



## THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

### SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

#### NATURE HEALS —Melissa Burdick, Executive Director

Late last year The Brenton Arboretum's board and staff set out on a mission to evaluate and strengthen our commitment to our mission. The process was as much a journey of self-discovery as it was an institutional exercise. We affirmed that yes, our mission to *inspire joy through the beauty and knowledge of the natural world of trees* is as sound as it has ever. The process of exploring our heart and soul uncovered an even deeper motivation. Working together to articulate this "higher purpose," we crafted a statement that is equal parts practical and aspirational:

Understanding nature heals, The Brenton Arboretum provides a tree sanctuary all can explore to find joy, renew their energy, refresh their spirit, and feel better. Our tree collection inspires an appreciation for nature and contributes to scientific research on the importance of trees to environmental, personal, and community health.

At the heart of this ethos lies a profound belief: *nature heals*. These words were not chosen merely for their poetry; but for the real science behind them. When given the opportunity and support it needs, nature can and does heal itself from the vagaries of human disregard. We also know from countless scientific studies that nature heals *us* to: physically, mentally, and emotionally. Humans are healthier with regular exposure to nature. Our purpose at the Arboretum is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of both planet and people.

The Brenton Arboretum's commitment extends beyond conservation; it encompasses a dedicated effort to ensure that every individual who crosses our threshold experiences a profound connection with the natural world. Through thoughtful stewardship and innovative programming, we strive to create a sanctuary where all can find solace among the oaks, serenity by a babbling brook, and inspiration under the gentle shade of a maple.

By fostering an appreciation for the amazing world of trees, we not only inspire wonder but also promote vital research and environmental conservation. The collective efforts of staff, volunteers, members, and donors, illuminates the indispensable role of trees in promoting environmental sustainability, personal well-being, and vibrant community health. Together, we strive to create a ripple effect of positive change by promoting a deeper understanding of nature's profound capacity to heal.

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## Testing The New —Andy Schmitz, Director of Horticulture

The canvas is clean, the brushes are new and the paint is ready to come to life. Or in the case of the arboretum, the space is opened up, the shovels have been sharpened and the trees are waiting eagerly to be planted. A colleague once said to me, "the chainsaw will be your paint brush." Well, one the arboretums "paint brushes" wore out last year after so much use.

The non-native and invasive pest, the emerald ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis* has wiped out most of the ash, *Fraxinus* collection north of the Maintenance Building. Though the blue ash, *Fraxinus quadrangulata* remain, as they are the least preferred ash species by the borer but in time, the chainsaw will be fired up again. The green ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, black ash, *Fraxinus nigra* and the white ash *Fraxinus americana* are all but ashes on the brush pile. We are truly watching a genus go extinct before our eyes. But with this, comes the opportunity to plant new species at the arboretum and this spring is that time.

The holes left vacant by the ash trees will soon be faded memories as they are replaced with oak, *Quercus* species new to the arboretum. Oaks like, wavyleaf oak, *Quercus undulata*, Gambel oak, *Quercus gambelii*, netleaf oak, *Quercus rugosa*, Arizona white oak,

*Quercus arizonica*, southern red oak, *Quercus falacata*, gray oak, *Quercus grisea*, Arkansas oak, *Quercus arkansana*, shrub oak, *Quercus turbinella* and Lacey oak, *Quercus laceyi*. These are all southern United States species and were wild collected when I crossed Texas with a group during the International Oak Society Conference in the fall of 2022. Now, one year old seedlings are ready to planted and take their chances at surviving Iowa's winter. The wavyleaf oak and the Gambel oak grown from southwest Colorado wild seed sources have already survived three winters in Iowa. Now, we will find out if some Texas genetics like or dislike Iowa. Being wild collected seed, we know the exact location it was collected and



Shrub Oak, *Quercus turbinella*



Oak seedlings in fall color

with this we know the soil type, associated species and elevation. So, no matter if these new oaks live or die, we learn something. If they die, we learn that during future collecting trips, we need to collect seed from higher or lower elevations, on different facing slopes or on different soils to trial them again in Iowa.

This is what the arboretum is all about, testing and trying new species to see what might just survive here. The next time you are at the arboretum take a look at these new little oak trees because in actuality you may only get this year to see them.



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!



Oak Leaf Circle members donated cumulative gifts of \$500 or more in the year 2023.

