From the Director

As winter gives way to spring in the Arnold Arboretum, wonderful and often extremely ephemeral events take place in our collections as the growing season begins. Across all parts of our 281-acre landscape, beautiful and complex mechanisms of life awaken and reveal themselves, expressed in astonishingly diverse ways in the biology of our plants. From the delicate tepals and heady scent of magnolia flowers near the Hunnewell Building to a parade of brilliantly-colored pollen cones bursting forth among the firs, spruces, and larches in our Conifer Collection, a walk in the Arboretum at this time of year can be the most enriching and enjoyable experience you could hope to find. Every visit offers something new, even if you come every day.

Since my arrival at the Arboretum in 2011—and with additional fervor since the launch of our 10-year biodiversity initiative, The Campaign for the Living Collections—we have redoubled our efforts to provide increasingly excellent care for our plants and for the landscape they inhabit. In this issue of Silva, you will read about our partnership with other U.S. gardens to explore and collect plants for the collection. You will also learn about what goes into finding a fertile and hospitable home for these new arrivals within the Arboretum grounds. With key additions to staff and management in our Horticulture Department, new initiatives and working groups to address everything from soil health and pest management to organic waste recycling, and a talented and dedicated team that extends to seasonal appointments and our Hunnewell Interns, we are dedicated to making Olmsted’s masterpiece in Boston shine and inspire like it never has before.

If a year or two, or perhaps even more, has elapsed since you last visited the Arnold Arboretum, I urge you to come now and to come often in the captivating days that lie ahead this season. Our trees and our landscape look extraordinary, and if you follow my Posts from the Collections* we can share some of the same encounters with fascinating plants. Many of the programs we offer this spring and summer will guide you deeper into the Arboretum and its collections—or even, in the case of our Forest Bathing workshops, facilitate a more inward journey in our urban oasis. Take a class to improve your gardening skills, hear a lecture to expand your horizons, or enjoy a docent-guided walk to engage more intimately with the natural world. We invite you to experience a landscape—and an institution—in full flower.

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

*Posts from the Collections highlight ephemeral moments in the life cycles of plants at the Arnold Arboretum. Browse posts, subscribe to RSS, or sign up for the email list at arboretum.harvard.edu/category/directors-blog/