



WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Plant Hunting at the Nursery



This beautiful oak-leaved hydrangea came from the Harlan P. Kelsey Nursery in 1936.

Where did the plants in our H. H. Hunnewell Arboretum and Alexandra Botanic Garden come from? This question came to the fore this winter as we worked with new plant databases for the gardens and filled in the 'source' data fields. Sometimes a plant was a gift from an individual or institution; for example, 57 plants came from Harvard's Arnold Arboretum. Sometimes it was propagated here from seed or cutting. And sometimes no source is noted. Maybe the plant was never recorded or, like our ancient white oaks, existed before the campus. Maybe the plant predates the handwritten

index cards and accession books which start in 1926, five years after the Botanic Gardens were designated. Thus it is still possible that the rhododendrons in the dell in the Arboretum came from the Hunnewell estate across Lake Waban as long believed, though the records don't confirm it. However, when a source is listed for one of our plants it is usually a plant nursery.

While bigger botanic gardens may go plant hunting in the wild or propagate their own specimens, Wellesley does not have the labor or facilities for that. But in looking at the plant records and in sourcing plants for the new Edible Ecosystem Teaching Garden I have developed a very deep appreciation

for the role of nurseries. Thank goodness they are propagating unique plants for sale!

In the 1930s, the name Kelsey shows up in several guises as a source of plants: Harlan P. Kelsey, Kelsey-Highland Nursery and Kelsey Nursery Service. Harlan P. Kelsey was a prominent horticulturist who ran a nursery in North Carolina with his father and then moved to Boston and Salem, MA where he became influential in horticultural and civic endeavors. He operated Kelsey-Highland Nursery on 500 acres in Boxford, MA. Currently three acres of the property remain and are in development as an arboretum by a group that wants to preserve the unique plant specimens that still exist. E.C. Robbins bought the Kelsey family nursery in North Carolina in 1892; his family continues to run the nursery today as Gardens of the Blue Ridge. These two nurseries supplied many of the more notable trees, shrubs and even wildflowers on our grounds. From Kelsey in the 1930s came the oak leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), striped maple (*Acer pennsylvanicum*), the original silverbells (*Halesia* sp.), the Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) in the Observatory meadow and most of the crabapples (*Malus* sp.) in the Arboretum. In 1931 an order with E.C. Robbins brought us the magnificent yellow buckeye (*Aesculus flava*) next to Mirror Pond and two specimens of a rare holly (*Ilex ambigua*). In 1933 the tropical

Continued on page 2



Friends of WCBG

WELLESLEY COLLEGE BOTANIC GARDENS

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Plant Hunting

Continued from page 1

looking umbrella magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*) also came from Robbins. The person who entered the data for the 1931 Robbins order actually recorded the prices of the plants, a rare piece of information. The buckeye cost 10¢, the hollies, four times as much at 40¢ and several witch hazels (*Hamamelis sp.*) were 15¢ apiece. We should be grateful to these nurseries for the fine representation of Appalachian species we have today.

In the 1950s, Kelsey Nursery Service, apparently unconnected to the earlier Kelseys, was a source of more of our important plants. With their 1950 catalog in hand, courtesy of eBay, I could picture Harriet Creighton, who was probably responsible for plant acquisitions at that time, perusing it for new plants to add to the collection. Notable in this burst of planting is the Franklinia (*Franklinia alatamaha*) in the wedding area, the flag pole sugar maple cultivar (*Acer saccharum sp. saccharum cv. Monumentale*) next to the Observatory house, and the Kentucky coffee tree near the 'Wild Spot' metal sculpture which was misidentified until

Continued on page 10

NOTES from the Director

Greetings from Wellesley! It's been quite a nice growing season here, with a gradual spring thaw bringing on one of the best flowering displays of spring-blooming trees and shrubs in many years. Plenty of rain in early summer was followed by typical July heat and a bit of a dry spell in August. Now most Rose-family trees such as crabapples are loaded with fruit, except for those the campus critters have already harvested. The Hall's Hardy Almond in the Edible Ecosystem produced its first dozen fruit, which we'll harvest as soon as the outer peach-like flesh splits open--assuming we get there first!

