



Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture

FALL 2006 NEWS

Transforming a Space into an Educational Place

by Mary D. Coyne 'MA61, Professor Emerita, Biological Sciences



With the driveway renovation hardscape nearing completion, WCBG Senior Horticulturist Tony Antonucci and Mary Coyne discuss the soil composition necessary for the three garden types planned. Watch for spring planting of the WCBG Educational Garden.

During the time I taught at Wellesley College, my usual route into the Science Center was via the road to the greenhouses which passes by the Friends' Office and the WCBG Visitor Center. While there are cars parked in this area, the greenery around the Visitor Center, the Cameron Gardens, and the Ferguson Greenhouse entryway would lift my spirits. However, if I looked in the other direction, my gaze was met with a powdery dry embankment topped by surviving yucca and various persistent wildflowers (a.k.a. weeds). Granted, in the summer a bouquet of prairie flowers and an occasional butterfly would reward my fleeting glance. That embankment bothered me. The greenhouse personnel who had tried to beautify it in the past were also frustrated with it, as they would watch their new plants shrivel while the water from

the hoses beaded up and rolled down the grade.

Fast forward to last year. The Friends wanted to honor their avid supporter, mentor, and good friend Harriet Creighton '29, Professor Emerita of Botany and Bacteriology prior to the merger of those departments). A tree was mentioned, but this seemed such a small token for a woman whose whole life was devoted to Wellesley College and to education in the Botanical Sciences.

Harriet's areas of botanical teaching ranged from the plant cell, that is, genetics, her area of specialization, to landscape design. She had a wonderful collection of slides that she had taken of gardens from all over the world. For me, they were the highlight of her course in horticulture.

I suggested that remodeling the problematic embankment into an educational garden would be a fitting tribute. As a class exercise at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum Landscape Design Institute, I had designed a rock wall with a series of gardens behind it and used this earlier work for the proposal. The Friends responded enthusiastically and decided this would be the very thing that would appeal to Harriet. Not only was a problem solved but a new teaching environment was defined.

The garden and wall design itself has turned into an educational experience for the three of us—Kristina Jones, Director of the Botanic Gardens and Faculty Co-Chair of the Friends of Horticulture; Carole Ely, Alumna Co-Chair of the Friends of Horticulture; and myself, the designer. We started with choosing the stone, trying to

continued on page 10

Notes from the Director

Greetings on yet another warm, wet day at Wellesley! It's been a good growing season for establishing new plants. According to the NOAA "Climate at a Glance" website,* the nearby Blue Hills weather station recorded the wettest May in the 112 years of record (10.10 inches of rain), and the third-wettest June (12.17"); these months receive between three and four inches each in an average year.

Fortunately, the new water treatment vault at the edge of the arboretum was completed on schedule, and we were able to plant its green roof in April, in time for the rainy growing season. Green roofs are front and center in the urban environmental movement these days, as they can have a significant impact on storm water management, air pollution, and energy savings, among other benefits, especially in cities. Chicago's City Hall and Kansas City's public library are two prominent examples of effective green roofs.

Growing plants directly on a roof can be a challenge, as the plantings should be self-sustaining in a fairly shallow, well-draining and lightweight growing medium. No taproots allowed! Most roof plantings involve non-native species of *Sedum* and *Delosperma*, tough little succulents that establish easily and hold up well under harsh rooftop conditions. We decided to plant our roof as a test garden for species native to eastern North America.

Looking for plants adapted to habitats that share some similarities to rooftop conditions, such as Cliff Goldenrod (*Solidago sciaphila*) and Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos urva-ursi*), we planted 28 species on the roof, and the same species in the adjoining slope for comparison of growth and survival in roof vs. garden conditions. Jing Cao '08, supported by a summer internship from the Mildred Kemper Memorial Fund, studied the establishment of the plants and compared aspects of their morphology. Smaller leaf size is a typical acclimation to relatively harsh growing conditions, and several species had smaller leaves on the roof than they did in the adjacent garden. Jing harvested a subset of the plants and separated them into above and below-ground parts, to compare biomass allocation to roots vs. shoots. Plants facing water or nutrient limitation often grow more slowly aboveground, while allocating more resources to root production. Jing's project is ongoing—look for her results on our new website, www.wellesley.edu/WCBG/

Speaking of the new WCBG website, we had two wonderful students, Mercy An '09 and Juliana Martinez '09, working as Knapp Instructional Technology interns this summer. They designed and built the website AND put together the information in our various collections databases into a central FileMaker Pro database. We have added fields such as economic and medicinal uses and specialized ecological interactions with pollinators and herbivores, and will be looking for students and volunteers to help us add this information to the database. We will also be taking digital photos of diagnostic characters, as a method of verifying the identity of plants in the collections. This is a fun and exciting project that is great for learning about the plants in both the greenhouses and the botanic gardens!



Jing Cao '08 tends the new green roof.

