From the Director

One of the things that sets the Arnold Arboretum apart as a botanical and horticultural collection is the historical significance of its landscape, designed by pioneering American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and considered today among his best preserved works. The thoughtful stewardship of Olmsted’s remarkable handiwork has long been an institutional priority, one that has come into even sharper focus as we prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the institution’s founding in 2022. Whether restoring viewsheds through pruning or strategic removals of non-accessioned material (or occasionally, accessioned plants that are problematic or in decline), creating mulched paths that invite visitors deeper into the collections, or planting meadow habitats that decrease mowing emissions and promote biodiversity, we remain fully committed to keeping Olmsted’s vision of an urban wilderness thriving at the Arboretum.

Fortunately for Boston, we are not alone in our devotion. For the past two decades, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy has worked tirelessly to restore, reconnect, and promote the public’s knowledge and enjoyment of the chain of parks Olmsted designed between the Riverway and the Arborway. To celebrate its twentieth anniversary, the Conservancy commissioned Japanese artist Fujiko Nakaya to bring her signature “fog art” to the Emerald Necklace, and the Arnold Arboretum was selected as one of five locations to host an installation—part of the artist’s first city-wide exhibition, Fog × FLO. You’ll learn more about the piece Nakaya created for the Arboretum in this issue of Silva, as well as some special events scheduled to mingle fog and performance in our landscape (see previous page). Come to see the fog, but stick around to experience the Arboretum in full late summer and autumn splendor. From Arnoldia Associate Editor Jonathan Damery waxing poetic about oaks and acorns from the living collections, to Gardener Brendan Keegan’s efforts to house and track birds that nest on our grounds, to the research on fascinating Dutchman’s pipes (Aristolochia spp.) by our Deland Awardee Harold Suárez-Baron, this issue is your passport to take a deeper dive into the plants and landscape of the Arnold Arboretum.

As we observe the end of one growing season and await the beginning of another, I invite you to visit and explore the fine and enduring legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted, as well as the work of generations of plant explorers, horticulturists, arborists, propagators, curators, scholars, and more who have made the Arnold Arboretum such an irreplaceable jewel in the Emerald Necklace. What Olmsted understood so long ago still holds true today, and perhaps even more so: human beings need to stay connected on every level with nature. This fall and winter, I hope you’ll follow in his footsteps.

—William (Ned) Friedman, Director of the Arnold Arboretum & Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard University