DEAR FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM:

The Arboretum is great in every season, but fall is truly beautiful. The change of season in this area is so dramatic with the colors of autumn and the changing light. Our Heritage Collections are glorious but, unlike many other arboreta, we have plenty of private, uncultivated spaces, the kind that are so hard to find in a bustling city. Bring yourself here to experience the peace and beauty of the Arboretum and savor the solitude.

We are celebrating many things this year. The Washington Youth Garden turned 45 years old, and a wonderful, much needed and appreciated new pavilion is under construction in the WYG area. The Flowering Tree Walk encircling the heart of the Arboretum—the glorious meadow and the Capitol Columns—is nearly finished. We funded four interns in the Gardens and one in Research this year and provided a FONA staff member for Visitor Services in the Administration Building. Our contributions allow the Arboretum to re-direct funds to other important areas. Our “Summer Evenings” concerts were a great success, and we intend to have even more next year, so be sure to join us for these special opportunities to enjoy the Arboretum in the evening.

None of these things would be possible without your continued support. Our heartfelt thanks go to those of you who have already made a donation. To those of you who are still contemplating your plans for year-end giving, please consider a generous donation to FONA. The need is great because government funding continues to fall woefully short. With your help, FONA can advocate for the Arboretum, develop educational, entertaining, and recreational programs, provide needed support for the preservation and enhancement of the collections, and continue the great work of the Washington Youth Garden. Thank you for your generous support.

Capitol Bikeshare recently installed their bikes just outside the R Street gate. Come for a visit and cycle or walk around the miles of low-traffic roads and paths—and enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of fall at the Arboretum.

Barbara Shea, Acting Executive Director
Friends of the National Arboretum

ON THE COVER: David Fairchild examines mangosteen fruit (Garcinia mangostana) at a market in Sumatra, 1926. Courtesy of Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fairchild’s Legacy: A National Arboretum

AUTUMN HAS ONCE AGAIN ARRIVED at the National Arboretum, and with it the long, cool nights that trigger the breakdown of chlorophyll and the unveiling of red, orange, and yellow foliage in our deciduous plant community. This year, it’s been accompanied by a bumper crop of acorns, the iconic fruit of oak trees (Quercus) that play such a vital role in forest communities and urban landscapes. The National Arboretum has a terrific, but unheralded collection of oaks from around the world, which is set to increase after collections of new oaks from recent plant explorations at home and abroad.

The Arboretum, as a collections-based research institute and public garden, is dependent on the availability of plant genetic resources to provide solutions for challenges facing agriculture and society. This core principle was set forth by David Fairchild in 1897 when he created the USDA Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction. Our plant exploration program is the direct descendant of Fairchild’s national effort to distribute new crops in order to diversify American farms, gardens, and dinner plates. You will read more about Fairchild’s efforts on this front elsewhere in the newsletter; however, what is not well known is his effort to create a National Arboretum.

The David Fairchild Society celebrates the legacy of a visionary plant explorer and his efforts to create a national institute dedicated to the study and promotion of plants for the benefit of all Americans.

Not long after arriving in 1889, Fairchild and his colleagues—Dorsett, Galloway, Saunders, and Swingle—began pushing for the creation of a true National Arboretum. Fairchild’s travels frequently took him away from Washington, but the seed was planted, and by 1914, at the bequest of then Assistant Secretary Galloway, Fairchild was leading the National Arboretum Committee. The committee, which included Frederic Calville, who would become our first director, had found an ideal piece of land in northeast DC, but it lacked the necessary appropriations and authorities to proceed. A champion was needed outside the government ranks, and Fairchild found one in Mrs. Frank B. Noyes who, with the Garden Club of America, effectively lobbied for passage of the National Arboretum Act of 1927, formally establishing one and for all, a true National Arboretum.

The David Fairchild Society celebrates the legacy of a visionary plant explorer and his efforts to create a national institute dedicated to the study and promotion of plants for the benefit of all Americans. With the help of FONA, the National Arboretum is embracing this legacy, and we hope you will too.