In addition to the abundance around us, the biggest yields of the season for the Botanic Gardens are people, particularly two new hires starting this fall. New Botany Fellow Katie Goodall brings expertise in

agroecology and biodiversity in tropical agricultural landscapes, and is leading the Environmental Studies reading group course this semester on "The Future of Food." And Mia Howard '12, winner of the Belyea Prize in Botany following her senior thesis work in Martina Koniger's lab, is back as a research technician, working with several faculty who are using the various gardens (including the new "Farm-in-a-Box" project) in their classes and research. I'm very excited to be working with both Katie and Mia to develop the research component of the Edible Ecosystem garden. Both of these term positions were made possible by the Botany Fellow/Center for Environment Fund. We are so grateful to the many Friends who contributed to this fund!

Continued on page 11



Botany Fellow Katie Goodall and research technician Mia Howard '12 have joined the Botanic Gardens staff this fall.

Botanical Artists to Create Florilegium for WCBG

A Florilegium, a compilation of botanical art works depicting specimens in a garden or collection, is a feature of some of the most prestigious botanic gardens in the world. Thanks to the generosity of the botanical artists who have received their Certificate in Botanical Art & Illustration from the Friends, the Wellesley College Botanic Gardens will have a Florilegium. This multi-year project is being organized by Certificate holders Nancy Savage and Pamela Gordon, and every artist who receives a Certificate is invited to participate.

From a list developed by Assistant Director Gail Kahn of iconic plants in our greenhouses and gardens, each artist will select one species per year to be the subject of a botanical watercolor. While the artist retains copyright and the original work, WCBG will acquire the right to print a professional giclée and to use the image on cards, bags, literature, etc. Regular exhibits of the Florilegium giclées are anticipated, and an online gallery of Florilegium images will appear on the WCBG website.

Artists who have been invited to participate in the Florilegium project for 2013-2014 are Sandy Adams '59, Deborah Cassady '61, Barbara DeGregorio, Kathy Folino, Pamela Gordon, Esther Klahne, Carrie Megan, Suellen Perold, Sarah Roche, Nancy Savage, Lucy Sur, Anita Turner, Lori Waresmith, and Joyce Westner. The creation of a botanical watercolor represents a major undertaking, and we deeply appreciate the gift of their time and their talent.



Rosa rugosa by Lucy Sur, a Florilegium artist.

She Wore Chives on Her Tam

Edible Ecosystem Teaching Garden intern Carly Gayle '13 wore a chive-bedecked tam to her graduation in June. Here's the story behind the chives, according to the Regeneration Farm blog (<http://regenerationfarm.tumblr.com/>):

“The night before graduation, my friends in the Sustainability Cooperative were creating pins, stoles, and crowns to commemorate the beloved parts of their Wellesley experiences. I spied a bowl full of chive flowers on the kitchen table; I weaved them into a square mat, then stitched it onto my tam with embroidery floss. The chives are from the Edible Ecosystem Teaching Garden, a place dear to my heart. Crafting and laughing with friends was a beautiful way to spend my last night at Wellesley, and I enjoyed the opportunity to showcase an ‘ordinary’ plant in a new way to deepen folks’ appreciation of edible plants. I love that we could personalize our graduation attire to reflect how each of us found ourselves and blossomed at Wellesley.”



Carly Gayle '13 and her tam (inset) made the back of *Wellesley* magazine.

Welcome Our TWO! Thorndike Interns for 2013-14

Selecting a student for the Thorndike Internship this past spring seemed like an impossible task because there were such stellar candidates, each bringing varied strengths, connections and interests to the position of student ambassador for the Botanic Gardens. Faced with this difficult decision, in the end the Thorndike committee members decided not to make it! Thanks to the generosity of the Thorndike donors in establishing the endowment, we are able to fund two Dorothy Thorndike Botanic Gardens Interns for the 2013-14 academic year.