We are also learning more about the ecology of the plants in the greenhouses; part of a successful IPM strategy is helping the plants defend themselves against pests and diseases. Soil samples from the Tropical House and the Durant Camellia were analyzed by Soil Foodweb, Inc., and found to be lacking in beneficial fungi and predators of root-feeding bacteria (of which there were plenty!). They recommended a local compost source, Brick End Farm, which has high fungal activity and a good diversity of bacterial feeders. We are using this compost to top-dress the plants in the ground, and making compost tea to further improve the soil and plant health in the greenhouses, while cutting back on synthetic fertilizers. We also continue to release beneficial insects to control pests in the greenhouses. Let us know how the plants look to you, and what you think of this approach.

This summer has also seen a dramatic clearing of invasive trees and shrubs, especially around the maple swamp

continued on page 6

Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481-8203

781-283-3094
horticulture@wellesley.edu

Editorial Committee:
Carole M. Jansson Ely '79
Kristina Niovi Jones
Gail Kahn
Nancy Webb

*NOAA "Climate at a Glance"
<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/cag3/cag3.html>

Growing Fruits and Nuts in the Suburban Garden

by Tricia Diggins, WCBG Horticulturist

Growing fruit and nut producing plants has a place in every garden and yard. Whether it is for you to eat or the birds (or both), you will be enhancing the plant diversity of your neighborhood. Despite these potential healthy rewards, this approach to horticulture is not nearly as popular in America as growing plants like impatiens and burning bush euonymus. There are reasons for this situation—impatiens and burning bush are easy to grow while growing fruit takes more time and knowledge. Also, interesting fruit plants are not often available in the local nursery; they are more likely found through mail order. However, if you already garden as a hobby, fruits and nuts are worth the effort to learn about and incorporate into the garden.



Seckel pear on espalier

The topic of growing fruit is huge so I will mainly stick to what I know best—my own experience growing fruit and nuts in my third of an acre yard.

My interest in fruit started about 18 years ago when I met a man in Peabody, Massachusetts who was growing four large fruit trees, along with grapes and who knows what else in a tiny, walled city lot. He gave me a bag of peaches to take home. I had never tasted anything so good

and I decided then that growing peaches would be necessary to really enjoy life. Finding a fruit that one loves and wants to grow is often a reason people start to grow fruit. Cherries seem to be the fruit a lot of people want to know how to grow.

When I moved into my current house, one of the first trees I planted was a ‘Madison’ peach. While I would like to say I am enjoying peaches like I had in Peabody, the reality is that the tree was dead within three years, weakened by several diseases, deer, and finally done in by peach tree borers.

Every setback in growing fruit is euphemistically a “learning experience” while every success is thrilling and hopefully they balance each other out. This year’s problems in my yard are dieback in one hazelnut and the appearance of the first canker of chestnut blight on one of my hybrid chestnuts. But my ten year old heartnut (*Juglans ailantifolia*) tree flowered for the first time and my two plum trees set massive amounts of fruit even though I barely noticed them flowering.

There are a few key concepts with which the potential fruit hobbyist needs to be familiar before impulsively buying a fruit tree: pollination, cultivars, pruning, rootstocks, hardiness, water and air drainage, and disease and insect problems. For example a ‘Granny Smith’ Apple is only hardy to zone 6 and would not do well in the zone 5 region that includes Wellesley. The proper use of pesticides to control disease and insects is usually necessary to get quality fruit from most orchard trees. Organic methods of fruit growing exist and the most effective method is to plant

fruit cultivars that are resistant to the problems in your geographic region.

While orchard fruits are often the reason people are interested in growing fruit, there are many other categories of fruit worth investigating. Small fruits such as strawberries and raspberries, native fruiting shrubs like chokeberry (*Aronia*) and juneberry (*Amelanchier*) and nut trees like walnuts and hickories can all find a place in the suburban yard.



Black Walnut

If you advance so far as to design a whole garden around edible fruiting plants, you have entered into the realm of forest gardening. This concept deserves a more lengthy explanation, but in a nutshell is a garden system which tries to exploit ecological niches found in a forest to maintain a forest cover while providing food for the gardener. An over simplified example would be a yard edged in large nut trees (the overstory) with chokeberry and other shrubs forming a shrub layer, grapes in a vine layer and plants like strawberries in a forest floor herbaceous layer with sun loving orchard fruits grown in the canopy gap.

Two groups that help me maintain my enthusiasm for fruit growing are the North American Fruit Explorers (www.nafex.org) and the Northern Nut Growers Association (www.icserv.com/nnga). 🌱

Plants for Winter Color

by Helen Freidberg '59



In Spring of 2006, Dr. Stephen Freidberg, husband of Helen DeOrsay Freidberg '59, gave a gift to the Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund in Helen's memory. Helen passed away in September of last year after a long battle with cancer. We thought that we would share Helen's horticultural talents with another of her hands-on horticultural essays.

Even though she majored in zoology at Wellesley, Helen spent most of her life engaged with plants and was among the first group of alums to be recruited as WCFH docents. According to her husband, Stephen, "When she was first married, Helen could kill house plants as well as anyone." But she developed a keen interest in horticulture, eventually becoming prominent in regional and national garden clubs and plant organizations.