Richard T. Olsen, Director
The United States National Arboretum

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL...

Tom Costello has resigned as FONA’s Executive Director effective September 27. We wish him well in his future endeavors and will continue to build on his initiatives to move FONA forward. We are conducting a national search and hope to have a new Executive Director in place soon. Barbara Shea, FONA’s Board Chair, will be acting as Interim Director until that time. Meanwhile, please know that FONA is not standing still!

ON THE COVER: David Fairchild examines mangosteen fruit (Garcinia mangostana) at a market in Sumatra, 1926.Courtesy of Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.
This fall, FONA established “The David Fairchild Society,” a group of generous donors who support the Arboretum. The society is named in honor of David Fairchild, an early USDA botanist, plant pathologist, world explorer, plant collector, and Arboretum supporter.

David Grandison Fairchild was one of America's great plant explorers and founder of the USDA's Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction. Growing up in the Midwest in the 1870s, where his father was the president of Kansas State Agricultural College, Fairchild had a natural interest in horticulture and agriculture. In college, he attended a lecture by Alfred Russel Wallace, the famous English naturalist and explorer who detailed his travels to Java. Wallace's romantic descriptions of his surroundings and exotic adventures, so different from Fairchild's experiences in a strict but simple household on the prairie, fascinated Fairchild and inspired his great dream of visiting Java on the other side of the world.

Before his first real foreign adventure, Fairchild worked in several different laboratories. He learned to love scientific inspection and investigation under an uncle's tutelage and followed the uncle to a job at a research station in New Jersey. When he was 20, Fairchild moved to Washington, DC, to take a job with the USDA's new plant pathology team. He would continue to work for USDA, off and on, for the next four decades.

His career took a turn when he met and caught the interest of a wealthy world traveler and philanthropist, Barbour Lathrop. Lathrop's many exotic voyages convinced him that America's food choices were bland and limited and that bringing new foods home would be a great service to his nation. For this monumental plan, he would need an expert partner. Lathrop engaged Fairchild to continue his botanical studies and then travel with him around the world. The exotic and novel sights, people, and plants amazed young Fairchild. Since Lathrop was paying the bill for the entire journey, his itinerary of quick stops and luxurious accommodations precluded Fairchild's wishes to explore the new surroundings thoroughly. Fairchild studied many unfamiliar plants, but had no laboratory in the United States to send his seeds and samples to. Although neither experienced the tight budgets and rugged physical hardships of most early nineteenth century plant collectors, they both endured severe illness during their months of travel. Once an awkward and unsophisticated young man, Fairchild learned a great deal about the social graces from his patron, valuable skills he would use among influential friends in the years to come.

Upon his return to Washington, now an expert on foreign plants, Fairchild and his friend Walter Swingle met with the Secretary of Agriculture, James Wilson, in 1897 to propose the establishment of a USDA Office of Plant Introduction. The secretary agreed and hired Fairchild to run the office, but Lathrop soon lured him away on another multi-year voyage. This time Fairchild could collect plants and seeds and send them to the Office for experimentation and eventual introduction to American farmers. Plants from that trip included varieties of broccoli and cucumis from Italy, hardy crops from Scandinavia, dozens of varieties of mangos from the South Seas, and dates from Egypt.

He settled in Washington in 1903 and married Marion Bell, the daughter of inventor Alexander Graham Bell, and sister-
David Fairchild Society Benefits

**Benefits**

- Recognition on the Donor Wall in the Arboretum's Administration Building
- A table for 10 at FONA's Annual Dinner Under the Stars and a recognition on the program
- A table for 8 at FONA's Annual Dinner Under the Stars and a recognition on the program
- 4 tickets to FONA's Annual Dinner Under the Stars
- A Director's Chair and Tour of the grounds for 6
- A private full-moon hike for a group of 5
- A curated tour of the Arboretum and a lunch for 4
- Subscription to Arbor Friends quarterly publication
- Free submission to Member Earrings on the Arboretum
- 20% discount on educational programs offered by the Arboretum & FONA
- 10% discount at the Arbor House Gift Shop
- Reciprocal discounts at gardens and arboreta participating in the American Horticultural Society
- FONA vehicle decal
- Free submission to Washington Youth Garden events
- The gift of an Arboretum plant introduced by the Research Unit

**Levels**

- **Donor** $1,200+
- **Patron** $2,500+
- **Level** $5,000+
- **Circle** $10,000+

**In the Woods: Fairchild's Maryland Estate**

By Claire Broderick

The wooded estate built by David Fairchild and his wife Marion is still home to a few of his plants. Fairchild fell in love with Japanese cherry blossoms during his first trip to Japan. Given that Japan and the DC region have a similar climate, he had hopes of bringing cherry trees back to Washington.

The couple imported 125 flowering cherry trees of 25 varieties, which they planted by hand. Their Japanese gardener helped the trees thrive. At least one cherry tree they planted in 1906 is still alive, although its limbs are propped up and looking a bit worse for wear. This specimen predates the ones planted in the Tidal Basin in Washington. Arboretum staff have taken cuttings from this original to use in their work. An ancient hemlock tree still standing has also been the source of cuttings for staff research.

Fairchild told his friend Frances Hodgson Burnett (author of *The Secret Garden*) that their greatest regret in selling In the Woods was that they would miss the cherry blossoms in the spring. For this, she composed a poem: “Only in dreams of spring/Shall I see again/The flowering of my cherry trees.”

Today, the house holds a nursery school. Every spring, when the old cherry tree is in full bloom, the children and teachers celebrate with a tea party under the flowering branches.

CLAIRE BRODERICK & KATHY HORAN visited the estate in Chevy Chase, MD, this summer.

Background photo: The Fairchild's estate in Chevy Chase was the first place the couple planted Japanese flowering cherry trees. Inset: At least one of the Fairchild's original 1906 cherry trees is still standing.
Bringing the World’s Flora to the Arboretum

Preserving plant genetic resources is part of the National Arboretum’s mission, and to do that, plant scientists travel around the country and around the world to find and gather seeds for conservation and display. To learn what’s involved in bringing new flora to the Arboretum, I spoke with Joseph Meny, Horticulturalist of the Gotelli Dwarf and Slow-Growing Conifer Collection, who recently returned from a seed collecting trip to the Republic of Georgia.

Karen Zill

Q: WHY WAS THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA CHOSEN AS THE DESTINATION FOR THIS TRIP?
A: Georgia has a tremendous diversity of plant life. Conservation International has identified it as one of 34 “biodiversity hotspots.” It is one of the richest, and at the same time, the most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on Earth and has an extremely high number of plants that are either rare or endemic to Georgia or the Caucasus. Much of its climate is also similar to that of Washington, DC, so that plants collected from Georgia can be grown, studied, and evaluated here in the United States.

Q: HOW WAS THE TRIP ARRANGED AND MANAGED?
A: The Arboretum is a member of the Plant Collections Consortium (PCC), a collaboration among horticulture institutions that have an interest in collecting and preserving flora from around the world. The trip was organized and funded through the PCC and included several other members, among them Longwood Gardens and the Chicago Botanic Garden. Our hosts in Georgia were the Bakuriani Alpine Botanic Garden and Ilia State University, affiliates of the Georgia Academy of Sciences. They provided drivers and guides, provided facilities for cleaning and storing our specimens, and arranged accommodations.

Q: WHAT SPECIFIC PLANTS WERE YOU LOOKING FOR, AND WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE IN YOUR SEARCH?
A: We had a target list of 117 plants and made more than 200 collections. Our work took us all over the country, west to Borjomi and the Ajameti Reserve, about 50 miles from the Black Sea, east to the Lagodekhi Nature Reserve on the border of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, and north to Kazbegi National Park and Tusheti National Park near Chechnya. Some of the plants on our list were Quercus iberyca (Georgian oak), Acer velutinum (velvet maple), and Ilex colchica (Black Sea holly). One of our challenges was that our target species were widespread and often in remote areas, and roads in many parts of the country were unpaved. Getting to some of the destinations took several hours, far longer than if paved roads had been an option.