Mackenzie Klema '14 is a familiar face, having worked at WCBG as an Environmental Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture intern during the summer of 2012. She writes, "I believe my sense of place was forged through working in this landscape, and it is only through daily, manual labor that I possess intricate knowledge of this place. I've endured this landscape in the pouring rain of early morning, when it was so cold my breath showed, and in the hottest days of July when horseflies circled my head and sweat dripped down my nose. I know what weeds grow under what trees because I have weeded the mulch circles under the smoke trees, dawn redwood and weeping cherry. I know that the Botanic Gardens have large toads, because one hopped onto my hand as I pruned a crabapple's suckers. I know the slope beside the Observatory has the comfiest moss, and is good for viewing stars..."

Sophia Liu '14 is also well known at the Botanic Gardens, having worked as a greenhouse assistant for three years. "I want to open up the greenhouses to the entire campus to share the inexpressible joy of being surrounded by life and beauty every season of the year," she writes. "I can't imagine what my college career would have been like without quiet contemplation in the Hydrophyte House, drawing sketches in



Mackenzie Klema '14 and Sophia Liu '14 are back on campus and already busy with Botanic Gardens activities.

the Tropic House beneath towering banana plants, or rubbing my fingers against the leaves of all the varieties of mints to experience their unique scents. All students, regardless of their major, minor, favorite color, etc. deserve to have such special greenhouse memories. And they're entitled to these experiences – they just need to be (more compellingly) welcomed in."

At WCBG events, Friends volunteers have the opportunity to work alongside the Thorndike Interns and the Botanistas, the Botanic Gardens' student support group. The lively energy of these students makes our event planning and execution much easier, and their outreach to the campus community is crucial. As their writing shows, both Sophia and Mackenzie have commitment and passion to bring to their year as student leaders and spokeswomen for the Botanic Gardens.

Mass Botanic Gardens

Wellesley College Botanic Gardens is proud to be one of ten botanic gardens located across Massachusetts which have joined forces to make it easier for tourists to discover them. Their new web site, massbotanicgardens.org, provides descriptions, photos and directions to each of these horticultural gems. Visit a public garden today!

Lunch at Eva's Herb Garden

Last June a group of us eager gardeners joined the Friends of WCBG “On the Road” tour to farms and gardens of southeastern Massachusetts. Lunch at Eva’s Garden provided us with a special treat. Not only does Eva Sommaripa ’63 cultivate commercial varieties of herbs but she encourages the wildest of wild plants to flourish. Could we find the edibles? Both Eva and gourmet chef Didi Emmons picked and passed around lamb’s ears, oxalis, purslane and other greens which I’ve been trying to eradicate from my garden for decades! We tasted them and marveled at their intense flavors, some delightful and others not so much.

Have you bought pea tendrils at your local farmer’s market and thought you might rip off a few of your own garden’s tall pea plants? No, no, no! Eva grows the peas until the plant is a mere six inches tall, then harvests them all for their leaves and tendrils. Garlic scapes? Grab them when they’re still curling and pliant; don’t wait until they straighten out and stiffen. No herb garden is complete without bronze fennel for its seeds—you can freeze them or make fennel sugar.

Sure, you’ve got raspberries and maybe blackberries, but how about wineberries (*Rubus phoenicolasius*)? Growing these for their own consumption, the farm workers claim they get too few to sell, and alas, our visit was too early to taste them—but what pretty and prickly red calices. Patty-pan squash grows under plastic; even a fig tree survives in one of the greenhouses, and row upon row of thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano, tarragon, mustard, and “mouse watermelon” extend into the wooded surroundings. Trucks from New York City’s poshest restaurants drive to Eva’s farm to pick up ingredients for their creative menus, and Eva sends her truck up to Boston restaurants with fresh herbs unattainable from any other local source.

