



From the Director

Ask any parent: naming the new baby is usually a challenge. A little over a year ago, we sought to improve our public communications by combining our newsletter and education catalog into a single publication. But what to call this merger?

Like expectant parents, we spent weeks sorting through lists, soliciting the ideas of friends, and writing down inspirations in the middle of the night. Options included names in fashion (Scion), old family names (Wilsonia), and names of honored person-ages (somewhere there must be a newborn named Linnaeus). As with babies, the “we’ve got it” moment took its time to arrive.

The choice that won the day is *Silva*, a name that speaks to our past as well as our future. *Silva* (Latin for trees or forests) acknowledges the *Silva of North America*, the monumental contribution to the literature of botanical science that director Charles Sprague Sargent wrote over a century ago. The first volume came out in 1890, one of the fourteen that would eventually compose a comprehensive reference of all forest trees growing in North America. Sargent built the *Silva* on his work as the federally appointed surveyor of the nation’s forest resources, part of the Tenth Census of the United States that began in 1879. Although the *Silva* was not part of his Census work, it did provide him the collaborations with field botanists and opportunities for travel that proved essential to a work of such enormous scope. After two decades of research and writing, Sargent published the last volume of the *Silva of North America* in 1902; today it is still among our finest guides to American trees.

The name *Silva* also speaks to the future. We are undertaking a major commitment to enhance the scope of our research program through large investments in staff and facilities. Our research will continue to focus on increasing knowledge about woody plants, whether they grow in the gardens of urban Boston or the forests of Borneo. We will disseminate that knowledge through the kinds of educational offerings that will be listed in *Silva* twice a year. I have no doubt that Sargent would have given us his proud parental approval.

—Robert E. Cook, Director of the Arnold Arboretum

More information about the Arboretum’s long-range plans can be found at our website, arboretum.harvard.edu.



Above Charles Sprague Sargent, author of the *Silva of North America* and first director of the Arnold Arboretum.

J. E. Purdy & Co., Archives of the Arnold Arboretum