Q: WHAT RESTRICTIONS OR PRECAUTIONS APPLY TO BRINGING FLORA INTO THE UNITED STATES?
A: Before the trip, we had to verify that none of the species were on the CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) list. All the seeds we collected had to be cleaned so they could get through quarantine. This meant removing caps from acorns, wings from maple seeds, any bits of fruit clinging to seeds, and so forth—all by hand. We did the cleaning on rainy days or late evenings. Once the seeds were ready to be shipped, we had to follow special packaging instructions, making sure the government permits were prominently displayed and that the boxes were sealed tightly to prevent the escape of any vermin that we might have missed in the cleaning process.

Q: WHEN THE SEEDS ARRIVE IN THE UNITED STATES, WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?
A: The seeds are quarantined for a time by the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. They will then be divided among the members of the PCC, depending on the climatic fit for the various species in each institution’s region. Of the seeds the Arboretum receives, some will be grown out for display, some will go to the germplasm laboratory to be stored, and some will be grown for research purposes to examine their characteristics.

Q: ARE THERE PLANS FOR TRIPS TO COLLECT SEEDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES?
A: Not at the moment. The international trips are infrequent. Most of our seed collecting is done domestically. One such trip took staff members to Ohio and Maryland to collect seeds for our Springhouse Run restoration project. But all these trips support our mission to preserve the world’s flora.
A collecting we will go!

1. Ilex colchica (Black Sea holly)
2. Roads across the Great Caucasus
4. Collecting Quercus macranthera (Caucasian oak)
5. Collecting Quercus iberica (Georgian oak)
6. Gentiana septemfida (Crested gentiana)
7. Abies nordmanniana (Nordmann fir)
8. Panorama of the scenery along the military highway
ON AUGUST 5, the Washington Youth Garden had the incredible opportunity of being host to the last Let’s Read! Let’s Move! event of the Obama administration in celebration of Washington Youth Garden’s 45th Anniversary. WYG was joined by the U.S. Department of Education and the office of First Lady Michelle Obama for an eventful day of education and physical activity. U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King was joined by the Executive Director of the First Lady’s Let’s Move! Initiative, Debra Eschmeyer; White House Chief Horticulturalist, Jim Adams; Celebrity Chef, Carla Hall; Director of the U.S. National Arboretum, Richard Olsen; Senior Policy Advisor at the U.S. Dept. of Education, Steven Hicks; and president and coach of DC Youth Rugby, Brian Mihelic for a reading of The Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin.

After the reading, students participated in garden Olympic-themed games and a ceremonial planting at the Youth Garden. Twelve student interns from the Washington Youth Garden’s High School Green Ambassador program were also instrumental in the success of the event. From developing the garden Olympic games to leading teams of visiting youth in conjunction with the YMCA, to representing Washington Youth Garden with the press, these high school students really got to experience what it means to be part of the Washington Youth Garden family.

Chef Carla Hall and Debra Eschmeyer competed in a dueling smoothie bike race while nearby, students raced bubble lawn mowers on the Arboretum’s lawn. After the event, every student received a backpack filled with a healthy snack and a book provided by Target. Washington Youth Garden strives to use the garden and other natural spaces as tools to enrich science learning, inspire environmental stewardship, and cultivate healthy food choices for youth and families. Hosting Let’s Read! Let’s Move was the perfect culmination of a summer of success at Washington Youth Garden. To learn how you can get involved with the Washington Youth Garden, please visit our website at www.washingtonyouthgarden.org.