The by-words of our foodie hosts are “phytonutrients,”



Didi’s salad ingredients—everything but the raspberry vines.



Chef Didi Emmons (in Eva’s Garden t-shirt) and Farmer Eva Sommaripa ’63 explained nutrient-dense agriculture to Wellesley tourers.

“permaculture” and “nutrient-dense agriculture,” all carefully explained by Farmer Eva and demonstrated by Chef Didi. As Didi tossed everything but the raspberry vines into a salad bowl, she created one of the most colorful salads imaginable. It could have been the bridal bouquet at a trendy outdoor wedding with its sky-blue cornflowers and brilliant yellow blossoms, mingling with fresh greens in every hue.

In addition, we ate sandwiches of cooked beet slices, pureed greens and cloumage, an artisanal curd cheese, tangy and fluffy, adding a piquant touch to the vegetables.

Dessert was homemade rhubarb-rose ice cream, delicious! Herbal iced teas completed the meal which we ate alfresco, surrounding our hosts in this charming Dartmouth, MA garden. It looked like a farm to us, and maybe even to the students from the Environmental Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture summer internship program who came along to do some volunteer labor and learn more about the business of growing edibles, accompanied by WCBG Director Kristina Niovi Jones and Assistant Director Gail Kahn.

The rainclouds that loomed all day never shed a drop or dampened our enthusiasm as we set off after lunch for the rest of the tour.

by Joyce Westner

Note: Didi Emmons’ cookbook, *Wild Flavors: One Chef’s Transformative Year Cooking from Eva’s Farm* (Chelsea Green Pub., 2011) is full of stories, plant care, culinary advice and recipes.

Brief Correspondence: Rachel Carson and Edith Kingsbury

It's been 51 years since the publication of *Silent Spring*, the book by citizen-scientist Rachel Carson that is credited with starting the environmental movement. Carson was an award-winning author whose lyrical books about the sea and its life had pushed her to the forefront of science writers. The controversial subject matter of *Silent Spring* – the revelation that DDT and other chemical pesticides commonly used in agriculture were killing songbirds and other creatures up the food chain, including humans – was a distinct turn for an introverted writer. Carson knew she was calling down the whirlwind with her assertions that pesticide manufacturers and the federal government were responsible for poisoning people. Willing to take a stand to inspire positive change, she became the spokeswoman for environmental responsibility. In the summer of 1962, the publication of *Silent Spring* and its serialization in the *New Yorker* caused a sensation.

In 1962, Edith Cameron Kingsbury '38 was raising her family in Keene, New Hampshire. Just as Carson had a life-long interest in observing nature, Edith provided ample opportunities for her own children to do so. Her daughter Marty Kingsbury says, "My mother would pick us up after school and we'd drive around, looking in caves for crystals, looking at beaver dams. She would let us get waist-high in the swamps. We went on picnics to a local gorge where my mother would point out geological formations." Edith taught Sunday school at the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, where her students learned about nature, science and evolution. An avid gardener and naturalist, Edith owned a number of books on horticulture, geology and sea life. Rachel Carson's earlier works on the sea, *Under the Sea-Wind*, *The Sea Around Us* and *The Edge of the Sea*, were part of her library. Marty recalls, "I remember my mother reading *Silent Spring* and her enthusiasm for it. Rachel Carson had articu-



Edith was a role model for a citizen-environmentalist and volunteer.

lated many of my mother's fears with the things she had experienced in the early 1960s."

Edith presented the *New Yorker* serialization to her Sunday school class. Motivated by the need for more information, she wrote to Rachel Carson. The famous author who, according to Marty, "was a kind of god to my mother," wrote back. See her letter to the right.