As fellow WCFH docent Joanne Clauson DS '75 remembers, "Without a staff in the early days, docents volunteered for some of the 'extra' jobs. For several years, Helen and I were responsible for the placement of large house plants in various dorm living rooms. Each September we would use Helen's van to deliver a ficus, schefflera, palm, or aralia. Then in May we collected the plants and transported them to Helen's woods in nearby Weston for the summer break."

Over the years, Helen cut back on her weekly volunteer efforts with the Friends as she became more involved with regional horticultural organizations. She did return to campus to attend talks and give lectures—she was our gesneriad specialist. Visit the WCFH Web site: www.wellesley.edu/WCFH to read Helen's Trees for Fall Colors article in the Fall 2004 Newsletter.

Plants that flower in winter are both popular gifts and an item we buy for ourselves to add some living color around the house for the holidays. When making a selection for yourself, choose a plant with light and temperature requirements you can provide. You can follow directions for various watering and fertilizer needs, but sun exposure and appropriate room temperature are harder to control. These requirements are for long-term permanent possessions: the cultivars available today are exceptionally sturdy and adaptable, so that any plant you acquire in flower will last for a long time even if conditions are not ideal. Always ask the florist or vendor for a care card. This should be enough information to keep your plant healthy and blooming for its normal flowering period.

Amaryllis (*Amaryllis belladonna*) usually arrives in do-it-yourself form as a dormant bulb, and directions are included. The price is directly related to bulb size, and the bigger the bulb

the more spectacular the flowers will be. Select a pot only one inch wider than the bulb; plant with half the bulb above soil level. Some gravel or other weight in the bottom of the container will help balance this tall plant. After the initial watering, it is important not to water again until growth begins. The flower stem usually appears before the leaves and once started reaches 3 feet in 4-6 weeks. During this time the plant should be kept warm (70 degrees) and in full sun at least half the day. When the flowers open they last longer out of the sun and in a cooler environment. If there is more than one stem, flowering may last for a month.

Reblooming requires imitating the amaryllis' native environmental conditions. Fertilize when growth begins and again after flowering with a high nitrogen fertilizer to promote

leaf growth. Keep the plant moist but not soggy and provide enough light so the foliage stays green and turgid. The bulb then needs a rest period of 12 weeks. Gradually withhold water, lay the pot on its side and keep it dry for 2 months. Then it must be cooled (Dutch producers maintain 52-55 degrees) for another month. Now repot with fresh soil and begin again.



Azalea 'Miss Jane'
by Sarah Jeon '07

Azaleas sold in late fall are not hardy in New England. The flowers are forced with cool temperatures to bloom earlier than the normal springtime. Select a plant with no cobwebs (indicates mites) or yellow leaves on the soil surface (a sign of poor watering). The maxim is: Keep it cool, keep it moist,

but keep it after it flowers! The second year it will bloom later. A cool, bright location with 4 hours of indirect sun (such as a sun porch or an east window) is good. Azaleas

prefer a temperature of 40-55 degrees at night, and no higher than 65 degrees in daytime. New growth is leggy if they are too warm. The potting medium is usually straight peat, which must be constantly moist. Shower the foliage weekly to prevent spider mites. It is normal to drop old leaves. If new ones fall, the plant needs water or more light. When the flowers are gone, trim dead blossoms and seedpods and shape the plant. Repot using at least half peat. Fertilize with acid fertilizer (to prevent iron deficiency) only 3 times yearly: when repotting and again in April and July. Azaleas can summer outdoors in the shade, but protect from wind and remember to keep constantly moist.

Cyclamen cultivars today are much more heat tolerant, but they still prefer cool temperatures, about 65 degrees. If overheated, the leaves yellow and buds wither. They come in large and small sized plants, but interestingly the corms of each are the same size. Select a plant with no yellow leaves and lots of buds underneath the leaves. If happy, they will bloom from October to March. Light should be bright but indirect. Keep the plant moderately moist but not soggy, and protect the corm from rotting by bottom watering, making sure the soil surface is wet. Fertilize with a high phosphorus food every 2 weeks. When flowering ceases, let the soil dry between waterings. In summer the cyclamen can take direct sun. Repot in the same size pot in late summer when new leaves appear. The top half of the corm should be above soil level. The next year's bloom will probably not start until January or February.



Small insignificant poinsettia flowers (in center) surrounded by showy white bracts.

The plants previously mentioned are all day-neutral, i.e. day length has no affect on flowering. The next three are photoperiod-sensitive. They flower in winter because short days are needed to set buds.

Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) is intolerant of cool temperatures. Keep it warm when transporting, and keep it close to 70 degrees, out of any drafts, and in bright light in the home. Water when soil is dry to the touch. Although

the actual flowers, which are tiny and yellow, are fleeting, the colored bracts on today's poinsettias can last 6 months. To rebloom, start fertilizing in early spring through summer, and repot during this time. Because poinsettias are treated with growth regulator to keep them shorter, you might prefer to start cuttings for next year's plants, rather than deal with a huge plant as the hormone dissipates. In mid-September, the plant must have absolute darkness for 14-15 hours per day for six weeks. Put it in a closet, or cover.

