

VOLUNTEER

March 2022



Morris Arboretum
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Volunteer

Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania

Volunteer is a newsletter published monthly for
Arboretum volunteers.

Mission

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania inspires an understanding of the relationship between plants, people and place through education, research and horticultural display.

Vision for the Future

As an irreplaceable public garden, the Morris Arboretum provides a place of respite, beauty and learning where the joy and wonder of the natural world inspire all who visit to be enthusiastic ambassadors for plants and our fundamental dependence on them.

A vital part of one of the great research universities in the world, the Morris Arboretum is renowned for its science aimed at understanding and conserving plants

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Volunteer

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Photos: Ilana Grubin, unless otherwise stated

Cover: *Smilax china*, Chinaroot greenbrier



Pteroceltis tatarinowii, Tatar wingceltis

Contents

Letter from the Editor	1
Notes from the Guides Chair	2
Volunteer Opportunities	4
From the Archives	6
Garden Highlights	7
Calendar	8



Loop de Loop, sculpture by Patrick Dougherty

Letter from the Editor

This morning as I walked to my office in Gates Hall, the aroma of Witchhazels was especially fragrant and delicious. I know that before long, more spring flowers will be on the way. With the transition to spring, this is also my last Newsletter as your editor until next winter, since we have a new intern starting in March! Her name is Melissa Lisboa-Underwood and she will be taking over the Newsletter for the duration of her 9 month internship (see more about Melissa on page 4). Doing the Newsletter has given me a good excuse to walk around the arboretum taking photos, and I have also felt a bit more connected to what's happening at the Arboretum outside of camp. While its been nice to take part in this newsletter, beginning in March I will be diving deep into my primary job duties – planning for summer camp! See more about that on page 5 as I hope that many of you can join me and our campers as guest presenters. Thanks everyone, and I hope to see you around the Arboretum.

Ilana Grubin

Summer Camp Coordinator



Galanthus sp.
Snow drops



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Sunburst'
Sunburst witchhazel

Notes from the Guides Chair

A trip of a Lifetime Leads to Thoughts of Conservation at Home

As part of a 14-day trip to Ecuador in January, I visited the Galapagos Islands where all visitors must be accompanied by a local naturalist guide, they must stay on the designated trails, they cannot touch or feed the wildlife, they cannot take anything off the islands, they cannot smoke, and they are asked to only take water to drink onto the land. Rules such as these help to protect the islands' ecosystems and preserve their natural state, which is pretty much as Darwin found them in 1835.

The ecosystem of the Galapagos Islands maintains a delicate balance that can be disrupted by something as small as a fly. Visitors like me are drawn to the Galapagos by its endemic species of birds, reptiles and plants, volcanic landscapes, and historical connections to science, and great care is taken to ensure that visitors do not harm the islands' environment. At Quito's airport, the luggage of all travelers bound for Galapagos is screened for food or other organic materials



that might introduce harmful species. And, as my plane flew toward Baltra Island 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, the passenger and baggage compartments were sprayed with an aerosol that helps further prevent the introduction of foreign organisms and materials to the archipelago.

The Galapagos National Park was established in 1959 to preserve the natural elements of the Galapagos, and today, 97% of the land surface of the 13 islands is protected by the park.

There is a rule on the Galapagos Islands that humans must stay at least 6 feet away from the wildlife, but if the birds and mammals decide they want to approach you, they can, and they do. Multiple times nesting birds, iguanas and sea lions nurturing their offspring came right up to me, without fear.

What I experienced in this nature kingdom will stick with me. Every day, I thought that there was no way to top the day before. Yet, every day I was absolutely amazed by the variety of wildlife, the proximity one can (continued on next page)



Notes from the Guides Chair (continued)

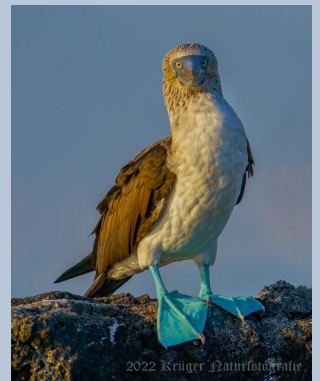
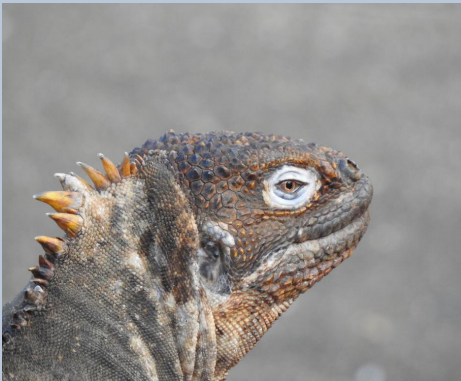
get to the wildlife, and the stark beauty of the landscape. I even witnessed an erupting volcano (Wolf), which last erupted in 2015.

Ecotourism, which is defined by The International Ecotourism Society as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education,” is a major reason to visit the Galapagos Islands. Here in the Philadelphia area, there are numerous opportunities to explore and interact with nature, too. Just as there are rules in Galapagos to ensure that

human visitors don't harm the islands' ecosystems, there are also practices in place and steps people can take to protect Pennsylvania's natural spaces. Education coupled with experiences in nature can instill an intrinsic value so that people care enough to make sure that it remains.