The backlash against *Silent Spring* was swift and even more savage than Carson anticipated. Pesticide industry representatives accused her of being un-American, a "hysterical woman," and attempted to suppress the book's publication. But the book also raised a tidal wave of concern. President John F. Kennedy appointed a committee to study pesticide use. When Carson appeared before Congress in 1964, she was keeping a personal secret: she was dying of breast cancer. She declined to publicize her medical condition for fear that her opponents would question her objectivity. Rachel Carson died of the disease on April 14, 1964 at age 56, less than two years after *Silent Spring's* release. But the

impact of the book went on (see sidebar). She was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter, and in 2010 *Time* magazine named her one of the 25 most

RACHEL CARSON
ROOM 604
15 EAST 48TH STREET
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

July 20, 1962

Dear Mrs. Kingsbury:

It is heartening
interest in my series
New Yorker. Thank you for

Many people have
of the articles or about
book form. The *New Yorker*
excerpts from a book of
published by Houghton M

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book, however, contains
subject, as well as othe
in the magazine.

I'm glad you are
in your class.

'38

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the same title, to be
Hofflin September 27th.

asked about alternatives
prays. There are many.
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Yorker articles. The
a full chapter on this
er material not included

Sincerely yours,
Rachel Carson
using *Silent Spring*



Rachel Carson pointed out that "man is a part of nature and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself."

powerful women of the last century.

Edith and her family moved to Wellesley, MA, where she took advantage of her proximity to her alma mater and her interest in gardening to volunteer as one of the first docents for the newly-formed Friends of Horticulture in the 1980s. New docents were always encouraged to follow along on Edith's tours, since everyone agreed that she was by far the most knowledgeable about the plant collections. Even as her health began to deteriorate, she gave her time gladly and cheerfully to the Friends.

During Edith's final illness, her daughter Marty donated Edith's book collection to the Friends, where Rachel Carson's letter was found during the process of cataloguing. Edith passed away on April 10, 2013. Former Friends alumna co-chair Anne Moore says of her, "By devoting precious time to what she cared

about, Edith was a role model for a volunteer in any field. The Friends were fortunate to have her during our early years, and thereby set a high standard for the many volunteers who have followed her."

by Gail Kahn, Assistant Director, WCBG

The Impact of *Silent Spring*:

- April 22, 1970: the first Earth Day
- 1970: Environmental Protection Agency established.
In her appearance before Congress, Rachel Carson suggested that such a commission be enacted. According to a journalist for the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency is "the extended shadow of *Silent Spring*."
- 1970: Clean Air Act passed
- 1972: DDT use banned in the United States
- 1972: Clean Water Act passed
- 1973: Endangered Species Act passed
- Not to mention all the scientists, writers, environmental advocates, humanitarians, etc. who have cited it as an influence.

Perhaps the most important impact is this recognition, as voiced by Rachel Carson: "Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. [We are] challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves."

Come Learn With Us

- * All classes are held in the WCBG Visitor Center unless otherwise noted.
- * For classes over the lunch hour, bring your own lunch or walk to local shops.
- * Full course descriptions and material lists may be found on our website.
- * Parking on campus is restricted. Use of the Davis Parking Garage or car pooling from off campus is encouraged.

To register for classes, use the form on page 11 or visit www.wellesley.edu/wcbgfriends and print a registration form.

Plant Stories and Poetry Reading Group HOR 14 040

Bring your lunch and join us at the Greenhouse Visitor Center for a weekly discussion of short stories and poetry featuring plants with group leader Joan Parrish. Each week read one assigned short story and one poem for discussion. The story for the first session, "Flowers" by Alice Walker, and the poem, "Peonies" by Jane Kenyon can be read online or picked up at the Friends' office.

5 Fridays: Oct. 25; Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22
12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Free / Non-Members \$25

The Botanic Garden and Southeast Asian Cooking HOR 14 060

Items for a Southeast Asian meal in the middle of a New England winter are relatively easy to source in our global world. Wellesley College Professor Alex Orquiza shows how many of the plants from the WCBG connect to our everyday lives, with individual histories that include both old and new cultural exchanges. The talk includes a cooking demonstration.

