

# VOLUNTEER

June 2023



Morris Arboretum  
& Gardens

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

*Viburnum plicatum*



# Volunteer

A newsletter published monthly for Arboretum volunteers.

## Mission of Morris Arboretum & Gardens

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 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 & Gardens 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!

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*Magnolia sieboldii*

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# Letter from the Editor

Dear Volunteers,

It was such a treat putting together this issue of the newsletter!

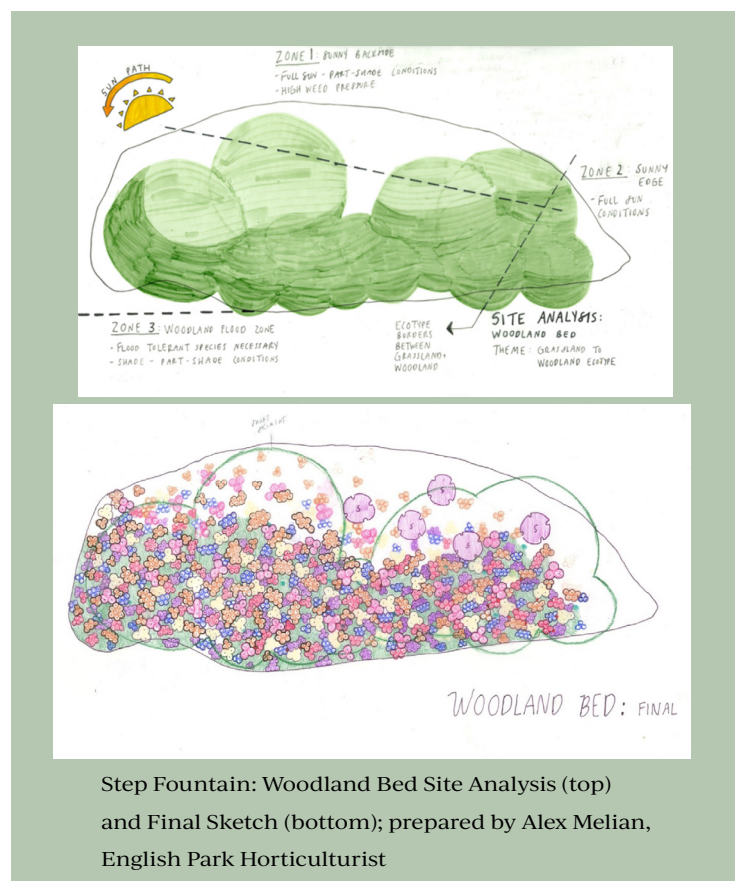
One of the many things that I adore about working with plants and plant people is watching the process unfold over what seems simultaneously ages and mere minutes. This year I am in awe watching the horticulture team patiently plan and carry out their visions with a beautiful combination of plant science and artistic sensibility. It reminds me of the many epic projects I have been fortunate to watch unfold from idea to execution in theater and music: a show that runs for 90-minutes often took years to create. The simplest elements that seem effortless often grow from a seed planted months ago and nurtured to fruition with great care.

The undeniable theme swirling this month is process. It's been thrilling to see the projects that we saw begin as ideas turn into blooming reality, some of which you'll see on later pages. I hope as you walk around the Morris in the coming weeks you'll be able to take a moment to appreciate the patient persistence of caring for these plants and this place together. We couldn't do it without you!

With immense gratitude,

Jenny Rajotte

*Program Coordinator,  
Internships & Volunteers*





# Notes from the Garden Educator's Chair

## Reduce Mowing and Support Wildlife

Recently, someone posted a message on Northwest Philadelphia's Neighborhood Next Door website complaining about Chestnut Hill College's poor landscape management practices, referring to the large swaths of tall grasses growing on the hillside among newly planted trees along Germantown Avenue near the new intersection at Hillcrest Avenue. Yes, it is not your typical landscape of green lawn that is mowed, raked, fertilized, weeded, chemically treated, and watered. But lawns provide little benefit to wildlife and are often harmful. Lawns composed of grass only lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and are often treated with pesticides that harm bees and other pollinators.

The most troubled pollinators are bees. US beekeepers lost at least 40% of their colonies in the last five years and they are continually having to create new hives. However, wild bees, unlike the nonnative honeybee, do the bulk of noncommercial pollinating, and they do not enjoy the luxury of human management. Over the past two decades, the rusty patched bumblebee was a major pollinator in 28 states. But its population has plunged 87 percent, making it the first bumblebee to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Center for Biological Diversity reported in 2017 that among the 1,437 bee species native to North America, nearly 25 percent are at risk of extinction.

