



A publication of the Friends of the National Arboretum

ARBOR FRIENDS

WINTER 2022



Thank you to our friends and supporters!

IN THIS ISSUE

2 From the Board Chair and Executive Director **4** 2021: A Year in Review **11** Winter Garden Tips **12** Thank You, Donors

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As 2022 begins, we send all FONA members our heartfelt thanks for your support and for all that you do to help FONA and the U.S. National Arboretum. We ended 2021 on a strong note and have you to thank for that.

Newsflash! The U.S. National Arboretum is no longer a “hidden gem” in our nation’s capital. Over the past year, we’ve seen visitation increase: we had more than 700,000 visitors in 2021. The Arboretum’s 450+ acres of greenspace in the midst of our busy city are more important now than ever before, as a respite for people seeking a healthy environment, improved well-being, and a connection to nature.

This is a special time for FONA as we **celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Washington Youth Garden**. Founded in 1971, our garden-based education programs have continued to serve youth, families, and teachers in the community for 50 years. In 2021, our programs reached more than 6,000 students. As we enhance and expand our programs to meet increasing demand, we are excited about redesigning our one-acre garden, which is located near the Capitol Columns at the Arboretum. Our vision for this space is to create a premier destination for garden-based education and nature play. Please be sure to stop by the next time you’re at the Arboretum—we welcome all visitors and encourage you to explore the garden and chat with our team members. We plan to have a big celebration for WYG’s 50th anniversary this June and will extend the invitations far and wide.

FONA’s partnership with Dr. Richard Olsen and his talented team at the Arboretum has never been stronger. We are well positioned with a solid vision and a Master Plan with designs for future growth. Enhancing the infrastructure of the Arboretum and serving our community are high priorities. We have a lot in the works: new and enhanced entrances, upgraded facilities, improved traffic plans to accommodate increased visitation, new visitor services, engaging events and, of course, a continued emphasis on education. **An exciting new treetop canopy trail is being designed** and will be built near the Washington Youth Garden for visitors and students to explore the area from new heights and learn more about the Arboretum. We will keep you updated on our progress.

Overall, our focus is you! The U.S. National Arboretum is a special place in our city, and we want to provide access for all, deliver fun events and activities, and support the local community through our award-winning youth education programs and food donations from our Washington Youth Garden.

From everyone at FONA, we wish you and yours a Happy New Year. We are excited about 2022, and we look forward to having you with us. Please don’t hesitate to reach out. We enjoy hearing from you.

With warm wishes. 🌳



Michael Stevens

Michael Stevens
FONA Board Chair
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Craven Rand

Craven Rand
FONA Executive Director
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ON THE COVER Bright yellow flowers of this witch-hazel plant bring color to a winter landscape. This is a specimen in the Arboretum’s research fields.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Plane Sight



WINTER IS THE PERFECT SEASON TO REFLECT on the beauty and majesty of our noble deciduous trees, because it lays bare the framework that supports the leafy summer canopy. You can see the finest trace of twigs silhouetted against the sky and enjoy the subtleties of bark and bough without competition from flowers or foliage. Species like our native plane tree or American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) take center stage as their unique, white-barked limbs and trunks enliven the riparian corridors that encompass D.C. from the Potomac and Anacostia rivers to the streams and draws of their tributaries. With a half dozen species, *Platanus* can be found in similar habitats along the West Coast and Mexico, southeastern Europe, southwestern Asia, and in hybrid form, along urban streets across the temperate world.

The fact that plane trees and their relatives have formed an integral part of forested riparian habitats for millions of years is lost on most onlookers. Like starlight from the far side of the universe, plane trees shed light on what it was like millions of years ago, and they remain relatively unchanged as they travel through the fossil record. In fact, *Platanus* and its relatives are found in the earliest microfossil records of angiosperms right here in the mid-Atlantic: *Platanocarpus marylandensis*, from the early Cretaceous period, was discovered in Prince Georges County, MD. Later fossil leaf imprints from across North America are unmistakably *Platanus* to anyone familiar with the living species.

At the National Arboretum, a notable, naturally occurring specimen grows adjacent to Hickey Run north of the Valley-Meadow Road intersection. With three massive trunks emanating from a single base, I like to consider that we are witnessing its second reincarnation with trunks sprouting from an older root system that survived a past trauma. Riparian trees are apt to resprout and grow anew as they adapt to a life of seasonal floods. So, are we looking at trunks that have not yet reached their second century? Or the regrowth of a root system much older than 200 years? And what is a century or two to a tree species that has inhabited the planet for 100 million years?