Kalanchoe is a succulent that can take full sun and needs to dry out between waterings. Over-watering tends to cause mold or mildew. Temperature is not critical as long as there is enough light. Kalanchoes flower for months; trim the main stalks to keep it tidy. This plant will keep forever as a nice foliage plant, but to rebloom it needs the poinsettia treatment: 14 hours of darkness per day starting September 1 for six weeks to have flowers at Christmas. Don't fertilize once buds are set as it can cause bud drop. All commercially available

plants are grown from cuttings and are therefore less than a year old. Reblooming poinsettias and kalanchoes can be a challenge. Most of us discard these after one season, when we have certainly obtained our money's worth. Holiday plants with ornamental fruit, e.g. Jerusalem cherry and ornamental pepper, are annuals and therefore also last only one season. Seed may be saved and started in summer for next year's plants.

Thanksgiving or Christmas Cactus

(*Schlumbergera truncata*) are also photoperiodic plants, but much easier to rebloom. Because they are so adaptable and tolerant of neglect, they are very long-lived. Stories abound of plants being passed on for generations. These are not as drought-tolerant as the typical cactus, and should be watered when the soil surface is dry. Fertilize regularly except in autumn. They need bright light, but too much sun will cause leaves to yellow. The rest period starts in September. Reduce watering. Plants need 13 hours of darkness per day for six weeks to set buds. If summered outdoors, leave until just before frost. If



Schlumbergera sp.
by Carol Govan

kept cool at 50-55 degrees, the plant will set buds regardless of day length. Rotate the plant if it is on a windowsill. Flowers on one side imply that only the stems facing the glass received enough cold. Thanksgiving cactus will bloom again in February / March, and Christmas cactus in April / May. This plant likes being pot bound, so no need to repot yearly. Treat all of these winter-flowering plants like any other houseplant. Avoid over-watering or over-feeding; find a location where the light and temperature are suitable, and the flowers will last a long time. 🌱

Programs *All classes held in the WCBG Visitor Center unless otherwise noted.*

For a complete listing of programs and/or complete course descriptions, visit our website www.wellesley.edu/WCFH.

For answers to programming questions or if you prefer to be sent the 2006-2007 Program Brochure, call the Friends Office 781-283-3094 or email horticulture@wellesley.edu.

WOW—Botany is Exciting

BAC 07 020

2 Tuesdays: November 14 and 21
9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Carol Govan introduces botany to the non-scientist. Using basic terminology, direct observations and journaling, you will explore plant morphology (seeds, roots, shoots, flowers, and fruit). No experience necessary except a love of plants.
Members \$50 / Non-Members \$63

Copperplate Calligraphy I

BAC 07 122

3 days: Tuesday, November 28–Thursday, November 30
9:30 a.m. registration; 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. seminar
Cynthia Henrich, experienced calligrapher and teacher, distills Copperplate into its basic elements. Characterized by thick downward strokes and hairline upward strokes, this elegant script is familiar to us by its use on note cards, invitations, envelopes, and illuminated manuscripts. No experience is necessary.
Members \$195 / Non-Members \$ 245

Copperplate Calligraphy Refresher

BAC 07 123

1 day: Friday, December 1
9:30 a.m. registration; 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. seminar
Cynthia Henrich is back with practical tips on Copperplate to get you ready for holiday labeling endeavors, fine art expressions, or your next level of class study. Some previous calligraphy experience is necessary.
Members \$60 / Non-Members \$75

Colored Pencil Fundamentals

BAC 07 142

3 days: Wednesday, January 3–Friday, January 5
Snow date: Saturday, January 6
9:30 a.m. registration; 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. seminar
Accomplished botanical artist Carol Ann Morley teaches you how to create a botanical drawing with the versatile medium of colored pencils. All levels of students welcome.
Members \$250 / Non-Members \$300

On the Road with The Friends of Horticulture

Mid-Hudson River Valley Tour with Leslie Land

Tuesday, June 19 – Friday, June 22, 2007

Join us as we journey by coach from Wellesley College to New York for a four day exploration of the Mid-Hudson River Valley's extraordinary horticultural offerings. Upon arrival in Rhinebeck, we are pleased to have as our garden travel guru Leslie Land—writer for The New York Times garden Q&A column, Virtual Hudson Valley garden expert, consultant on garden design, and well-known speaker on cooking and gardening.

We look at what makes this ecosystem so rich and how it has been tamed and cultivated. As a local resident with ties to the gardening, agricultural, and conservation communities, Leslie shares her insider's view during visits to premier public gardens as well as explorations of private gardens of Wellesley alumnae and friends.

Call The Friends of Horticulture at 781-283-3094 or email horticulture@wellesley.edu to receive more information on this exciting horticultural adventure.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

continued from page 2

area of the arboretum.