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*Gifts received between  
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*Gifts received between  
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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](http://www.thebrentonarboretum.org/events). Email [mail@thebrentonarboretum.org](mailto:mail@thebrentonarboretum.org) if you have any questions.

### MONTHLY

**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

We have two great options for children to learn about nature at the Arboretum this year. Each week will cover a different topic and will be held outdoors unless otherwise noted; Pavilion

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

**Yoga with Nature**—Every Wednesday 12 to 1 pm; May to September—Join Dennis Kelly for a rejuvenating session of yoga amidst nature. All ages and abilities welcome for FREE!

**Roaming Readers Book Club**—2nd Monday; 2 to 3 pm—Join the Waukees Public Library for a discussion of each month's book. Meet inside for book discussion followed by a walk on one of the trails. No registration needed.

### MAY

**Mother's Day Botanical Drawings with Artist Jill Woodward** Saturday, May 4; 10 am to 12 pm; Vista Room

Join us at The Brenton Arboretum for a nature walk around the grounds to look for seeds, sticks, parts of plants and even dandelions. After our nature walk gathering we will meet at the Vista Room and with some instructions and guidance from artist, Jill Woodward, we will create botanical drawings using mixed media. (colored pencils and watercolor) This is an art event appropriate for a wide range of ages and no experience is necessary. Bring all generations for an early Mother's Day celebration.

*Members \$35 per person—Non-members \$40 per person*

**Plein Air Festival** Sunday, May 19; 1 to 4 pm; Start at the Vista Room

Join local artisans at The Brenton Arboretum for our inaugural Plein Air art events. The gorgeous surroundings will provide as inspiration for artists who will be set up across The Brenton Arboretum grounds. We want people to come by and have a look, ask questions, and be inspired by the natural world's palette of hues and sceneries.

Artists check in from 12 to 1 pm at the Vista Room.

### JUNE

**Go Hug a Tree** Saturday, June 1; 1 to 3 pm; Pavilion

Come help support The Brenton Arboretum's mission "to inspire the joy through the beauty of the natural world of trees" and hug one of our trees. Connect yourself with nature by hugging a tree, take a moment to take a deep breath appreciate The Brenton Arboretum.

*Cost is \$1.00 per tree hug. Open to all ages. Donations for tree hugs are appreciated.*

**Outdoor Foraging with Polk County Conservation** Thursday, June 6; 6 to 7:30 pm; Vista Room

Join Polk County Naturalist Heidi Anderson for an exciting outdoor adventure. Learn about the abundance of wild edible plants in your landscape. Heidi will discuss wild edible plants in our area, plant identifications, safety and sustainable harvesting, nutrition and more. Recipes will be shared and everyone will get a chance to sample a variety of wild edibles.

This program will have indoor and outdoor class time. Suitable for ages 12+. No dogs allowed for this program.

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

**Wine on the Prairie** Saturday, June 8; 7 to 9 pm; Vista Room

Come and enjoy a unique experience at The Brenton Arboretum. This is an opportunity to enjoy a glass of wine and light appetizers while taking in all the arboretum and nature have to offer as you overlook the arboretum grounds.

Enjoy a magnificent sunset as you mingle with fellow arboretum supporters.

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



## UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS, Continued

### **Foundations of Nature Photography**

Saturday, June 29; 9 to 11 am; Vista Room

Join photographer and educator Tim Abramowitz for a series of four classes on Nature Photography. Tim is known for his garden and landscape images and extensive teaching experience. Bring your camera to dial in the settings and concepts during classroom time. You will then have a chance to practice the techniques at the arboretum alongside Tim. This program is a 4 class series with sessions 2-4 on July 6, July 20, and July 27.

*Members \$50 per person/per class—Non-members \$60 per person/per class*

### **JULY**

#### **An Evening with the Fireflies**

Saturday, July 20; 8 to 10 pm; Pavilion

Bring the whole family for a beautiful night with the summer fireflies at The Brenton Arboretum. We'll meet at the Pavilion at 8:30pm and enjoy the sunset as we wait for the fireflies to perform their nightly ballet. All ages and free!

#### **Plant, Grow, Fly with Blank Park Zoo**

Friday, July 26; 1 to 2 pm; Vista Room

Join Ben White from Blank Park Zoo as he presents an interactive class for all ages about what to plant and grow in your yard for all those wonderful bugs, insects, birds and butterfly's that are native to our area. Ben will also have a selection of animals from Blank Park Zoo to help with our program.