Many recent studies across the planet confirm that acres of manicured lawn are as much a habitat loss as any development site. Lawns now cover 40 million acres, or 2%, of land in the US, making it the single largest irrigated crop grown.

It is time we re-think the American lawn by reducing mowing frequency or area mown or by permanently converting lawn to a more diverse and natural landscape. By reducing mowing and allowing a variety of plants to grow in your yard, pollinators and other wildlife can find food and cover.

See you at Morris Arboretum & Gardens.

Jim Kohler,  
Garden Educators' Chair



*Photo courtesy of gardeningknowhow.com*



# Around the Gardens: Process Stories

## English Park: Woodland Bed Installation



## Rose Garden: Accessible Walkway Installation



## Azalea Meadow: Exuberant Blooms Installation





# Around the Gardens: Process Stories

## Widener Lawn/Woodland Connection Bed



## Garden Railway Expansion





# Meet Megan Nguyen!

by Bryan Thompson-Nowak

I am happy to welcome Megan Nguyen to the Education Department. Megan is our new Education Administrative Assistant and will be responsible for the scheduling and coordinating of a lot of activities in the Education Department. She will be scheduling tours, school groups, Garden Educators, working with Penn Student visits and helping to get our registration system and calendars efficient and organized. Megan comes to us most recently from the Weaver's Way farm and lives close by in Mt. Airy. Megan can be reached at extension 157 and her email is mnguyen9@upenn.edu.



We're excited to have Megan here and when you see her in the garden please say, "hi."

## Camp Craft Supplies Needed

It's that time of year, again! The Morris is gearing up to welcome 175 youth to our Nature Explorers Camp across six weeks this summer.

**Do you have...**

- **Paper towel and/or toilet paper rolls**
- **Cereal boxes (just the box, please!)**
- **Cardboard egg cartons?**



Consider donating these reusable supplies for art projects during camp. Your discarded material could be the next expressive canvas for a burgeoning young nature-lover!

**Please drop donated items in the box labeled "CAMP SUPPLIES" in the Education Office in the Widener Welcome Center (side entrance).**



# From the Archives

by Joyce H. Munro

## A Date Worth Noting: June 1933

Over the course of a three-day weekend in June 1933, a family's private property came into the care and administration of a university. The owners of the property, John and Lydia Morris, were gone now; it was time to carry out their wish that the estate become a public arboretum.

When the gates of the great iron fence opened to the public for the first time ever that Sunday, crowds rushed in to glimpse Compton's priceless collection of exotic trees and shrubbery and flowers they had long admired through fence rails. More than one person in attendance that weekend called it a marriage made in heaven. Truth be told, it was actually a calculated decision involving powers of persuasion. And in the end, mutual interests prevailed—the estate would be a place dedicated to the search for scientific truth amid pleasant surroundings of beauty and color.

The [dedicatory speech](#) made by Dr. Rodney H. True, Director of the Arboretum, gives us a sense of how this union would be carried out. The Morris's vast collection of woody plants was a trust to be studied and shared and expanded, True said, and the University's Botany Department was ready to take on the task. He named four groups who would benefit from this marriage: botanists would learn about plant dynamics, landscapers about new varieties of ornamental plants, forestry specialists about ecological uses of trees and nature lovers about the beauties and mysteries of plant life.



True predicted that the Arboretum would change as it engaged in new functions—new facilities would be erected, new equipment installed and new staff hired. But he acknowledged that this was only the beginning and he posed a question to the audience: What vision will struggle to condense itself into reality as the years come and go? Ninety years later, True's question has been answered once again with the Arboretum's new name, new image, and a renewed emphasis on beauty and color.



# June

# Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Moonlight & Roses 6 PM	3
4	5	6 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	7	8	9	10 More Hidden Gems Specialty Tour 11 AM
11	12	13 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM  Exuberant Blooms: Member Preview 5:30 PM	21 June Story Time 10:30 AM	22	23	24
25 Springfield Mill Day 1 PM	26	27 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	28	29	30	



# July

# Upcoming Events

Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday

						1
2	3	4 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	5	6	7	8 Water Features Tour 11 AM
9	10	11 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	19 July Story Time 10:30 AM	20	21	22
23	24	25 Bloomin' Bubbles 11 AM	26	27	28	29
30	31					