Learn at the Arnold Arboretum

Featured Programs

APRIL

Taking Stock Tree Walk

Monday, April 2, 2:30–4:00pm [HB]
Nina Bassuk, PhD, Professor and Program Leader, Urban Horticulture Institute, Cornell University; Michael Dosmann, PhD, Keeper of the Living Collections, Arnold Arboretum; Andrew Gapinski, Manager of Horticulture, Arnold Arboretum

A bit of magic happens when one invites three tree professionals to wander a landscape together. In this case, we have matched professor with former student and three individuals with differing experiences and expertise in woody plants. Nina Bassuk, a leader in urban tree research, was one of Michael Dosmann’s professors while he earned his doctorate at Cornell. Michael is responsible for curating the 15,000 specimens of the Arnold Arboretum. Andrew Gapinski, who has worked at several arboreta prior to his tenure at the Arnold Arboretum, is charged with the horticultural care of the Arboretum’s 281 acres. On this arboreal walk, they will speak as moved by the sights and sounds of the Arboretum’s living collection. We can’t define the topics they may cover on this walk, but we do know that you will gain a richer appreciation for trees and absorb some nuggets of botanical wisdom to share with others. Bring a notepad or clipboard and dress appropriately for the weather.

Fee $10 member, $20 nonmember

Ecology of Spring

Saturday, April 7, 11:00am–1:00pm [HB]
Bryan Connolly, PhD, Department of Biology, Framingham State University

As soil, air, and water temperatures warm, wondrous things develop in the landscape. In this season of mud, life previously dormant activates, hatches, expands, emerges. Bryan Connolly will speak about natural developments and interconnections...
Robin Wall Kimmerer and Learning From the Past of Plants

Braiding Sweetgrass: The Teachings of Plants
Friday, March 23, 7:00–8:30pm [HB]

Drawing on her life as an indigenous plant scientist, a teacher, a writer and a mother, Robin Wall Kimmerer will share ideas found in her award-winning book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, in which she shows how plants—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we’ve forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of ecological science, indigenous philosophy, and literary reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten it today, she explores and celebrates the material and cultural gifts of plants and our responsibilities for reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

Fee $10 member, $20 nonmember

Returning the Gift: How Do We Reciprocate the Gifts of the Plants?
Saturday, March 24, 9:30am–12:30pm [HB]

This workshop with Robin Wall Kimmerer engages participants in exploring the material and cultural gifts of the plants, from ecosystem services, to food, medicine and lessons on how we might live. Through guided observations, readings, and writing, together we will explore how we might reciprocate those gifts, with gifts of our own.

Fee $40 member, $60 nonmember

Fifty Shades of Green: Tales from the Hothouse
Friday, April 13, 7:30–8:30pm [HB]

Terry Huang, Living Collections Fellow, Arnold Arboretum

Alluring suitors with a pungent rotten odor, promising nectar for the exchange of goods, or going at it alone, plants have evolved interesting strategies to ensure their continued existence. In this bawdy botanical review, Terry Huang delves into the sex lives of plants, dramatically explaining the challenges of courtship and consummation for those rooted in place. From mutualistic partnerships to deceit-filled ones that would rival the most twisted romance, his vivid pollination stories reveal the ingenious ways flowers deal with one of life’s most important needs—sex. (Adult content: PG)

Fee $5 member, $10 nonmember (Students call to register free)

The Straight Talk on Hydrangeas
Thursday, April 19, 6:00–8:00pm [HB]

Jen Kettell, Arborist and Horticultural Educator

With gorgeous hydrangea cultivars flooding nurseries and garden centers, it can be challenging to choose just one or even just a few. Magnificent flowers in rich hues entice the eye, yet their allure can lead you to purchase hydrangeas that will not thrive in your garden. Don’t let this happen! Instead, join horticultural educator Jennifer Kettell at the Arboretum for a lively discussion of the species behind some of the hottest names in the trade—especially a consideration of their inherent growth characteristics—and learn how to match appropriate plants to your specific site conditions. She’ll suggest which species are drought-tolerant or benefit pollinators and demonstrate pruning techniques to maximize flowering and plant health, along with other essential growing tips. Jen will focus on hydrangeas that are hardy in Zones 5–7. Class
includes an indoor lecture and walk to a demonstration in the Leventritt Shrub and Vine Garden.

Fee $25 member, $35 nonmember

MAY

Humane and Happy Gardening
Tuesday, May 22, 7:00–8:30pm [HB]

Nancy Lawson, Garden Habitat Consultant

In this myth-busting talk, learn how common growing methods divide the natural world into false dichotomies and perpetuate misperceptions about the wild species living among us. Discover practical ways to put humane gardening philosophies into action by protecting wild nurseries of animals large and small, eliminating unintended hazards to wildlife, nurturing plants that provide food and shelter, and humanely resolving conflicts with mammals and other commonly misunderstood creatures. Nancy Lawson will provide simple principles for both attracting wildlife and peacefully resolving conflicts with all the creatures who share our world. Nancy blogs at HumaneGardener.com and is the author of *The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife.*

Fee $10 member, $18 nonmember

Renewal of the Blue Garden
Wednesday, May 30, 7:00pm [HB]