Our vision is to inspire discovery, understanding, conservation, and the love of plants. Our plants offer stories rooted in an authentic sense of place that cannot help but resonate with people once those stories are discovered and told. Step outside and find your nearest plane tree; it won’t be hard. Right there in plain sight is one of the most fascinating plants you have never considered. Imagine what else is out there! 🌳

Richard T. Olsen, Director
The United States National Arboretum



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2021 What a year it has been!

Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) supports and promotes the U.S. National Arboretum through our partnerships and programs. In 2021, we provided critical support for the present and future success of the Arboretum. We also connected more people than ever to food, the land, and each other through our education programs, recreation programs, and events.

Read the full End of Year Report on our website at www.fona.org/2021-fona-eoy-report/



Partnerships

Friends of the National Arboretum's strong partnerships with the U.S. National Arboretum and dozens of other organizations across Washington, DC, allow us to better support and promote the National Arboretum. In 2021, we supported the National Arboretum by:

ENSURING ACCESS TO GREENSPACE

Supported the Arboretum's COVID-19 management strategy to ensure the grounds were open and safe for more than 700,000 visitors to connect with nature.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Laid the groundwork for a treetop canopy trail to complement our environmental education efforts.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborated with 52 partners to expand our offerings and more effectively achieve our goals.



Education Programs

We adapted our education programs to fit our community's needs and celebrate Washington Youth Garden's 50th anniversary.



WE HARVESTED 5,745 POUNDS OF PRODUCE and donated it to local families.



WE DISTRIBUTED 2,111 GROW@HOME KITS to DC students so they could learn garden science at home.



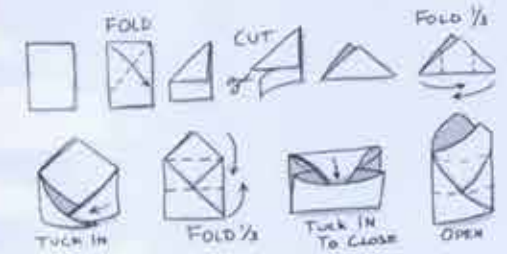
WE ENGAGED WITH 102 EDUCATORS FROM 50 SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS through the School Garden Support Program's professional development opportunities, garden events, and garden science lessons.



WE HELPED 17 GREEN AMBASSADORS develop garden and interpersonal skills, explore career opportunities, and address food insecurity in their communities.



MAKE A SEED ENVELOPE!



Recreation Programs & Events

We provided more opportunities for people to connect with nature by expanding the types of programs we offer and making them more accessible.



4,800 GUESTS ATTENDED outdoor weddings and corporate events.



627 PEOPLE EXPLORED THE ARBORETUM during our 5K run, forest bathing walks, and yoga classes.



410 FILM FANS ENJOYED outdoor movies in the Ellipse Meadow.



Looking Ahead

Friends of the National Arboretum is committed to the Arboretum’s future. In preparation for the National Arboretum’s 100th anniversary in 2027, we are investing in three major projects:

WASHINGTON YOUTH GARDEN

We are elevating the Washington Youth Garden as a premier destination in our region for garden-based education and nature play. We are reimagining our one-acre garden at the Arboretum to make it more engaging, productive, and easier to maintain. We will continue adapting and expanding education programs to better support children, families, and teachers in our community.

CANOPY TRAIL

Our treetop canopy trail will immerse children and families in the National Arboretum’s environment of trees. Located in the forest behind Washington Youth Garden, this canopy trail will engage people of all ages with tree science and environmental education. We are prioritizing accessibility and experiential learning in the design of this trail.

CAPITOL COLUMNS

As the group responsible for bringing the Capitol Columns to the National Arboretum in 1990, FONA is committed to maintaining the columns so visitors can enjoy them for decades to come. Current priorities include the ongoing maintenance of the water feature and lights surrounding the Columns while we develop a strategy for the complete restoration of the Columns themselves.



UPCOMING EVENTS

FONA has a full schedule of events for 2022. We're excited to host more activities this year. All events will be modified as needed to meet COVID safety restrictions.

Look for more information about these events on our website (fona.org/events_programs/) or in our weekly FONA Field Notes email newsletter.

Do you love visiting the Arboretum's beautiful greenspace and collections? Are you a fan of our garden-based youth education programs, our community efforts, and our recreation programs?

PLEASE HELP FONA CONTINUE ITS WORK TO PROVIDE ALL OF THIS AND MORE BY CONSIDERING A LEGACY GIFT.