Tricia Diggins and Pedro Rivera were joined by Alfredo DeLeon, Jing Cao '08, and Ayla Solomon '09 in this tremendous effort. Ayla, the Friends of Horticulture summer student intern, began a study of the establishment of native species in the maple swamp, with and without the presence of invasives. Her

project laid the groundwork for a long-term study of the development of a native plant community in the wetland.

Last but not least, as I write this the stone wall across from the Visitor Center is taking shape! Gert Dever's and Mary Coyne's vision of an educational garden that would make Harriet Creighton proud soon will be realized—stay tuned.

Hope to see you at Wellesley soon!

Kristina Niovi Jones, Director
Wellesley College Botanic Garden
kjones@wellesley.edu 781-283-3027 



Ayla Solomon '09 in the Maple Swamp.

Growing Soft Fruits— Tips for the Home Gardener

HOR 07 104

Monday, January 8, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Master Gardener and enthusiastic home gardener Robin Wilkerson shares her tips on planting, maintaining, and harvesting soft fruits, as well as tricks for keeping the berries from flying off with the birds.

Volunteer Program: Free for WCFH Volunteers

Members \$10 / Non-Members \$13

History of Botanical Art Seminar

BAC 07 112

4 Wednesdays: 1:00–4:00 p.m.

January 10, 17, 24, 31

Snow date: Wednesday, February 7

Private viewings with Carol Govan in Wellesley College's Margaret Clapp Library Special Collections and Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum Horticultural Library in Jamaica Plain and the Botany Libraries at the Harvard University Herbaria in Cambridge highlight three extraordinary world-class collections of rare manuscripts and some of the earliest printed herbals, floras, monographs, nature prints, and periodicals. Registrants must provide their own transportation.

Members \$105 / Non-Members \$130

Foundations of Botanical Drawing and Painting

BAC 07 102

8 Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

January 16, 23, 30; February 6, 20, 27; March 6, 13

Botanical illustrator Sarah Roche introduces the traditional art and science of botanical drawing and painting. Instructional focus includes observational skills, drawing development, composition, design, and watercolor technique through demonstrations and tutorials. All abilities are welcome!

Members \$200 / Non-Members \$250

Foundations—Watercolor Skills

BAC 07 100

4 Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

March 1, 8, 15, 22

A 4-week foundations of watercolor painting class with Sarah Roche filled with lessons focused on the challenges of painting botanical subjects. All abilities are welcome!

Members \$112 / Non-Members \$140

Techniques of Botanical Drawing and Painting

BAC 07 202

8 Fridays: 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

January 19, 26; February 2, 9, 16; March 2, 9, 16

In this continuation of the CBA Foundations course, Sarah Roche will guide you as you hone your botanical drawing technique. Botanical accuracy is emphasized by examining plant structure. Students enrolling in this course should have successfully completed two Foundations courses and have the permission of the instructor.

Members \$200 / Non-Members \$250

Building on a long tradition of making a difference with plants for the College and Community, Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture (WCFH) introduces a Certificate in Botanical Art and Illustration (CBA)—bringing together fine art and scientific accuracy in a integrated course of study set in the Wellesley College Botanic Gardens.

For more information about botanical art courses and the CBA offerings, please visit our website, email, or phone WCFH.

Introduction to Botany through Drawing

BAC 07 111

8 Mondays: 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

January 22, 29; February 5, 12, 26; March 5, 12, 19

Carol Govan shows you how to increase your observational abilities by drawing plants. Using graphite and colored pencils, you will study and draw elementary plant morphology and development—the structure of flowers, leaves, roots, stems, and the organization of these elements to make a whole.

No previous experience necessary except a love of plants.

Members \$165 / Non-Members \$210

Experienced Watercolor Painting

WCC 07 202

7 Wednesdays: 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

January 31; February 7, 14, 21, 28; March 7, 14

Visual artist and painting instructor Susan Swinand offers this course for people with some watercolor experience. With the opportunity for prolonged, intense observation in the Ferguson Greenhouses, and group critiques, you will heighten your awareness and ability to see and discover a personal language of form and color.

Members \$175 / Non-Members \$225

Tropical Adventures—Wellesley Style

HOR 07 105

Monday, March 5, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

As part of Wellesley College's Tropical Ecology course taught every other year, twelve lucky Wellesley students spend three weeks at research stations in Glover's Reef, Belize and La Selva, Costa Rica. This slide lecture by Martina Königer, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences, will give you a flavor for the students' independent research.

Volunteer Program: Free for WCFH Volunteers

Members \$10 / Non-Members \$13

Copperplate Calligraphy for Botanical Labeling II

BAC 07 124

3 days: Tuesday, March 20–Thursday, March 22
Snow date: Friday, March 23

9:30 a.m. registration; 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. seminar

Cynthia Henrich helps you expand your ability to vary these beautiful and adaptable English letterforms, identify your own aesthetic preferences, and learn to use calligraphy for practical and artistic projects. Calligraphy I or prior Copperplate experience is necessary.

