

VOLUNTEER

March/April 2023



Morris Arboretum
& Gardens

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Pinus palustris (longleaf pine)

Volunteer

Morris Arboretum of the University of
Pennsylvania
Volunteer is a newsletter published monthly for
Arboretum volunteers.

Mission of Morris Arboretum

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 and ecosystems.

CALL FOR CONTENT!

Do you have an idea for a column or article for our beloved Volunteer Newsletter? Let us know!

Contact: Jenny Rajotte
jrajotte@upenn.edu

Information:

(215) 247-5777
www.morrisarboretum.org
100 E. Northwestern Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Jenny Rajotte, Interim Editor
Contributors: Jim Kohler, Joyce Munro, Deitra Arena

Photos: Jenny Rajotte unless otherwise stated



Iris reticulata

Contents

Letter from the Interim Editor	1
Notes from the Garden Ed. Chair	2
Winter Warmer Wrap-up	3
Meet Clara Reyes	3
Blue Bird Monitoring Project	4
History Chat & Chew: April 11	5
From the Archives	6
Around the Gardens	7
Volunteer Calendars	8-9

Letter from the Interim Editor

Dear Volunteers:

As many folks know, it's been an incredibly busy few months here at the Morris Arboretum & Gardens! Change abounds as the plants and people prepare to celebrate [90 years of being open to the public](#). In March we launched our new name and branding, a fresh spin that we hope welcomes the community in to explore what we have to offer. The year will be filled with celebratory events and new installations, and the buzz about what's to come goes well beyond the bees who are busy with the Spring blooms popping up all over the gardens.

In addition to all of the planning and projects taking place, we also welcomed the 2023 cohort of Interns and Fellows who will spend 9 - 12 months working closely with staff across almost all departments. May's Newsletter will introduce you all to them, but please say hello and introduce yourself as you see them working over the next few weeks.

The Interns and Fellows aren't the only new faces around the Arboretum, either! We've had such a wonderful time meeting, training, and onboarding new volunteers, and I am looking forward to an exciting year with you all, new and returning.

And lastly, we are absolutely thrilled to be welcoming our new Assistant Director of Youth and Visitor Education, Clara Reyes, introduced in this very issue of Volunteer! I look forward to working closely with Clara in the coming weeks to work on developing more plans for volunteer programming and engagement across departments.

Spring has been quite a ride already, and if it's any indication of what's to come I can't wait to strap in and feel the wind on my face as we whip through the winding roads of 2023!

With immense gratitude,

Jenny Rajotte
Program Coordinator, Internships & Volunteers

Notes from the Garden Educator's Chair

A Case for Dimming Outdoor Lights

“The light pollution produced by streetlamps, advertising billboards, floodlights and our homes is so bad that 80% of the world’s population lives in the haze of a perpetual glow in hours of darkness.” (BBC, July 19, 2021) In the United States and European countries, it’s 99% of the population.

The light that beams from all of the aforementioned sources doesn’t just light what we need, it finds its way into animal and insect habitats, creating a glowing sky that extends up to 150 miles from every metropolitan area. What has resulted is an alarming decline of insect populations around the world. It has changed the foraging behavior of nocturnal insects and bats. Creatures, such as male fireflies, can be confused by artificial light and make it difficult for them to find and attract females. Light pollution can affect fish by suppressing melatonin, which controls processes like reproduction and growth. It disrupts the nesting behavior of turtles. Researchers have even found that coral reefs have been damaged by light pollution. It is estimated that up to one billion birds die every year from flying into buildings in the US, with artificial lights thought to play a major role.

