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Arboretum Annual Report, 1988

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Connecticut College Arboretum

New London, Connecticut

Administration

As most members already know, a number of significant changes have recently been made in the administration of the Arboretum. Our official name has been changed to the Connecticut College Arboretum, a move which both reduces the size of the name and more clearly states our relationship to the College. The Arboretum is totally owned and operated by Connecticut College and we hope that both the Arboretum and the College will benefit from greater public understanding of this fact.

Glenn D. Dreyer, Assistant to the Director since 1983, was appointed Director in June 1988. The fact that the College appointed its first full-time Arboretum Director is a clear and welcome indication of strong support for our program and its future. Dean of the Faculty R. Francis Johnson has been particularly supportive of our efforts, for which we sincerely thank him.

Dr. William A. Niering became Research Director last June, after serving first as Assistant Director and as Director since 1965. In addition to his pivotal role in leading the Arboretum for twenty-three years, Dr. Niering's national stature as a scientist and conservationist has brought much favorable attention to the Arboretum and to Connecticut College. His life-long dedication to conservation was recognized during 1988 by special awards from the following four environmental organizations: The Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions, The New England Wildflower Society, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, and The White Memorial Foundation.

The year 1988 marked Horticultural Assistant Craig Vine's twentieth with the Arboretum, and we celebrated by presenting him with a beautiful College chair in appreciation of his dedicated service. Jacklyn Haines of North Stonington, Connecticut was appointed Assistant Horticulturist in December 1988. Jackie attended Connecticut College and recently graduated in Horticulture from the University of Connecticut. Her position is funded for at least two years and we are making every effort to see that it becomes permanent. We are also working to add another full-time Arboretum horticultural staff member within the next five years. These staff changes are the result of a two-year planning effort by the Botany Department and have been made with the help and support of the College Administration.

Recent changes in the College Botany Department include Assistant Professor Lisa Baird's move to the University of San Diego and her replacement by Dr. Mary Jane Morse of the University of Connecticut. Among other research interests, Dr. Morse hopes to explore the biochemical basis of heat generated by flowers of Skunk Cabbage and is already working with Arboretum populations of this well-known plant. Ethnobotanist Dr. Carmen

Burch filled a new, two-year, joint appointment in the Botany and Anthropology Departments teaching Ethnobotany. Dr. Burch works with indigenous people in Malaysia studying their relationship to the plant life around them.

Important changes in the College Administration have already had a positive effect on the Arboretum. Dr. Claire Gaudiani (Conn '66) became College President in 1988 and initiated a year of strategic planning in which both Arboretum and Botany staff are deeply involved. Changes in the administrators in charge of the College Physical Plant Department have altered the relationship between the Arboretum and Grounds staff in very positive ways. We look forward to working with Director of Operations Edward Hoffman and Grounds Supervisor James Luce to increase the educational value and beauty of the Campus and Arboretum. Dean Lynn Clapham, new head of the College Development Office, has been working closely with Arboretum staff in planning new development projects.

Arrangements for using the Arboretum's Buck Lodge and the Outdoor Theater are now being made by the College Office of Conference and Scheduling, a change which frees our secretary for more important business.

Research

A portion of the controlled burning research initiated in 1968 by Bill Niering and Dick Goodwin will soon be available to the scientific community in an article to be published by the American Midland Naturalist. This research is unusual because it reports on the effects of fire on grasslands outside the midwest prairie, where most other studies have been conducted, and because it was followed up over so many years. Burning continued in three experimental fields in 1988, and oak seedling regeneration was censused in a forest burn plot.

Eunice Sutphen continued her individual ecological studies of Arboretum old field vegetation change with Dr. Niering and attended a national Old Field Research Group meeting at

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the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory in Georgia.

Most of Glenn Dreyer's research time has been devoted to compiling and writing the Connecticut Botanical Society's publication about the State's Notable Trees. This will include an appendix of the largest tree of each kind measured in the State, many photographs of unusual specimens and a chapter on historic trees. Inspiration for the project came from longtime Arboretum advisor and benefactress

Katharine Matthies' *Trees of Note in Connecticut*, published in 1934.

Annual breeding bird surveys of the Bolleswood Natural Area continued during 1988, with Wendy Dreyer and Margaret Philbrick (Conn. '85) taking over while Zoology Professor Robert Askins was in Japan studying its forests and birds. Students in Dr. Askins Animal Ecology course did a number of individual studies in the Arboretum including: Predator detection advantages

of mixed foraging flocks by Chris Cook; The effects of fire on mice and voles in an old-field system by Wendy Kuntz; and The feeding ecology of wintering waterfowl by Daniel Kluza.

Zoology Professor Phillip Barnes advised senior Terry Garfinkel on a project designed to test whether the Mamacoke Salt Marsh is a migration barrier separating populations of the white-footed mouse on the mainland and on Mamacoke Island.

Collections

A great deal of positive feedback has resulted from concerted efforts to clean up the Collection Areas and make them more attractive, accessible and better labeled for visitors. This has been possible, in part, through our members' and friends' generous contributions which were used to hire contractors to do high pruning of trees and to help our small maintenance crew out in a variety of ways.