Members \$195 / Non-Members \$245

VISITORS' VOICES

Dear Wellesley Friends of Horticulture,

This past summer I participated in one of Wellesley's Center for Work and Service's stipend programs, working in Boston at the International Rescue Committee as an English as a second language teacher. My students, who were all high school aged international refugees from Eritrea and Somalia, came from all across the Boston area. While part of the program focused upon boosting the children's English skills, it also centered upon expanding the children's horizons through exposure to the cultural offerings of Boston area.



Elyssa Weber's ESOL students learning from docent Nancy Webb about Monstera deliciosa in the Tropic House.

A simply amazing experience for them was a tour of Wellesley's Ferguson greenhouses. The girls enjoyed seeing the flowers, the boys preferred the carnivorous plants, and all the children loved looking at any species from Africa. Our guide, Nancy Webb, spoke slowly and carefully, making sure all the children understood what they were looking at and helped them to grasp the great biodiversity that exists within the greenhouses.

The kids, even those who had been here less than three months, were able to gain a tremendous amount of knowledge. Less than a week later, when we were at the Harvard Natural History Museum, the children were able to identify a multitude of plants in the Glass Flower Exhibit. "Look we saw this one at Wellesley, this is the plant that..." they would shout and point.

Thank you so much for giving us a tour, and for cultivating a love of botany within a group of children who are ordinarily never exposed to flora and fauna. Thank you for making this summer one of the most memorable of my life.

Sincerely,

Elyssa Weber '08 

Winter Horticultural Lecture Series

Co-sponsored by the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, New England Wild Flower Society, Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, and Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture.

Design for Outdoor Living **WLS 07 010**

Thursday, January 18, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

MassBay Community College, Wellesley, MA

Garden designer and plantsman Sean Conway will discuss great plants, garden designs, projects, simple solutions, and inspiring ideas for home, table, craft, and landscape.

Members \$20 / Non-Members \$25

Gardens to Go: **WLS 07 020**

Creating a Container Garden

Thursday, February 1, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

MassBay Community College, Wellesley, MA

Painter and scene designer, Sydney Eddison takes the audience through the process of transforming an empty patio into a garden of lushly planted containers. Her slides illustrate how these vessels can divide spaces, enclose garden "rooms," frame views, direct traffic, and dramatize entrances.

Members \$20 / Non-Members \$25

Making Sense and Use of Color in the Garden **WLS 07 021**

Friday, February 2, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Elm Bank Horticultural Center, Wellesley, MA

Join gardener, author, and self-confessed color junkie Sydney Eddison for an eye-opening workshop to demystify color theory and to figure out why some plant combinations work so well and others don't.

Members \$40 / Non-Members \$48

Good Planting with Fergus Garrett **WLS 07 030**

Thursday, February 15, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Mass Bay Community College, Wellesley, MA

Learn the principles of good planting—and all about designing with plants—from Fergus Garrett, head gardener of Great Dixter and long-time creative partner of famed British gardener and author Christopher Lloyd. Don't miss this rare opportunity to view Great Dixter, one of the "must-see" gardens of the world, from the viewpoint of someone who so intimately helped to create its beauty.

Members \$20 / Non-Members \$25

Creating the Mixed Border **WLS 07 031**

Friday, February 16, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Elm Bank Horticultural Center, Wellesley, MA

In this morning workshop, Fergus Garrett will teach you how to create a multi-season border, sharing his ideas on proportion of garden beds; variation in plant height, texture, and flowering; and color combination and repetition.

Members \$40 / Non-Members \$48 

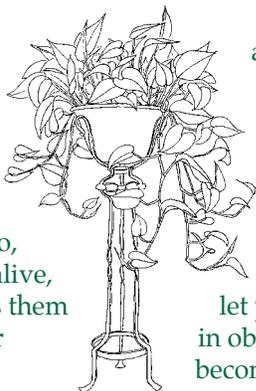
Philodendron – Best for Beginners

from *Houseplants are Houseguests: Thoughts from an Indoor Gardener*
by Anne Sinnott Moore '56

My first plant probably was a philodendron, although I cannot remember it. Probably it was in my college room, struggling to stay alive in darkness and drought. That's what they do, these philodendrons—stay alive, the characteristic that makes them everyone's favorite beginner plant.

It's too bad that philodendrons have this reputation, because it induces an expectation that they are impossible to kill, and that they will pull through, no matter what. The fact is that a philodendron is a truly wonderful beginner's plant because it demonstrates the noticeable difference between a well-grown plant and one that is just getting by. The strugglers are the ones we see hanging over our heads in the dry cleaner's, or plunked in the dimmest corner of the doctor's waiting room. The beginner can see that long straggling stems and dusty leaves are not attractive, and therefore get inspired to grow a healthy philodendron the right way!

The simple heartleaf philodendron, *P. scandens*, is a good example of how to approach basic houseplant care, which is to duplicate the plant's native condition in the wild as closely as possible. Philodendrons are tropical rain forest plants, growing either on the forest floor or twining their way up a tree toward the light but under the canopy. They therefore prefer filtered bright light or a steady medium light. They obviously love humidity, but today's cultivars have been bred to tolerate fairly dry indoor air. They like household temperatures above 70 degrees, with a ten-degree drop at night. They like to dry out a little between waterings, and enjoy



Rebecca Saunders '61

a regular diet of feedings during their growing periods.