Sarah Vance, MLA, Director, the Blue Garden and Arleyn A. Levee, MA Ed, Landscape Historian

Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., with the Olmsted Brothers firm of Brookline designed the Blue Garden from 1912–1918 for the Newport, Rhode Island estate of Arthur Curtiss James and his wife, Harriet. Named for its unique palette of blues and purples, the garden was opened to friends in August 1913 with a celebration called “The Blue Masque,” and was heralded at the time with numerous magazine articles and photographs depicting its architectural and horticultural riches. By 2012 the Blue Garden was almost forgotten, subsumed under a thick covering of weeds and invasive trees. This lecture will present the story of the people who originally created the Blue Garden and how the restoration team used original plans, drawings, and photographs from the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site Archives to reinterpret the design and rebuild the garden in all its glory, while meeting contemporary sustainable standards. Reception to follow.

Fee Free, but registration requested. Seating is limited. Offered with Friends of Fairsted

JUNE/JULY

Summer Photography Workshop Series
3 Saturdays: June 2, June 9, June 16; 9:00am–12:00pm
[Boston Nature Center, Mattapan and Arnold Arboretum]

Steve McGrath, Photographer

Photographer Steve McGrath will teach a series of photography workshops utilizing the Boston Nature Center in Mattapan and the Arnold Arboretum landscape. Sessions highlight macro/close up photography, panoramic photography, and garden photography. Note that cell phone cameras are not appropriate for these classes. Sessions are limited to 15 people and pre-registration is required.

Fee per session $30 members, $40 nonmember

Offered with the Boston Nature Center

Identifying Ferns of the Arnold Arboretum
Sunday, June 3, 1:00–4:00pm [WH]

Jacob Suisa, Fellow, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

A relatively rich flora of ferns and fern allies (clubmosses, spikemosses, and quillworts) grows across New England. While it is possible to see almost all the diverse species somewhere in Massachusetts, several can be found here at the Arboretum. Jacob Suissa will teach the anatomy, reproduction, and key identifying characters that will help you to identify the ferns and fern allies of the Arboretum and New England. The class will begin indoors at the Arboretum’s Weld Hill Research Building with a lecture and then move outdoors to Hemlock Hill and Bussey Brook for a fern foray. Dress for indoor and outdoor learning.

Fee $40 member, $50 nonmember
Gardening for Us and Them: How Native Plants Can Feed Both Pollinators and Humans
Thursday, June 7, 7:00–8:30pm

Dan Jaffe, Propagator, New England Wild Flower Society

People typically begin to create gardens for aesthetic reasons. However, many soon find that they want more than simple beauty and look to incorporate plants that contribute on multiple levels. Dan Jaffe will address a current trend (one that we hope is lasting) for gardening with pollinator-friendly and edible plants. He’ll explain which flower shapes and colors attract insects, which edibles are more resistant to diseases and pests, and how to provide for pollinators across the growing season. Armed with a bit of knowledge and a selection of low-maintenance native plants, you can create a multi-tasking garden that nourishes the needs of both humans and pollinators. Dan’s book with co-author Mark Richardson, *Native Plants for New England Gardens*, will be available for purchase and signing.

Fee Free member; $10 nonmember

In the Groves: A Summer Solstice Journey
2 Sessions (select one): Friday, June 22, or Saturday, June 23, 6:30–8:30pm [HB]

Diane Edgecomb, Storyteller, and Margot Chamberlain, Celtic Harpist

Enjoy an enchanting evening of tree myths, songs, and summer solstice legends in a unique outdoor performance, designed specifically for the Arnold Arboretum. Each story is told under a different tree or among a unique collection of Arboretum plants, culminating with the haunting Czech legend “The Wild Woman of the Birch Grove” told amid the birches at sunset. Appropriate for adults and for children twelve years and above. The performance takes place rain or shine. In the event of rain, it will be held in the Hunnewell Building lecture hall.

Fee $20 per person through June 15; $25 per person after June 15

SPOTLIGHT ON URBAN TREE HEALTH
Jerry Bond, Urban Forestry Consultant, Urban Forest Analytics LLC

Tree Health Assessment
Wednesday, July 18, 9:00am–4:00pm [HB]

Jerry Bond will introduce his process for obtaining quick and reliable estimates of tree health, with emphasis on producing repeatable and useful results. After practicing techniques in the field, he will present the way field observations can be interpreted and transformed into reliable information for communicating to clients. This class is based on the book, *Urban Tree Health: A Practical and Precise Estimation Method*, by Jerry Bond, published in 2012. Lunch will be provided.

Fee $130 through May 31; $150 after May 31; professional arborist credits available

Tree Load in Risk Assessment
Thursday, July 19, 9:00am–12:30pm [HB]

This half-day course will demonstrate how to incorporate estimates of tree load into ordinary tree risk assessment. Jerry Bond will present the concept and complexity of tree load and provide an overview of the research about load factors. He will then move on to solving the problem of including tree load, the most important development in the field over the last two decades, into the daily work of an arborist. In an outdoor session, participants will apply what has been learned to develop a load profile. The program concludes by considering the utility of this approach across the tree industry.

Fee $65 through May 31; $75 after May 31; professional arborist credits available