The highlight of 1988 was bringing the Lillian Dauby Gries Memorial Native Conifer Collection to fruition. After spending most of the winter and early spring preparing the site and designing the plantings, over 300 plants were set out in late April. By the Memorial Day dedication for the Gries family, half of the stone sitting wall overlooking the Dwarf Conifer section was complete. Masons Mark Gleason and Scott Dawley finished the second section of wall and intervening patio of native granite by Thanksgiving. During the fall we planted a variety of native grasses and late wildflowers in a central meadow area and began mounting display labels which give common and scientific names of conifers and associated native shrubs. We are planning a public dedication of the Gries Conifer Collection for early June of this year. In addition to financial support provided by Lillian Gries's family, contributions of time or materials for this important collection were made by the following companies :



View from patio location north across the Lillian Dauby Gries Memorial Native Conifer Collection before stonework or planting began. Spring 1988.

Albert Veri and Associates, Providence
Three R's Carpentry Co., Mystic
Miner and Alexander Lumber Co.,
New London
General Woodcraft, New London
Environmental Nursery
Summerhill Nursery
Sylvan Nursery
Weston Nursery

Planning for a memorial to the late Daniel Klagsbrun (Conn '86) to be located north of the Outdoor Theater began this September. This area has historically been devoted to the Legume Family and the memorial will be developed as a section within that collection. As with the Gries Collection, we are again working with Sara Bradford (Conn '63), landscape architect with Albert Veri and Associates, on a

conceptual plan for the memorial and the entire Legume area. Students in Professor Taylor's Ornamental Plants course also worked on the design. We anticipate the plantings will include Eastern Redbud, Honeylocust, Black Locust, Kentucky Coffeetree, Yellowwood, and other native, woody members of this large plant family.

An important new project was undertaken to computerize the Arboretum's plant records system this year. BG-Base, a database designed specifically for record keeping at botanical gardens and arboreta, was chosen for the task. Programmed by Kerry Walter of the Center for Plant Conservation, Jamaica Plain, MA, the system has been developed at a number of public gardens, especially the Arnold Arboretum

of Harvard University. The database will allow us to track very detailed information about individual plants in our collections, and will be able to interact with a computerized mapping system in the near future. Besides keeping better tabs on plants, we expect its eventual use by students and professors to greatly increase the academic value of the plant collections. Our records will also be completely compatible with many major public gardens across the nation including the Arnold Arboretum, NY Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Missouri Botanical Garden, Holden Arboretum (Ohio),

and the Huntington Botanical Garden (California). The program also includes

a module for our membership records, which we will be using within the year.

Eunice Sutphen (Conn '88) worked during the summer keying in collection information thanks to a small Mellon Foundation Grant.

During the summer of 1988 the final 250 feet of chain link fence was installed along Gallows Lane, thus totally enclosing the approximately 100 acres of Arboretum south of that road. We hope this will discourage the large deer herd north of Gallows Lane from bringing their healthy appetites and Lyme disease-bearing ticks into the most public area of the Arboretum.



Mason Mark Gleason installs the patio adjacent to the dwarf conifer display in the Gries Memorial Native Conifer Collection. Fall, 1988.

Visitors

Once again the Arboretum was host to many classes and groups from beyond the College Campus. In addition to using the Arboretum regularly during the year, the Thames Science Center continued its children's summer program in Buck Lodge for day and overnight sessions. University of Connecticut Plant Ecology and Woody Plants classes toured the Arboretum as part of their course work. Harvard University's graduate Landscape Ecology course also spent a day in the Arboretum. Dr. Niering taught The Wetlands of Connecticut, a summer graduate course through Wesleyan University which made extensive use of the Arboretum. Six different Connecticut College Elderhostel Program groups toured the Arboretum in July and August. In September, members of the Worcester County (MA) Horticultural Society visited.

In spring 1989, both the New England Botanical Club and the Northeast Section of the Botanical Society of America will hold field meetings at Connecticut College. In October 1990 the Northeast Section of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta will be hosted by the Connecticut College Arboretum.

Membership

By December 1988 there were 58 Garden Club members and 286 individual Arboretum members, including 26 life members. In light of the increase last year in individual membership dues to \$25, Garden Club dues have been raised to \$35 beginning this year. Life membership in the Arboretum Association, which was set at \$500 for decades, has been increased to \$1000.

In addition to the satisfaction of contributing to an organization dedicated to conservation, horticulture and ecology, membership benefits of the Arboretum Association include:

- Early notification of programs and other events sponsored by the Arboretum, and discounts when fees are charged.
- Arboretum bulletins, annual reports, and other relevant literature when published, at no charge.
- Forty percent discount on Arboretum bulletins.
- Subscription to Garden Magazine, a bi-monthly, national publication featuring conservation and horticultural information.

- Use of Buck Lodge and other Arboretum facilities.

Please encourage your friends to join the Arboretum Association and enjoy one of the best kept secrets in Connecticut (Call 447-7700 for membership information and applications.)

Volunteers

The development of an organized volunteer program in the Arboretum is an important subject which will be seriously considered in this year's Arboretum planning process. Even without the systematic recruitment of volunteers, some individuals have stepped forward and provided valuable services which were very important to the functioning of our program. In particular, we wish to thank the following individuals: Eunice Sutphen, Betty Pinson, Judy Nickerson, Jean Sullivan, Sheila Wertheimer, Sue Olmstead, Hap Waters and the members of the Arboretum Advisory Committee. Finally, all members of the Botany and Zoology Departments deserve our hearty thanks for the many hours of personal time each gives to help further the Arboretum's goals.

Gifts

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Olynciw of Waterford generously gave 10 acres of land to the Arboretum this year. The property is located on our western border, south of Millaris's Piggery in the area where the gas pipeline right-of-way intersects our former boundary. This gift brings the total Arboretum acreage to approximately 435 and adds valuable protected open space, especially for wildlife habitat.

Thanks to the generosity of Lucy McDannel (Conn '22) and Saul and Lois Ricklin (Conn '44), we were able to hire a new Assistant Horticulturist for two years while we look for more permanent funding.

As mentioned previously, the family of Lillian Gries (Conn '27) made possible the development of a new Native Conifer Collection on a scale not seen since the early days of the Arboretum. Beyond starting the Collection, they have also initiated a permanent maintenance endowment to ensure adequate care of this valuable asset. Our thanks to Lincoln and David Gries, Martha G. Davis, Mrs. Lon Homeier, Lynn Homeier Rauch, Mrs Shepard Schwartz and other family members.

Special thanks are also due to Suzanne Klagsbrun of New York City for a substantial gift in memory of her brother, Daniel. As noted above, this will be used to develop a memorial planting associated with the Legume Collection.

Finally, many members contribute more than the minimum dues payment each year, either through matching arrangements with their employers or alone. These are the funds which allow the Director to bring in contract workers, buy large pieces of equipment, and to support special research projects in the Arboretum. Thanks to you all.

Programs

One of the most popular features of last year's program was the regular

walks in various parts of the Arboretum. Last year's schedule also included lectures on the following topics: Lyme Disease, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Plant Life Above the Arctic Circle, and Connecticut's Notable Trees. Our annual symposium, once again co-sponsored with the New England Wildflower Society, explored the growth, selection and care of trees in the home landscape. Finally, Dr. Niering led a very popular tour to observe naturalistic landscapes on homegrounds around the region.

For 1989 we are planning a Monthly Arboretum Walk to different places within the Arboretum with a variety of leaders. Also this spring, we are highlighting plant identification and have two mini-courses scheduled, "Identifying Deciduous Trees in Winter" with Glenn Dreyer, and "Identifying Evergreens" with Sally Taylor. Tentatively scheduled for next fall are a driving tour of Seaside Gardens with local Landscape Designer Sheila Wertheimer (Conn '85) and a workshop in the Botany Department Greenhouse to introduce indoor plant propagation and care.

Publications

Arboretum Bulletin No. 30, *Native Shrubs for Landscaping*, has been a smashing success. Favorably reviewed across Connecticut and beyond, we have distributed approximately 3,500 copies, including a second edition published early in 1988. In addition to its information value, it has spread the reputation of the Arboretum and the College near and far.

Bulletin No. 31, *Birds of the Connecticut College Arboretum*, is currently being written by Dr. Robert Askins. Designed to replace Bulletin No. 10, a 1958 treatment of Arboretum bird life, the cover will feature a beautiful watercolor painting by renowned wildlife artist Julie Zickefoose of Hadlyme, Connecticut. We hope to have it ready to send to members by the beginning of the spring birding season. Tentative titles for upcoming bulletins include *The*

Vegetation of the Connecticut College Arboretum, *Raptors of Connecticut*, and *Roadside Wildflowers of Connecticut*. We have also made some minor changes to bulletin pricing, including setting \$1.00 as the minimum price, raising the *Native Shrubs* Bulletin to \$5.00, and providing a 40% discount to members and bulk buyers.

Published in 1988

With the help of Graphic Designer Dale Julier of Higganum, Connecticut, we redesigned, edited, and reprinted four pamphlets describing the botanical resources of Connecticut College: *The Connecticut College Arboretum*; *Caroline Black Garden*; *A Self-guided Tour of the Connecticut College Arboretum*; and *A Guide to Campus Trees*. Dale also designed our new letterhead.

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Taylor, Sally and Glenn Dreyer. 1988. Techniques to control vegetation. *The Public Garden* 3(2):20-22.

Niering, William A. 1988. Vegetation Dynamics (Succession and Climax) in relation to plant community management. *Conservation Biology* 1(4):287-295.

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Fell, Paul and Laurence Bazer. Survival of the gemmules of *Anheteromeyenia ryderi* (Potts) following aerial exposure during winter in New England. *Hydrobiologia*.

Niering, William and Glenn Dreyer. Effects of prescribed burning on *Andropogon scoparius* post-agricultural grasslands in Connecticut. *American Midland Naturalist*.