So why isn't this the easiest regimen in the world? It is. The good and bad news is that the philodendron will let you know how unhappy it is in obvious ways when conditions become just too tough. It will become a stemmy, straggly specimen with scrawny leaves if it does not get enough light. Its leaves will turn yellow if overwatered, and they will brown and fall off if underwatered. It likes to have its leaves kept clean and free of dust so that it can breathe easily and keep that chlorophyll working. In this sense, it is a good patient for the beginner caretaker. It will make its needs known before it becomes too late to correct the problems.

The name philodendron evolves from the Greek and means "lover of trees," thereby describing the vining type which races up tree trunks in the jungles of Central and South America and some Caribbean islands. This type is one of the world's most commonly grown houseplants, but it should be recognized that a vine wants to climb, up or around or on something. Left on its own in a pot, and especially a hanging pot, the vining stem will reach out for something to grab hold of. If it doesn't find anything, it will just hang in midair, getting stemmy and leggy as it hunts for support. A few little trailers are fine, and can be charming against a window or filling up a corner, but that's enough. It's therefore best to keep it pruned back in its pot so that bushier growth will occur, the plant's form will be visually pleasing and it will be healthy.

continued on page 10

Houseplants are Houseguests: Thoughts from an Indoor Gardener is the natural outgrowth of my longtime attitude about houseplants. If they are treated with understanding and affection, they will return the favor in their own wondrous ways. The best way to care for a plant is to understand its origins on Earth, and to try to duplicate nature in providing what it needs. Over all reigns the mantra "think of your plants as people." You won't go wrong.

Learning about my plants, and caring for them, has given me enormous pleasure and endless subjects to write about. The essays in this collection have been published previously as individual articles for "In the Pot," a monthly column I write for the Seacoast Media Group. In these articles I try to share my own experience in hopes that it might help my readers approach plant care with confidence and a sense of humor. If the column, and now the book, also help them avoid some of the mistakes I have made, so much the better! I am not a botanist nor a Master Gardener – not even an expert! Just someone who loves plants and loves to write about them.

I decided to publish this book myself with the good advice and technical assistance of my daughter-in-law, Mary Moore, with the delightful addition of original line drawings by my friend and fellow WCFH volunteer Rebecca Saunders, and the encouragement of my husband Don, who long ago accepted plants as members of his family!

If you would like to purchase a copy of Anne's book, please stop by the Visitor Center or contact the Friends office 781-283-3094 or horticulture@wellesley.edu. Proceeds from books sold by WCFH benefit the Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund.

TRANSFORMING A SPACE

continued from page 1

incorporate the ochre colors in the neighboring wall in the adjacent parking lot. As we were pondering this choice, Meg Thompson from the Geology Department commented that the stone we had chosen was not endemic to the immediate geologic area and would look out of place (to a geologist). We invited Meg to join us at the stone yard and watched in awe as she quickly paced through the yard pointing out Quincy granite, Dedham granite, etc. After this, our first educational lesson, we ended up with old weathered field stones which fit in perfectly with the surrounding hillside. For safety reasons the wall will be topped with a piece of bluestone which will provide a flat surface.

We also had to consider a long-term goal—providing an appropriate portal to the adjacent Alexandra Botanic Garden and Hunnewell

Arboretum. Thus began our next educational adventure in designing and redesigning a set of stairs to replace the existing rough, sloping foot path down the hillside. This seemed pretty straight-forward in concept but underwent many iterations. In the end, we will have a set of stairs that will be easily seen from the Visitor Center as the direction to proceed to the Botanic Gardens. There will be a wide platform halfway up the slope. This can be used for viewing of the gardens or as a gathering place for the beginning of a tour to the arboretum. Eventually this will connect with a pathway across the grass to the arboretum stairs.

What will be in the garden is the next question, and the next educational experience. Inherent in the overall WCBG Education Garden design is seasonal interest for passers-by particularly during the academic year from September to June. The educational garden will have three

foci resulting from the three different sun/shade patterns found on the embankment. The first is a rock/skree garden using a number of alpine plants, both herbaceous and woody, showing the adaptation of plants to their microenvironment. The second is a prairie meadow area geared to demonstrating the life cycle of butterflies. This area will contain many native perennials. The last area is to be a conifer garden using dwarf and miniature conifers.

As a consequence of Professor Creighton's specialization in genetics, the conifers will incorporate hybrids and mutants which can be compared by students and visitors with standard size conifers in the arboretum and botanic gardens. Many of these will be distributed throughout the garden area to provide structure, winter interest and continuity to the garden as a whole—combining botany and landscape design—thus providing

continued on page 11

PHILODENDRON

continued from page 9

Another approach is to give the vine something to climb on, a hoop or a trellis, or a piece of wood set into the pot as a backdrop. Given good growing conditions, this vine should really take off. You can control the speed and route, encouraging the vine to grow in any desirable pattern - up and around a window, across a beamed ceiling, mixing it up with books on a bookshelf. Even here, however, it should be kept pruned back and under control.