Wednesday, December 4, 1:00 p.m.
Members Free / Non-Members \$10

Mark Making Techniques Your Inner Doodle – An Introduction to Pen and Ink BAC 14 032

Jeanne Kunze encourages you to discover 'your inner doodle' as a means of expression and learning in this non-traditional and fun approach to interpret the variety of textures found in plants. Learn to enrich shapes with a variety of marks using Micron pens.

2 Thursdays: November 14, 21
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Members \$50 / Non-Members \$65

Training Sessions for Volunteer Tour Guides

Share your love of nature and plants with others by becoming a tour leader for the Ferguson Greenhouses. New tour guides are encouraged to attend all 6 of these training sessions:

Fridays: 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Nov. 8, 15, 22; Jan. 31; Feb. 7, 14
Free; pre-registration is required.
For more information, contact us!

Music Inspired by Nature HOR 14 070

Join us for a special afternoon filled with a concert of contemporary classical music and spoken word poetry by Boston-based composer Toni Lester, inspired by the natural world, the impact of noise pollution on it, and how species communicate. Part of the recital will invite listeners to walk through the Greenhouses while music is being performed.

Saturday, December 7, 1:00 p.m.

A preconcert talk will begin at 12:15 p.m.
Suggested donation \$20



America's Romance with the English Garden HOR 14 050 / HOR 14 055

Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies at Bridgewater State University and author of *America's Romance with the English Garden*, Thomas Mickey blends his background in communications studies with his passion for gardens and history to describe the 1890s revolution in advertising resulting in the English garden becoming the look of America.

Offered in collaboration with the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Friends of Wellesley College Botanic Gardens, and the Garden Club of the Back Bay

Afternoon Presentation:
Wed, Nov. 13, 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Location:
WCBG Visitor Center

Evening Presentation:
Wed, Nov. 13, 6:30 p.m.

Evening Location:
Arnold Arboretum's Hunnewell Building,
125 Arborway, Boston

Either Lecture:
Members Free / Non-Members \$10

Plantastic Family Days

The Botanic Gardens hosts free programs for visitors of all ages to discover through art, literature, culture and science just how fantastic plants can be. Hands-on activities, crafts and scavenger hunts will engage everyone from toddlers to college students to grandparents.

Drop in any time between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. to explore.

Superplants: Monday, January 20
Spice Plants: Monday, February 17

Watercolor Painting in the Botanic Gardens WCC 14 202

Be inspired and renewed by the awesome diversity of natural forms in Wellesley College's Ferguson Greenhouses. Or use your drawings, memory and imagination to develop ideas in the studio classroom. In this watercolor class suitable for adults at all levels of experience, award-winning artist/educator Susan Swinand offers weekly critiques and suggests projects to spark your creativity and develop your skill in handling watercolors.

7 Thursdays: Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27; March 6, 13, 20 (Snow Date: April 3)

Classes meet weekly 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Members \$200 / Non-Members \$250



Exploring Drawing in the Greenhouses BAC 14 031

Winter is a special time in our greenhouses! Enjoy the discovery of the many plant treasures in the Ferguson Greenhouse collections while improving your observation and drawing skills with instructor Jeanne Kunze.

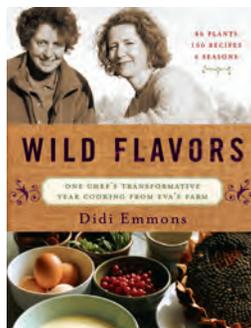
3 Saturdays: January 25; February 1, 8 (Snow Date: February 22)

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Members \$75 / Non-Members \$95

Well-Designed Gardens HOR 14 080

Enjoy a trip through several well-designed residential gardens with Professor Emerita Mary Coyne as she shares images from her garden travels and explains what makes a garden work from her point of view as a landscape designer.

