Painting Workshop with Artist Jill Woodward Sunday, June 11; 2 to 5 pm; Overlook Pond

Join local artist, Jill Woodward, at The Brenton Arboretum for an outdoor painting workshop. All supplies will be provided. Please bring a lawn chair and any personal items you might need. (hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle)

Best suited for ages 16 and older. No painting experience needed. Limited to 10 participants.

This program will take place on the paved path at Overlook Pond. Please dress to be outside the entire class.

Members \$40 per person—Non-members \$40 per person

Guest Visit—Reiman Gardens—What's the Buzz in Your Backyard Wednesday, June 21; 1 to 2 pm; Vista Room

Learn all about bees, from bumble to honey, that live in your backyard and neighborhood. We will explore who they are and what they do that makes them so important to our environment. Must have 10 participants.

Registration Required by June 14; Members and Non-members FREE

Back to our Roots: The Brenton Arboretum History Sunday, June 25; 1 to 2 pm; Vista Room

Join The Brenton Arboretum's Executive Director for an in depth class on The Brenton Arboretum History. Melissa Burdick will discuss the history of the Brenton Arboretum from pioneer days to now. Learn about the Brenton family and the evolution of it's relationship to the land in the heart of Dallas County, Iowa.

Members \$5 per person—Non-members \$10 per person

Crafty Cocktail Hour Monday, June 26; 6 to 8 pm; Vista Room

Join us the last Monday of June for Crafty Cocktail hours. We will have a Pinterest worthy craft courtesy of Wild-flower Factory and our bartender will be "shaking" up some tasty cocktails for you to try. Grab your friends and spend one Monday evening enjoying the breathtaking views and crafting your evening away.

Sicilian Sunset Cocktail; Pressed Flower Dish Craft

Each ticket purchased will include 1 craft project and cocktails (a small selection of wine will also be available).

Members \$50 per person—Non-members \$60 per person

UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS, Continued

JULY

Trees as Herbs

Friday, July 14; 6 to 7 pm; Vista Room

Join The Brenton Arboretum's Executive Director, Melissa Burdick for a one hour discovery of Trees as Herbs. Melissa will share the many benefits of trees and how they can be used in a variety of ways to benefit your life. Suitable for ages 14 and older.

Members \$5 per person—Non-members \$10 per person

Ice Cream Social—*Members only*

Sunday, July 16; 1 to 4 pm; Pavilion

Join the manager of memberships, Megan Webster for a members only fun afternoon ice cream social. Ice cream provided at the Pavilion.

Members Only—FREE

Crafty Cocktail Hour

Monday, July 24; 6 to 8 pm; Vista Room

Join us the last Monday of July for Crafty Cocktail hours. We will have a Pinterest worthy craft courtesy of Wildflower Factory and our bartender will be “shaking” up some tasty cocktails for you to try.

Bay Breeze Cocktail; Flower Bookmarks and Flower Ornaments Craft

Each ticket purchased will include 1 craft project and cocktails (a small selection of wine will also be available).

Members \$50 per person—Non-members \$60 per person

AUGUST

Crafty Cocktail Hour

Monday, August 28; 6 to 8 pm; Vista Room

Join us the last Monday of August for Crafty Cocktail hours. We will have a Pinterest worthy craft courtesy of Wildflower Factory and our bartender will be “shaking” up some tasty cocktails for you to try.

Electric Lemonade Cocktail; Seed Paper Craft

Each ticket purchased will include 1 craft project and cocktails (a small selection of wine will also be available).

Members \$50 per person—Non-members \$60 per person

SEPTEMBER

Succulent Container Garden

Sunday, September 10; 1 to 2:30 pm; Vista Room

Join Succulent experts Richard and Cynde Schreiber for a hands on make and take succulent container garden class. Suitable for ages 16+. Each ticket allows one container.

Members \$25 per person—Non-members \$35 per person

OCTOBER

Campfire S'mores—*Members Only*

Sunday, October 1; 3 to 6 pm; Vista Room lawn

We'll enjoy a late afternoon at the Arboretum with a bonfire and s'mores.

Members Only—Free

Halloween Boo-quet Centerpiece with Wildflower Factory

Sunday, October 15; 2 to 4 pm; Vista Room

Join owner of the Wildflower Factory, Miranda Kyhl to create your very own pumpkin centerpiece.

Suitable for ages 12+. Each ticket allows one 'spooky' looking pumpkin centerpiece.

Members \$35 per person—Non-members \$45 per person

Spooktacular Trees Halloween Drive-Through

Sunday, October 29; 1 to 5 pm

Our annual Halloween event keeps getting bigger and better! During this family-friendly drive-through event you'll view delightfully spooky scenes with scenic fall vistas in between.