Looking forward to seeing you at the arboretum during our tour refresher sessions throughout March.

Jim Kohler
Chair of the Guides



Photos in this article are by Jim Kohler. Blue footed booby by Karl Kruger.

Did you know...

The cover photo shows *Smilax china*, which is native to Asia, and has been used for thousands of years as a medicinal plant in China. The roots are the most commonly used part, however, stems and rhizomes can also be used in the form of a powder or paste. It has been widely used as a traditional herbal medicine for the treatment of gout, rheumatoid arthritis, skin diseases, diabetes, urinary tract infection, and much more. Scientific studies of the plant compounds confirmed that the tuber of *Smilax china* has anti-inflammatory, anticancer, depurative, and anticoagulation properties.

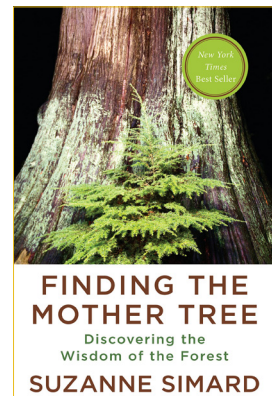
Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities

April Book Club

Finding the Mother Tree: The Wisdom of the Forest by Suzanne Simard, 2021

April 1st | 1:00 PM | Zoom Meeting

From the world's leading forest ecologist who forever changed how people view trees and their connections to one another and to other living things in the forest—a moving, deeply personal journey of discovery. Suzanne Simard is a pioneer on the frontier of plant communication and intelligence; she's been compared to Rachel Carson, hailed as a scientist who conveys complex, technical ideas in a way that is dazzling and profound. Her work has influenced filmmakers and her TED talks have been viewed by more than 10 million people worldwide. Now, in her first book, Simard brings us into her world, the intimate world of the trees, in which she brilliantly illuminates the fascinating and vital truths—that trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complex, interdependent circle of life; that forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks by which trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own—and at the center of it all, the Mother Trees: the mysterious, powerful forces that connect and sustain the others that surround them.



The Book Club is open to all Arboretum volunteers and staff. All are welcome to attend any session and you do not have to attend every month.



Meet the new Visitor Education Intern

March 29 | 11 am | Widener, Classroom

Meet our new Visitor Education Intern, Melissa Lisboa-Underwood. Melissa, a graduate of Rutgers University, brings to the position a background in Agricultural Sciences and Environmental Conservancy as well as years of experience in both classroom and summer camp education.

Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

Gates Hall Tour & Chat

April 12th | 12:30pm | Gates Hall

Interested in knowing more about Gates Hall? Join us Tuesday April 12 for a chat and private tour of the house formerly called Overlea. Find out who designed it, who lived there and how the original rooms are used now. Plus we'll answer the question no one ever asks: what does George Widener have to do with Overlea? Join Leslie Morris-Smith and Joyce Munro in the lobby of Gates Hall at 12:30pm.



Volunteer Workshops and Opportunities

— Training Opportunities for all Garden Educators —

Student group tours requests have begun for the Spring! Please join us on Thursday, March 3rd and Tuesdays, March 8th through March 29th at **9:30 AM** for Tour Refreshers & Updates.

- Thurs. March 3rd – A revised “What Tree Am I” tour
- Tues. March 8 – “Tree Adventure” tour refresher
- Tues. March 15 – “Wetlands” tour refresher
- Tues. March 22 – “4 Seasons thru 5 Senses” refresher
- Tues. March 29 – A revised “Interdependence & Sustainable Practices” tour + Meet our New Visitor Education Intern!

Thanks for all you do – hope to see you there!



— Volunteer with summer camp —

Summer Camp needs your help!

For six weeks, the Arboretum will be abuzz with young visitors who are coming to us for summer camp! There will be a team of camp counselors with the children every day from 9am-3pm, however, we are looking for volunteers to share their talents during short special programs. A special program for camp could be a game, song, craft, demo, fun plant facts,



or hands-on presentation. The time frame is flexible and might be anywhere from 15 minutes up to an hour. Camp Counselors will always be with the group as well. Campers range in age from 4 years old all the way up to middle school, and they will be divided into groups with about 15 kids. A special program could just target one age group, or we could adapt it to target several different groups. We would love your expertise and your feedback in leading special programs for our campers! If you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out directly to Ilana Grubin at igrubin@upenn.edu.