Wednesday, February 12, 1:00 p.m.
Members Free / Non-Members \$10



Wild Flavors HOR 14 090

Award-winning food writer and chef Didi Emmons presents a slideshow featuring 25 off-the-beaten-track herbs, greens, and foraged foods easily found or cultivated in Boston's climate. Didi also profiles the eccentric, sustainable lifestyle of farmer Eva Sommaripa '63, whose 2-acre organic farm grows unusual herbs and greens exclusively for Boston's top chefs. Author book sale and signing at the lecture. Wednesday, March 5, 1:00 p.m.

Members Free / Non-Members \$10

ON LOCATION: The Kampong National Tropical Botanical Garden, Coconut Grove, Florida BAC 14 230

Join Sarah Roche at the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Florida and enjoy 5 days of botanical art. Take home a journal filled with field sketches useful for future art works and fond memories of a unique experience. All abilities are welcome!

Fee includes class instruction, 2 half-day visits to local botanic gardens, and Thursday evening lecture by Sarah Roche. Travel, accommodations, food, and other expenses not included. Dormitory accommodations at Kampong may be arranged on a first-come basis. Contact WCBG Friends office for more details.

5 days: Monday, Jan. 20 – Friday, Jan. 24
9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Offered in collaboration with The Kampong, National Tropical Botanical Garden
www.ntbg.org/gardens/kampong.php
Members \$495 / Non-Members \$595



See Our Full Course Listing Online.

More classes of interest . . . complete details online, in our program brochures, or contact the Friends office.

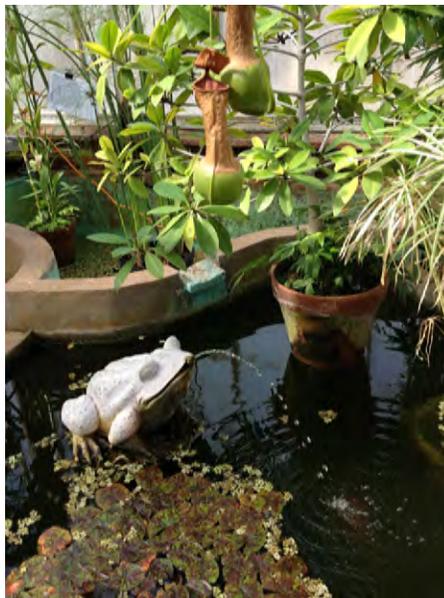


Meditation in the Greenhouse: an Oasis of Well-Being

With the start of fall and the inclement weather that is sure to follow, the greenhouses fill with the buzz of people who want to study nature or enjoy the beauty of the thriving natural world within its protective glass walls. But there are those who come for something just a little different, who come in search of a different kind of nature.

They are here to sit quietly in meditation with Ji Hyang Padma '91, Zen teacher and Wellesley College's Director of Spirituality and Education Programs, and to discover, in Ji Hyang's words, their own original nature.

Each Wednesday at 12:30pm during the College's fall and spring semesters, Ji Hyang can be found tucked away beyond the cactuses, beyond the ferns, beyond the tropical plants, in the furthest greenhouse known as the Hydrophyte House. The room is small and without seating except for one small bench, but ideally suited for turning inward. The *Nepenthes* (known commonly as pitcher plants), with what look like ancient water vessels dangling from their vines, make up the sky above. The bam-



The gurgling of the frog is a background to Buddhist meditation.

boos and papyrus provide a secluded spot in which to settle. The gurgling of the lily pond's frog intensifies the feeling of being very far removed from routine.

There, Ji Hyang offers centering thoughts and prayers before ushering in the

silent meditation with a soft bell. Then each participant is left alone with his or her own observations and the personal experience each creates.

Some 30 minutes later, the group is reminded with another ring of the bell that it is time to release their private explorations. When ready, each travels back through the greenhouses in reverse order to return to the day's activities, touched perhaps by the vast array of plant life assembled and just perhaps by the vast life within.