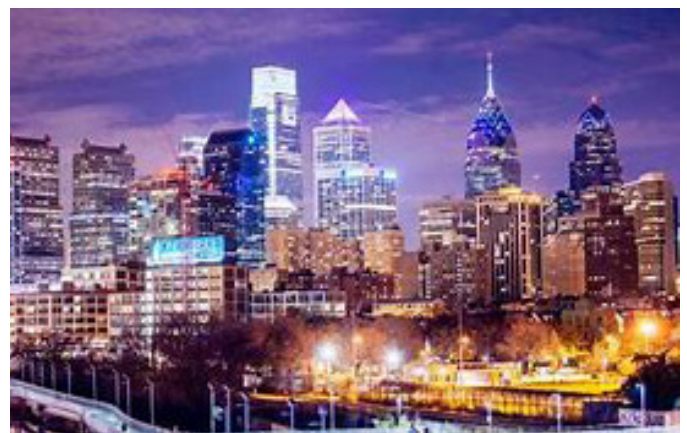
Unlike the problems associated with plastic pollution and climate change, we can literally reduce light pollution overnight. And Philadelphia officials did just that in March, 2021, when a coalition led by the Audubon Society and the Academy of Natural Sciences started “Lights Out Philly,” where building owners, managers, residents and tenants in center city Philadelphia agreed to turn off or dim city lights between midnight and 6 am during key migration periods between April 1 and the end of May and again from August through November. Researchers in Chicago found that a similar program there cut bird deaths by 60%.

There are several things we all can do to reduce light pollution. Simple measures can make a big difference. Closing curtains at night; using outdoor lighting responsibly, directing light downward; turning off unnecessary lights and turning off outdoor lights when we are not at home or when we are sleeping; supporting dark sky policies; and educating others about the negative effects of light pollution, encouraging them to take action to reduce it. An article that appeared in the January 24, 2023 edition of the Philadelphia Inquirer cited the Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council’s efforts to help municipalities in northwestern Pennsylvania, the “Pennsylvania Wilds,” to preserve pristine views of the night sky.

Together, we can make an impact in reducing light pollution.

See you in the Arboretum.

Jim Kohler, Garden Educators’ Chair



Catch up on Winter Warmer Digital Volunteer Series

Did you miss our Zoom series this February? Catch up on what's happening at the Arboretum with the recorded Winter Warmers below!

Hear from Horticulture: Join Vince Marrocco, Gayle E. Maloney Director of Horticulture, and the Horticulture team for some sneak previews and project updates for the coming season.

Labels and Labors: Hear from Plant Collections Manager Pam Morris-Olshefski for updates on our quest to label the collection. We also do a Fellows round-up to find out what they've been up to at the Arboretum and beyond!

Learning for a Lifetime: Check in with Rosarian Erin Conley about her work and garden travels in England and some impactful findings and inspirations. And for your own inspiration, Stephanie Bruneau, Assistant Director, Adult Education takes us through a Spring Class overview while Alison Thornton shares details about an upcoming Arboretum adventure.

**Note: the Winter Warmer Digital Series is intended for volunteers and staff of Morris Arboretum. Please do not share our links with any outside parties. Thank you for your consideration!*

Welcome Clara Reyes, Assistant Director of Youth and Visitor Education!

from Bryan Thompson-Nowak

I'm excited to announce that on Monday, April 17th Clara Reyes will be joining the Education Department as the new Assistant Director of Youth and Visitor Education. Clara comes to us from the Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center where she was the Manager of Education and Community Programs. She has over 8 years of experience in education program management, administration, and strategic planning. Clara has cultivated strong partnerships with the Philadelphia School District, public and private schools, and non-profit organizations. She has a passion for engaging communities and people that are often underrepresented in cultural institutions, and creating educational programming that impacts children's hearts and minds.



Clara's skills and experience made her stand out early in the interview process, but what made her rise to the top is her deep love of education and sharing of knowledge and experiences with others. During the interview process we saw her genuine excitement and energy for this position and desire to fulfill our educational mission here at Morris Arboretum and Gardens.

When you see Clara please introduce yourself as she is excited to get to know you and learn about the great work that you do as Garden Educators.