As the stem grows, tiny aerial roots often are produced. They can be trained to cling to the support device, or just be tucked back into the soil of the pot where they will take hold and produce new little plantlets. You can help them do this by wounding the

stems slightly where they touch the surface, and fastening them down with hairpins or paper clips opened up to make little hoops. Keep the soil surface moist. That wounded spot should produce roots and eventually new little plants, turning your original plant into a shrub or giving you the opportunity to increase your collection.

Other philodendron types grow in a cluster of leaves coming up from the crown of the plant. They are called self-heading philodendrons and they are also good houseplants, requiring the same care as *P. scandens*. Two dramatic species are *P. selloum*, the saddle-leafed philodendron with deeply lobed leaves, and 'Burgundy' cultivar with its reddish stems and foliage. Both grow to a large size, the saddle-leafed can get to be 3 to 4 feet tall. And another large

plant commonly called a split-leaf philodendron or Swiss Cheese plant, *Monstera deliciosa*, is not a philodendron at all but a separate genus of tropical vines.

And that's another story! 

Anne Sinnott Moore '56 is a freelance writer and amateur horticulturist. She writes about houseplants and container gardening for her column "In the Pot" appearing in the newspapers of the Seacoast Media Group and online. An English major at Wellesley College, Anne is past alumna co-chair and currently a member of the Steering Committee of WCFH. She lives in New Hampshire and Arizona with her husband and plants.

TRANSFORMING A SPACE

continued from page 10

a demonstration of possible small conifers for residential gardens.

None of this, of course, would have come to fruition if not for the generous donation of Ms. Gert Dever, long-time friend and traveling companion of Harriet Creighton. According to Ms. Dever, Harriet too was always bothered by that embankment, and renovating the area to install an educational garden was an idea that Professor Creighton would have solidly endorsed. Walls, we discovered, are costly, as are specialty plants, but we hope that the many students and friends of Professor Creighton and visitors who will benefit from the garden will continue to support this work by contributing to the Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund. 

WCBG EDUCATIONAL GARDEN

If you would like to honor the spirit of Miss Creighton and be a part of building this great teaching resource, please make your contribution payable to *Wellesley College* and send to:



Mary D. Coyne

Development Services—
Wellesley College
Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481

YES! I would like to help create the WCBG Educational Garden with a donation to the Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

If applicable, Wellesley College Class of _____

PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

WELLESLEY COLLEGE FRIENDS OF HORTICULTURE

www.wellesley.edu/FOH email: horticulture@wellesley.edu office: 781-283-3094

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: HOME _____

PHONE: WORK _____

CELL _____

E-MAIL _____

If applicable: Wellesley College Class of _____

Section #	Class title	Fee
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

PROGRAM CHECK ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make check(s) payable to:

Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture

Mail to: Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture

106 Central Street

Wellesley, MA 02481-8203

_____ I would like information on volunteering at WCFH.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE FRIENDS OF HORTICULTURE

(for the academic year July 2005-June 2006)

Benefactor: \$2500

Patron: \$1000

Supporter: \$500

Donor: \$250

Sponsor: \$100

Member: \$50

Young Alum: \$15 (5 most recent classes)

SEPARATE CHECK FOR MEMBERSHIP \$ _____

made payable to: Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture.

Cancellations and Refunds: You may cancel a registration and receive a partial refund by calling the WCFH office at 781-283-3094 ext. 4 at least one week prior to the first class. A cancellation fee (\$5 or 25% of the cost of the course, whichever is greater) will be deducted. Special cancellation policies apply to overnight trips. We regret that no refunds or credits can be given for class cancellations less than one week prior to the start of the class or for classes you have not attended.



WELLESLEY COLLEGE
Friends of Horticulture
Science Center
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481-8203

Non Profit Org
U S Postage
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No 12548

From the Spring 2006 issue of Wellesley Magazine

Gertrude K. Dever



“Together with my friend Harriet Creighton '29, for a long time I was an enthusiastic customer of the College's Planned Giving office, and I still enjoy receiving the money they send me from the annuities I established at Wellesley years ago. Lately, however, I have taken great pleasure in creating enhancements that are made possible by the outright gifts that I now make in Harriet's memory. She loved her College so much. What better way to honor her lifelong service to her alma mater and to her beloved science, botany.”

Gertrude Dever, 95, is a longstanding friend of Wellesley College. Gertrude's philanthropy includes the new elevator at the Wellesley College Club, as well as the establishment of a new Botanic Gardens Fund that bears the name of the late Harriet Creighton '29, professor of botany emerita. The fund will provide support for a variety of physical enhancements in the areas surrounding the Ferguson Greenhouses.

Please join Gert Dever and the Friends of Horticulture in creating the WCBG Educational Garden by making a donation to the Harriet B. Creighton Botanic Gardens Fund.

See page 11 for details.