THE WASHINGTON YOUTH GARDEN (WYG) has been forever changed and improved by Betty Mosher’s passion for education, teaching, and interest in all the WYG programs. She was a WYG volunteer, and when she became president of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs (2001-2003), she directed her energy toward raising money for WYG programs. To say that she was passionate about the Washington Youth Garden is an understatement. "Growing Green Dreams" was her mantra, and she threw herself wholeheartedly into every endeavor. She conceived of the idea for a 5k run and named it “Dig In Your Heels.” It was a huge success: kids in their event t-shirts experiencing the joy of finishing their first 5K race, parents cheering them on, and DC chefs serving healthy snacks to all who attended.

We could count on Betty and her husband Dean to be involved in and attend every event at the Youth Garden with a warm and welcoming greeting for everyone. Betty’s lively spirit lives on in all the Youth Garden’s wonderful programs.

KATHY HORAN had the pleasure of knowing Betty Mosher. She, like so many others, really misses Betty.
Donald Hagen Voss: Valued Colleague and USNA Volunteer

Alan Whittemore, Ph.D.

IN MEMORIAM

THE ARBORETUM LOST A VALUED colleague and very good friend when longtime volunteer Don Voss died on August 12.

Don first made use of the Herbarium at the National Arboretum in 1964, when his friend Henry Skinner was director. His father-in-law, Robert Gartrell, was a famous azalea breeder, and Don worked with him to document his breeding work and register the cultivars he bred. Don began volunteering regularly in the Herbarium in 1987 and continued for 29 more years, often logging the most hours per year of any National Arboretum volunteer, despite his long, congested commute from Vienna, Virginia.

He carried out major projects for the Herbarium, such as seeing A Catalog of Cultivated Woody Plants of the Southeastern United States (E.G. Meyer et al; http://dx.doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.58811) through to its completion and publication and thoroughly reviewing our type specimens and cultivated standards. He also made important contributions to the azalea community as an author, editor, and consulting expert for the American Rhododendron Society. His father-in-law, Robert Gartrell, was a famous azalea breeder, and Don worked with him to document his breeding work and register the cultivars he bred. Don began volunteering regularly in the Herbarium in 1987 and continued for 29 more years, often logging the most hours per year of any National Arboretum volunteer, despite his long, congested commute from Vienna, Virginia.

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Don’s knowledge of plants and the rules for naming them was broad and deep. He was always ready to help others who were interested in botany and horticulture, and his willingness to share his specialized knowledge in areas such as botanical nomenclature and the accurate description of colors has benefitted botanists and horticulturists all over the world.

Don was an excellent companion—well-educated and well-read, a man with many interesting experiences and the ability to communicate them clearly and vividly. He will be greatly missed by all of us who had the pleasure of knowing him and working with him.

NANCY AND PIERRE MOITRIER: operate Designs for Greener Gardens, a boutique gardening company that specializes in designing, creating, developing, and maintaining distinctive gardens of all styles. Pierre hails from France and brings the charm of the Old World to their garden creations. Nancy’s 40 years of gardening experience combined with her design knowledge and innate artistic eye add a superior dimension to their garden projects. Follow Designs for Greener Gardens on Facebook.
The Friends of the National Arboretum is an independent, nonprofit organization established to enhance, through public and private sector resources, support for the U.S. National Arboretum.

HAPPENINGS

Be sure to follow FONA on Facebook and to check events on the National Arboretum’s Events page at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/events.html

EXHIBIT—AUTUMN BONSAI: THE COLORS OF NATURE
October 28 – November 13, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
National Bonsai & Penjing Museum
Enjoy bonsai in their glowing autumn colors before the leaves fall away to reveal their bare winter silhouettes. Visit the Special Exhibits Wing for a formal display of select trees during their peak fall colors, including red maples, yellow ginkgos, fruiting trees, and more. Free.

*NEW* CAPITAL BIKESHARE STATION AT THE ARBORETUM
Check out our new Bikeshare station at the R Street entrance. Take a ride on our 9 miles of paved roads.

If you’re an Amazon Prime member, please consider using the AmazonSmile program to benefit Friends of the National Arboretum at smile.amazon.com