Also, in the long tradition of having staff in Youth Education with very similar names (Liza and Lisa), I know you'll be ready to have staff with the same name (Clara and Clara). Now, you won't have to feel bad saying the wrong name!

Calling Bird Lovers: Blue Bird Monitors Needed

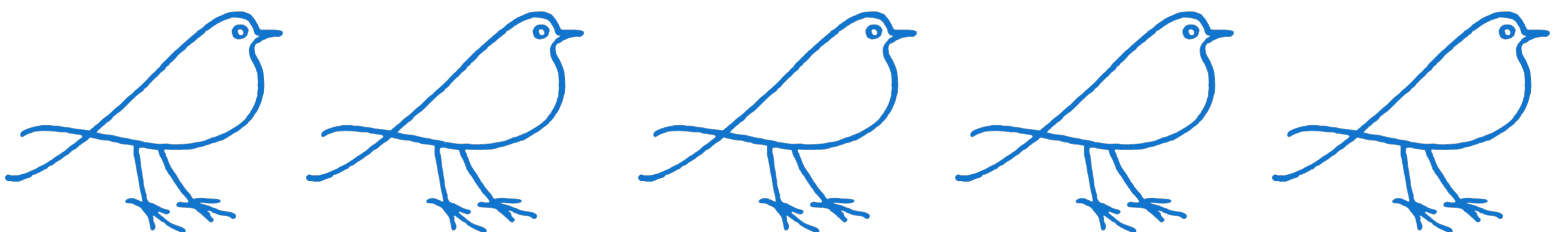
While visiting the Arboretum, have you noticed birdhouse nesting boxes around the garden? These simple wooden structures with small circular openings are designed to attract bluebirds and other native songbirds to nest at the Arboretum. The boxes have just the right size opening for these small birds and they are designed to keep the nests dry during rain and safe from predators.

Over 10 years ago, a troop of boy scouts built and installed the bird boxes in carefully chosen locations throughout the Arboretum and Bloomfield Farm. Since then the bluebird boxes are cared for by a group of dedicated volunteers and bird lovers who help maintain the boxes and monitor the bird activity in them throughout the nesting season. This is no small task - the 23 bluebird boxes are scattered across the Arboretum's gardens and Bloomfield Farm.

Each box is monitored weekly during the nesting season from March through July. It involves opening the box quickly to see if there is a nest and determining to what species each nest belongs based on its size, materials and depth of its nesting cup. Native species can include the eastern bluebird, tree swallow, house wrens and Carolina chickadee.

Volunteers collect data about the number of eggs laid and the success of each nest. At the end of the season they compile this data into The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch online database to be used in scientific research.

Anyone interested in monitoring or help with box maintenance/repairs is encouraged to contact Ryan Drake, Morris Arboretum's Natural Areas Section Leader at: rdrake@upenn.edu



Arboretum History Chat & Chew Series

At our final Brown Bag Lunch & Learn session, we'll take a look inside the Compton Mansion through the eyes of the domestic staff. We'll explore the fixtures and furnishings and figure out who kept everything spic and span.

Joyce Munro, an Archives volunteer and author of *Untold Stories of Compton*, leads our sessions. Whether you're a volunteer or employee, paid or unpaid, newcomer or long-timer, you're welcome to join us.



Tuesday, April 11 | 12 PM

Widener Upper Gallery

Bring your lunch and chew on something.

Kindly let Jenny Rajotte know if you plan to attend:

jrajotte@upenn.edu



Viburnum x bodnantense

From the Archives

by Joyce H. Munro

A Date Worth Noting: April 1933

Early in April, 1933, Rodney True received word that 3000 mounted plant specimens from China were on the way to Morris Arboretum. Just two months into his new job as Arboretum Director, True was extremely busy revising the budget (yet again) and arranging dedication ceremonies (only seven weeks to go) and now he had to figure out where to store the specimens and who would catalog them.