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

### **AUGUST**

#### **Market on the Prairie**

Saturday, August 3; 9 am to 12 pm; Pavilion

Discover this Pop-up Market on the Prairie! Enjoy in person access to some of the best locally-sourced and crafted products from premier Central Iowa vendors. Spend time shopping local vendors Julie McGuire with all things bees, Against the Grain with handcraft wood items, My Neighbor's Garden 515 garden products and Native Legacy Tree Nursery.

### **SEPTEMBER**

#### **Painting with a Twist Arboretum Inspired**

Sunday, September 22; 1 to 3 pm; Vista Room

Join us and Painting with a Twist to create an amazing work of art inspired by Iowa. Instructors will guide you step by step through the process of creating this beautiful piece. Best suited for ages 12+. All materials are provided.

*Members \$50 per person—Non-members \$55 per person*

### **OCTOBER**

#### **Autumn Nature Photography Workshop**

Sunday, October 6; 5:30 to 7:30 pm; Vista Room

Join photo artist, Shelby Patterson ( Candid Creations LLC) and Horticulturist, Lee Goldsmith (Native Legacy Tree and Perennial Nursery LLC) for this hands- on nature and landscape photography workshop. Learn how to optimize your camera settings to enhance your own nature photographs. Best suited for ages 18+.

*Members \$50 per person— Non-members \$55 per person*

#### **"Get on Board Des Moines" Charcuterie Workshop**

Sunday, October 13; 1 to 2:30 pm; Vista Room

Join owner and founder Wendy Tinkey from Get on Board Des Moines for a hands on charcuterie workshop. We encourage guests to create your board then find your perfect peaceful location on property to enjoy your work.

*Members \$70 per person—Non-members \$75 per person*

#### **Hay Rack Ride**

Sunday, October 20; 12 to 3 pm

Our new annual tradition of a scenic hay rack ride through The Brenton Arboretum. Executive Director Melissa Burdick will talk about the science of fall colors, The Brenton Arboretum's signature tree collections and some interesting facts all about the arboretum. Enjoy cocoa and cookies before you board.

*\$10 per adult – \$5 per child under 10 years of age*

### **NOVEMBER**

#### **Floral Centerpiece with Adel Flowers & Gifts**

Sunday, November 10; 1 to 3 pm; Vista Room

Join Marie from Adel Flowers and Gifts to create your own fall centerpiece for your casual or holiday table. Marie will explain design elements, how to properly choose flowers, greenery and all the insider tips and tricks you need to know to create a piece your proud to show off. Best suited for ages 16+. All materials provided.

*Members \$55 per person—Non-members \$65 per person.*

## \$50-\$149, continued

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*Donor list shows gifts received 1/1/2023 through 12/31/23. 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!

## Summer of Learning —Penny Perkins, Education & Outreach Manager

Hello there! Our evenings will soon be filled with songs from the calls of woodcocks, cicadas, insects, frogs, and toads. Exploring the world at different times keeps us aligned with the changes as the seasons pass. Keep your eyes open for upcoming Nature Clubs- Tell Me Tree and Frogs, Toads, and Turtles and our full moon night on May 23 for the Flower Moon.

Bring your kids out for some exciting fun this summer! This year we are offering four summer camps. We have two Animal Odyssey Camps and two Nature Explorer Camps. To register, please go to Waukee Parks and Rec website: [https://waukee.activityreg.com/selectactivity\\_t2.wcs](https://waukee.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs)

**THE BRENTON ARBORETUM**

**Summer Camps**

25141 260th St  
Dallas Center, IA 50063  
<https://thebrentonarboretum.org/>

Registration begins February 16 through Waukee Parks and Rec.

**Animal Odyssey Camp**

<b>Session 1: \$60</b> May 30, 31 ages 5-7	<b>Session 2: \$60</b> June 3, 4 ages 8-12
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**Nature Explorer Camp**

<b>Session 1: \$60</b> June 10, 11 ages 5-7	<b>Session 2: \$60</b> June 18, 19 ages 8-12
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Summer Camp registration will receive \$40 off a new Brenton Arboretum Membership

Follow QR Code

[https://waukee.activityreg.com/selectactivity\\_t2.wcs](https://waukee.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs)





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## THE BRENTON ARBORETUM

25141 260th Street, Dallas Center, Iowa 50063

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

**Return Service Requested**

**Come visit our beautiful landscape!**