Drop-In Event; \$5 per car, exact change—no change will be made at the gate.

NOVEMBER

Fall Centerpiece with Adel Flowers and Gifts

Sunday, November 19; 1 to 3 pm; Vista Room

Join Marie from Adel Flowers and Gifts to create your own fall centerpiece for your Thanksgiving table. Containers, filler flowers, and colorful stems will be provided. Bring your own fall branches, fall grasses, or fall flowers as well. Suitable for ages 12+. Each ticket allows one centerpiece.

Members \$45 per person—Non-members \$55 per person.

\$50-\$149, continued

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	Meghan Joelle Photography	Jeremy Dubansky	
	Ami Stokes and Paul Brady	Judith Warmuth	

Donor list shows gifts received 1/1/2022 through 12/31/22. We apologize for any unintentional error or omission. Call 515-992-4211, ext 2 so that we may correct our records.

If you would like to make a memorial or tribute gift to the Arboretum, we have a variety of options ranging from bird boxes to benches. Contact Melissa at 515-992-4211 ext 3 if you would like to learn more!

THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP

—Megan Webster, Membership & Volunteer Manager



Do you know someone looking for fun new things to do this summer? Do you know a parent with children in the Des Moines metro always on the lookout for fun and educational classes for all ages? Tell them all about the beauty of having a membership to The Brenton Arboretum! The arboretum has added tons of new fun events and classes to our lineup this year.

Your memberships have provided tremendous support of this oasis of trees, prairies, streams, and trails for the next generation.

Do you have any birthdays, weddings or anniversaries coming up? Take advantage of your member perk to rent a space or an outdoor area at the arboretum.

There are so many benefits to membership with the Arboretum, including reciprocal admission privileges to other gardens in the metro and beyond; reduced and/or free class registration fees; a dog pass to bring the family pup with you as you enjoy our trails; special member event invitations; and more.

One of the newest benefits that has been added for our members is a 10% discount to The Wildflower Factory in Dallas Center. Don't miss out on an opportunity to check out one of Dallas Center's newer businesses and get the added perk of a discount while you are there!

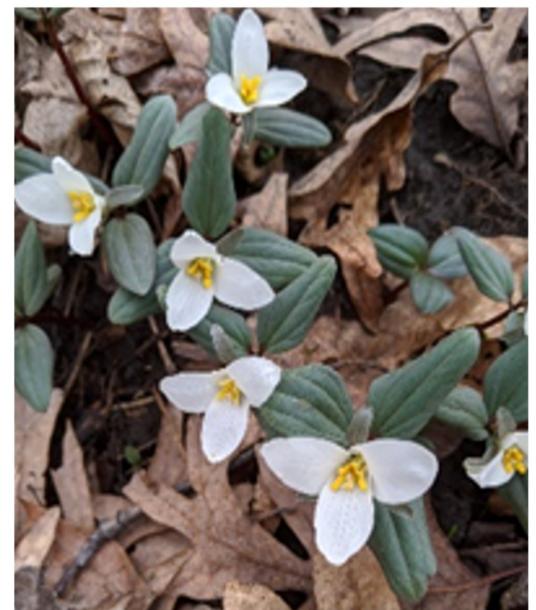
Come out and enjoy all the beauty and peaceful tranquility that the arboretum has to offer as the weather warms up.

Consider sharing your love of the Arboretum with your family and friends this year. We are grateful for your continued support!



WELCOMING OF SPRING —Penny Perkins, Education & Outreach Manager

Many of us look forward to the new beginnings springtime brings. Ephemerals, the petite flowers that are quick to bloom and fade herald the arrival of spring. This is the perfect time of year to shake off winter's cabin fever and set out into the woods to practice your observation and identification skills on these here-and-gone beauties. Examples of these species are various trillium species (seen in the picture) that get their name from their trio of leaves and petals. Another treasure to look for are spring beauties which host the mining bee (Andrena erigeniae), a specialist bee that gathers pollen from the flower to take into the ground feeding the next generation of this specialist pollinator. Dutchman's breeches, toothwort, and May apples also fall within this category of short-lived spring treasures. All of these blooms are utilizing the sunlight that covers the forest floor before the forests canopy's leaves appear. To learn more about the flora and fauna of our spring woodlands stop by and browse our horticultural library. If you'd like to help your little ones learn to observe and appreciate nature too, check out our Kid's Nature Club programs. Every club meeting touches on a new and exciting nature topic to inspire your child's curiosity.





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Have fun with these new arrangement classes at the Arboretum!



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