Granted, the Arboretum wasn't receiving the entire collection of 30,000 specimens—a number of arboreta and botanical gardens across the U.S were sharing in the largess. But it still created space and personnel issues that True had to solve in a matter of days. On top of that, reporters from The Philadelphia Inquirer wanted to interview him.

True found space and hired an assistant and gave the interview. The headline on April 16 read: “Morris Arboretum to Receive Plants Collected in Asia” and the name of the collector appeared in the first paragraph: Joseph F. Rock. This was a major story, not just because the plants were from China, but the person who collected them had a reputation among botanists as an intrepid, cocky plant explorer. (Learn more about this extraordinary plant hunter [here](#).)

Rock's expeditions were long, costly and dangerous, which is why his entourage included cooks, porters and armed guards. Among the belongings he took along were folding tables and chairs, linens, dinnerware, leopard-skin rug and collapsible bathtub. Rock had no academic degrees (though he was referred to as Dr. Rock) but his work was meticulous and his articles for National Geographic were thoroughly researched and highly readable.

Food poisoning, bandits, terrible weather—juxtaposed with breath-taking vistas of snow-capped mountains, deep forests and alpine meadows. His diaries reveal a love-hate relationship with China that lasted over thirty years. Did I mention that Rock always took his hand-cranked phonograph along so he could play his favorite Caruso records? I can't wait for the movie about this character!



Plant experts examine specimens from Rock's expedition to China
The San Francisco Examiner, March 21, 1933, p. 5
(Newspapers.com)



Helleborus orientalis

Hamamelis mollis 'princeton gold'



John and Lydia overlooking new Azalea Meadow bed installation



Witchhazels dot the Arboretum landscape

April

Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Regular Tour: 1-2pm
2 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	3 Regular Tour: 10:30am	4 Regular Tour: 10:30am	5 Regular Tour: 10:30am	6 Regular Tour: 10:30am Education Committee Meeting 1:00pm	7 Regular Tour: 10:30am	8 Hidden Gems Tour: 1pm Regular Tour: 1-2pm
9 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	10 Regular Tour: 10:30am	11 Regular Tour: 10:30am Arboretum History Talk #4 12pm	12 Regular Tour: 10:30am	13 Regular Tour: 10:30am	14 Regular Tour: 10:30am	15 Regular Tour: 1-2pm
16 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	17 Regular Tour: 10:30am	18 Regular Tour: 10:30am	19 Regular Tour: 10:30am	20 Regular Tour: 10:30am	21 Regular Tour: 10:30am	22 Regular Tour: 1-2pm
23 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	24 Regular Tour: 10:30am	25 Regular Tour: 10:30am	26 Regular Tour: 10:30am	27 Regular Tour: 10:30am	28 Regular Tour: 10:30am	29 Regular Tour: 10:30am
30 Regular Tour: 1-2pm						

May

Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Regular Tour: 1-2pm
7 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	8 Regular Tour: 10:30am	9 Regular Tour: 10:30am	10 Regular Tour: 10:30am	11 Regular Tour: 10:30am Education Committee Meeting 1:00pm	12 Regular Tour: 10:30am	13 Small Trees Specialty Tour Regular Tour: 1-2pm
14 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	15 Regular Tour: 10:30am	16 Regular Tour: 10:30am	17 Regular Tour: 10:30am	18 Regular Tour: 10:30am	19 Regular Tour: 10:30am	20 Member Plant Giveaway Regular Tour: 1-2pm
21 Member Plant Giveaway Regular Tour: 1-2pm	22 Regular Tour: 10:30am	23 Regular Tour: 10:30am	24 Regular Tour: 10:30am	25 Regular Tour: 10:30am	26 Regular Tour: 10:30am	27 Regular Tour: 1-2pm
28 Regular Tour: 1-2pm	29 *School Closed* Regular Tour: 10:30am	30 Regular Tour: 10:30am	31 Regular Tour: 10:30am			