From the Archives

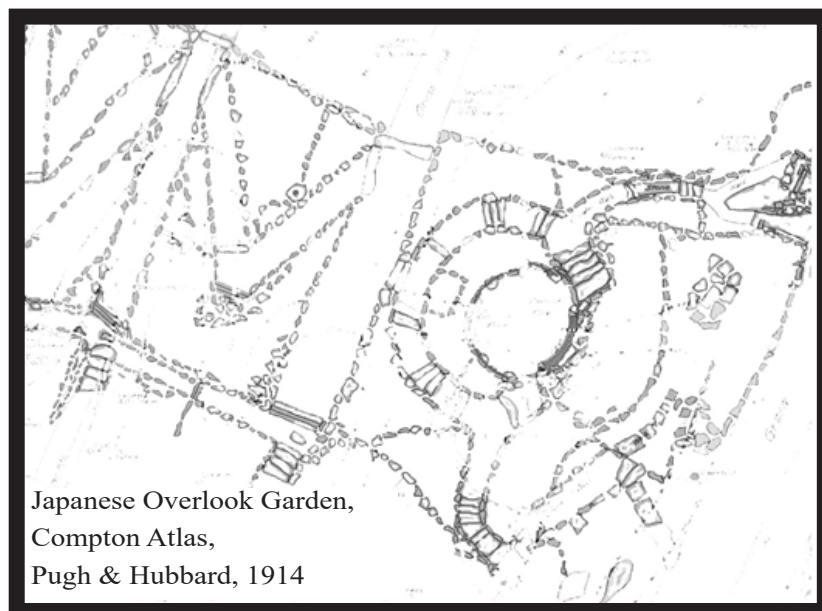
by Joyce H. Munro

A Map Worth Studying

Unlike English-style gardens where beds of colorful flowers reign supreme, the Japanese Overlook Garden is all about the rockwork. For construction of a project as complex as the Overlook, John and Lydia Morris knew they needed a Master of the art of setting stones (*ishi wo taten koto*)—and that person was Y. Muto of Tokyo.

The Morrises commissioned Muto in 1912, two years after they purchased the property now called English Park. Muto was familiar with Compton; he had constructed the Hill and Water Garden for the Morrises in 1905, so he knew the contour and character of the land. Muto was in high demand and at times his clients had to wait months, even years, for his services. But fortunately for the Morrises, Muto was available—he had just completed an expansive Japanese garden for James and Sallie Dooley in Richmond, Virginia.

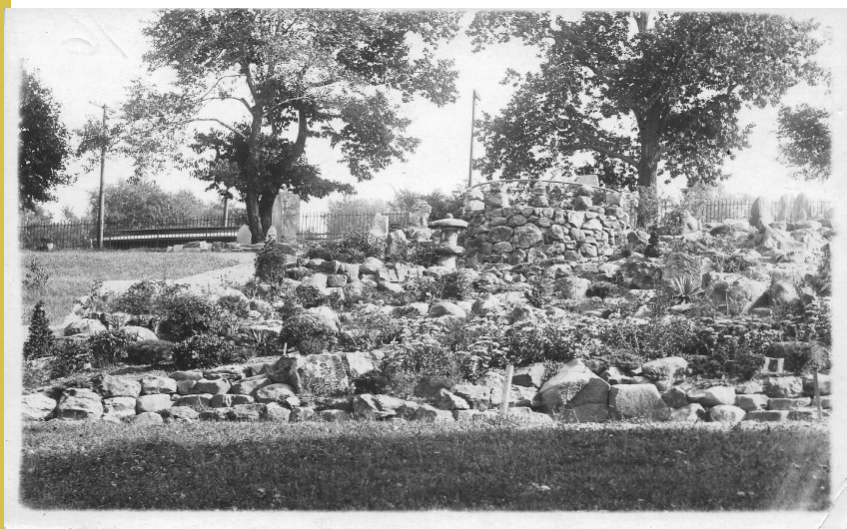
Like every garden Muto created, the Overlook was meant to be a contemplative, spiritual place. Along the zigzag pebble path (*sando*) up the slope were symbols to muse, like an *ishi-doro* lantern and a pair of lion-dogs (*komainu*). Chrysanthemums lined the path and over time, the ubiquitous



Japanese Overlook Garden,
Compton Atlas,
Pugh & Hubbard, 1914

Japanese vine, wisteria, covered the platform railing. Midway to the top was a pool with a stone seat, another feature designed to slow the visitor. At the top of the stone embankment, a round viewing platform offered a pleasant view of English Park.

This was not the first overlook garden Muto designed in the U.S. At the Doolley's estate, he created a viewing platform on a massive granite outcropping, accessible by a winding stone stairway. It's called the Rocky Overlook.



Japanese Overlook Garden, c. 1914 (2018.36.23)

Keeping you connected from home

Garden Highlights



Malus 'Indian Magic'
Indian Magic crabapple



View of English Park



View of "Out on a Limb"



Hamamelis × *intermedia* 'Moonlight',
Moonlight witchhazel



Eranthis hyemalis,
Winter aconite



Camellia japonica,
common camellia



Fungus on *Pteroceltis*
tatarinowii, Tatar wingceltis

Upcoming Events

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Garden Educator Training 9:30am	4 Book Club 1pm	5
6	7	8 Garden Educator Training 9:30am	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Garden Educator Training 9:30am	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Garden Educator Training 9:30am	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 Training - 9:30am New Intern Meet & Greet 11am	30	31	1 Book Club 1pm	

Weekly Volunteer Events

Wednesdays (beginning March 16): Horticulture Volunteers 8:30am-12pm

Saturdays and Sundays: Regular Tour 1:00pm-2:00pm

Saturday & Sunday: Wellness Walks 10:30am