Your donation today is important, and it allows FONA to support the mission of the Arboretum today, but we also need to ensure funding into the future. Including FONA, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, in your estate plans is an easy way to make an impactful commitment that helps secure the future success of the Arboretum while ensuring that your legacy lives on.

Please contact Cathy at Cathy@fona.org or Claire at CALrich@fona.org to notify us of your plans or to request more information. We would be delighted to welcome you into FONA's Heritage Society and show our appreciation for your dedication to FONA and the Arboretum.

MARCH 26: USNA Lahr Symposium (virtual)

MARCH 27: Native Plant Sale

APRIL 6: All Souls Choir Strolling Performance

APRIL 30: Garden Fair & Plant Sale

MAY 15: Lunar Eclipse Viewing

JUNE 25: Summer 5K



Early Spring Garden Tips

Spring is almost here. Get ready!

Nancy and Pierre Moitrier

DURING THE GARDEN'S DORMANT MONTHS, take the opportunity to observe structural plants that are looking less than stellar. Oftentimes, removal is not the only choice. A stylist can take an unflattering haircut and create something better to redefine a person's appearance. You can do the same with your garden. You wouldn't remove your hair just because it's unruly, would you?

- **Deadheading** trees or shrubs is the removal of spent flowers or seed pods and allows the new season's flowers to develop unimpeded.
- **Lifting** removes lower branches of a tree where more clearance is desired for vehicles, pedestrians, or plantings. Consult an arborist for removal of branches more than three inches in diameter for safety but also to understand the implications of pruning mature branches.
- Special effects result when **pollarding** or **coppicing** select trees and shrubs such as *Cotinus*, *Catalpa*, and *Paulownia*. Cutting all shoots back to a desired low height will rapidly push enlarged, vigorous foliage that creates a unique display. Copious watering and fertilizer are necessary for best results.
- **Reduction** is performed to diminish the overall size of a tree or shrub. No more than 25% of the foliage should be removed from any branch. Be careful, because indiscriminate reduction pruning may take the form of "topping," which is an incorrect form of pruning that is detrimental to trees.
- **Rejuvenation** pruning is performed on shrubs that have been neglected, are lopsided, or were damaged during a winter storm. Remove weak shoots to the ground; prune other stems to one foot. Feeding, mulching, and watering will stimulate new growth. Follow up in one year with formative pruning to restore the shrub's characteristic habit.
- **Renewal** is practiced on shrubs that produce flowers on new wood or shrubs that produce vividly colored stems. Remove the oldest branches of the shrub by pruning at ground level to produce vigorous shoots ensuring a good display.
- **Shearing** is used to develop special forms like hedges and topiary. Use sharp tools for clean cuts and crisp lines. Taper the pruning (wider at base) to allow sunlight to reach all branches and don't forget to thin regularly!
- **Thinning** focuses on removing congested growth in trees or shrubs but does not affect the overall shape of the crown. Thinning allows extra light to penetrate and helps reduce wind resistance. Thinning can help expose a plant's ornamental features such as attractive bark, or it can be performed to remove old and unproductive wood on deciduous flowering shrubs. 🌳



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.

2021 DONORS

Thank you!



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The David Fairchild Society, FONA's highest level of membership, is a group of **exceptionally dedicated individuals** who support FONA and the U.S. National Arboretum.

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Frederick G. Meyer

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This list reflects gifts dated through 12/31/2021. Please contact Claire Broderick at cbroderick@fona.org or 202.544.8733 to note any errors or correct our records.

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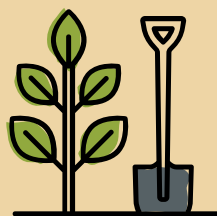
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HAPPENINGS

For more information, visit usna.usda.gov or fona.org

GET UPDATES BY EMAIL AND ONLINE

Sign up for the FONA Field Notes email newsletters at FONA.org to get regular updates from the Washington Youth Garden, behind-the-scenes stories, pictures of the Arboretum, and the latest updates regarding events and activities.



GARDEN FAIR

Save the date! The annual FONA Garden Fair & Plant Sale is being planned for Saturday, April 30. The first few hours are exclusively for FONA members.

EVENTS

The calendar of events is updated regularly at FONA.org. Meditative forest bathing sessions are offered several times a month. Register online.

STREAMING NOW

Watch the Arboretum Bald Eagles through the Eagle Cam. See streaming video of the nesting pair at naeaglecam.org