"For me, the meditations reconnect us with an ecosystem awareness which is at the heart of Buddhism: everything is part of our ecosystem, everything is rich material for awakening if we stay open and curious. My hope is that these sessions provide an oasis of clarity, centeredness and well-being in the midst of our academic weeks," says Ji Hyang.

The greenhouse meditations, which have been held for over three years, are a part of the Buddhist community's group meditations held throughout the campus during term time. No pre-registration is necessary.

By Sherri Stepakoff, WCBG volunteer

Plant Hunting *Continued from page 2*

recently as a golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) probably because that is what was ordered. The mix up likely occurred at the nursery because *Koelreuteria* is in the catalog but *Gymnocladus* is not.

While our nursery suppliers of the early decades were important, one nursery that stands out in the records will be familiar to anyone who gardens in Massachusetts today — Weston Nurseries in Hopkinton, MA. Started by the Mezitt family in Weston, MA in 1923, Weston Nurseries has supplied plants to us in every decade except the 1930s. Weston is the source for 142 plants

in the records starting with a burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) from Peter J. Mezitt in 1929. Many of the trees and shrubs around Paramecium Pond came from Weston in 1971. Weston is also the source of many of the memorial tree plantings in the 1980s including the impressive sourwood tree (*Oxydendrum arboretum*). It is hard to believe, given its size, that the tree was only planted in 1987.

Gardeners know that there are many reasons the source of plants is important. Will a plant do well in the north if it is grown in the south? Will a disease, insect or weed problem come with the plant from the nursery to its new location? Can I trust this

nursery to supply quality, well-maintained and accurately identified plants? Once a tree, shrub or wildflower comes to its new location from a nursery and survives and thrives, as many of our plants have, its birthplace (or propagation place to be more accurate) fades back into the records. Investigating the 'source' field has made me look at the collection in a new light. Instead of belonging solely to the landscape and collections of the Wellesley College Botanic Gardens, I can now think of the plants as individuals that traveled here from someplace else and found a new home.

by Tricia Diggins, Senior Horticulturist

Director's Notes

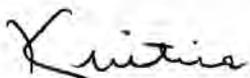
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Several students had excellent botanical summer adventures off campus at places such as the Chicago Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Grange, the Biosphere2 project, and the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. My favorite part of the beginning of the school year is students bouncing into my office to tell me all the cool botanical things they did over the summer. And this year's crop of summer interns on campus, almost all of whom were rising sophomores, designed and planted a renewed herb garden, engaged in preliminary experiments with biochar and aquaponics, researched the problems with soil cadmium in China, initiated some research projects in the Edible Ecosystem, and brought the Regeneration student farm its best harvest yet, on top of maintenance work in the gardens.

A highlight of the summer was a visit from Donald Leopold of SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, NY, an expert in native trees and biodiversity of northeastern habitats. Students remarked that walking around the Botanic Gardens with Don was like taking a field trip through our own campus, as he pointed out so many things that are easy to miss and shared his excitement on seeing rare trees and other plants that he hadn't seen in years. I'm happy to report that Don was impressed with the health and diversity of species and had many ideas for further enhancing the habitats and plantings in the gardens.

We have a lot on tap for this academic year, and have two wonderful seniors, Mackenzie Klema and Sophia Liu, serving as Dorothy Thorndike Interns and leading the Botanistas. Botany at Wellesley continues to thrive!

Best wishes for a beautiful fall season.



Kristina Niovi Jones, Director
 Wellesley College Botanic Gardens
 kjones@wellesley.edu 781.283.3027

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: Home _____ Work/Cell _____

EMAIL: _____

If applicable, Wellesley College Class _____ CBA student? _____

Mail this completed form and your payment to: **Friends of Wellesley College Botanic Gardens, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02481-8203**

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(See Programs and Classes Information and Cancellation Policy.)

Course ID #	Class title	Fee
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

SEPARATE CHECK FOR PROGRAM FEES \$ _____

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Science Center
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