

2017 Year in Review

Friends of
Laurelwood Arboretum
Connecting People with Nature



Mark Hirsch

Our Mission

To preserve Laurelwood Arboretum as an oasis for the enjoyment of nature and to provide opportunities for environmental awareness through educational programs, community involvement and outreach activities.

Our Vision

To connect people with nature

Our Core Values

Stewardship – Commitment to the conservation of this treasured oasis for present and future generations

Environmental Education – Engaging the public through-workshops, programs and activities

Horticulture – Pursuing excellence in landscape design and horticultural practices

Teamwork – Realizing our mission through the cooperative efforts of the Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, Wayne Township officials and employees, community organizations and members of the public

Leadership – Cultivation of emerging leaders

Community – Promoting involvement through membership, volunteerism, events, programs, tours, social media and outreach

Financial Responsibility – Ensuring the future of Laurelwood Arboretum through effective fiscal management and fundraising initiatives

Organizational Excellence – Commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct

Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum was incorporated in 2003 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

In 2007, a partnership was formed between Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum and the Township of Wayne. Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum oversees the park and is responsible for maintenance, operations and public programs.

The Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum Board of Directors oversees the activities of more than 200 volunteers, who contribute more than 11,000 hours of work in the arboretum each year. The organization is funded by membership dues, plant sales, grants and donations from individuals and businesses.

Message from the President

This is my third year as president of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum. Each year I have been pleased to report good news—more visitors, more members, more volunteers, more successful programs and activities. The good news continued this year.

In 2017, we hosted seven educational programs, eight monthly gardening discussions, seven free tours for the public, seven scout groups, two art exhibits, and a jazz concert. The parking lots were often full, and the arboretum welcomed an estimated 15,000 visitors this year.

Volunteers



Tuesday volunteers

Our volunteer numbers have swelled to over 200 energetic people who helped maintain our gardens, roads and equipment and served on the board of directors and the many committees that planned and executed our programs and activities. Volunteers donated more than 11,866 hours of their time. This represents a contribution of \$325,840 based on the nationally accepted volunteer hourly rate.

Our Tuesday and Friday volunteers weeded, pruned, mulched, propagated and planted to help keep Laurelwood looking its best. Other volunteers repaired vehicles, road, bridges and essential infrastructure. Volunteer tour guides led a total of 525 visitors through Laurelwood, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm. Volunteers served on the more than 25 committees that manage our organization, plan educational programs and activities, promote membership, and help raise funds.



Volunteer tour guides

Plant Collection Management Committee

We are particularly proud of the work of our dedicated Plant Collection Management Committee, which continued its efforts to identify and tag Laurelwood's trees, shrubs and plants and then create a detailed record for each. The database now contains over 1,000 records of identified plants. The Rhododendron Study Team has identified 272 rhododendrons and tagged 214. Four William Paterson University interns worked with this committee on plant identification, plant location mapping, data collection and entry, and plant tagging.

Plant Collection Management is one of our most important programs and has elevated the status of the arboretum in the horticultural community. The Rutgers Master Gardener Association presented its 2017 State Award to our committee. Betty Montagne is retiring as chairperson and has graciously offered to work with any volunteers who might be interested in continuing some of her important work.



Plant Collection Management Committee: Back row, from left, Bill Mains, Jim McHugh, Peter McHugh, Joe Di Giacomo, Nancy Alexander, John Crowell and William Paterson University intern Richard Platte; front row, Sara McHugh, Jane Van Eeuwen and Betty Montagne. Not pictured, Al Fitzburgh, Wally Koenig, David Kooistra, Frank Libert, and Joan Scott-Miller

Membership

Friends are the mainstay of our organization. Membership dues and the voluntary contributions of many of our members are critical to our continuing success. We depend on membership support to create programs to engage visitors of all ages and to maintain and enhance Laurelwood Arboretum. I'm very pleased to report a substantial growth in membership in 2017 with 464 members, (that includes 25 Lifetime members and 12 five-year members).

Community Outreach and Public Relations

Our website, www.laurelwoodarboretum.org, is constantly updated with important information about the arboretum and Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum's programs. There were 16,821 visits to our website in 2017, an increase of 75 percent over last year. Our monthly E-newsletter is sent to more than 1,000 members and supporters, keeping them informed of upcoming events. We also have a very up-to-date Facebook page with 470 "Friends." Photos of the arboretum and events at Laurelwood are posted regularly on Instagram and Twitter with the hashtag #LovingLaurelwoodArboretum

Fundraising

This has been a successful fundraising year for Friends of Laurelwood. Although we did not have a major fundraiser, smaller efforts bolstered our bottom line. Our annual Gift of Green mailing helped us start off the gardening season and brought in substantially more donations than in previous years. Donors continue to order patio pavers. We installed a mail slot at the

Knippenberg Center to encourage spontaneous gifts from visitors to the arboretum. We closed out the year by participating in the global Giving Tuesday campaign. Donations to the Laurelwood Arboretum Plant Restoration Fund will allow us to replace a number of dead and damaged trees and shrubs. Contributions to the Laurelwood Arboretum Irrigation Improvement Program will make it possible for us to begin Phase I of our plan to upgrade the arboretum's watering system.

This year, we were also successful in securing important grants. Through the efforts of Joe Di Giacomo, chairperson of our Rhododendron Study Team, we were awarded a \$2,850 grant from the American Rhododendron Society for the publication of a brochure on the history of rhododendron hybridization at Laurelwood. The Passaic County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust and Wayne Township awarded grants to help fund the replacement of the arboretum's propagation greenhouse at the top of the hill, which was built in the 1930s and is in a state of advanced disrepair. The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust gave us a grant of \$15,725 for replacement of a utility vehicle used by our arboretum staff. And the Ira A. Roschelle MD Family Foundation awarded us \$1,000 for educational programs and community activities.

We sincerely appreciate the enthusiastic support of Wayne Mayor Christopher Vergano and the Township's Parks and Recreation Department and thank the Wayne Township Council for authorizing the funds we need to manage the arboretum.

Board meetings are the 4th Thursday of each month at 4:30 pm at the Knippenberg Center, except for January, February and March when they are in the Mayor's Conference room if weather limits access to the arboretum. Board meetings are always open to the public.

Laurelwood Arboretum is open to everyone free of charge daily year 'round from 8 am to dusk (except in emergency conditions). The Knippenberg Center for Education is open April through October, Tuesday through Sunday, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Alice Moskowitz

President, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum

Executive Director's Report

Deer damage continues to be one of the most serious problems in the arboretum. We sprayed continuously and installed netting to prevent the deer from trampling, eating or rubbing against our most treasured rhododendrons and azaleas.



Nancy Alexander and John Crowell helped install deer netting to protect the arboretum's most valuable plants. In the absence of fencing to prevent deer from entering the arboretum, the netting is a temporary solution. Purchase of deer netting was funded by donations from members and volunteers.

Our arboretum would not be beautiful and healthy without lots of **horticultural maintenance**. We tested the soil to determine the fertilizer needs in Lilac Walk, the Pollinator Garden, and the Native Plant Demonstration Garden and amended the soil where required. We increased the use of organic matter, composting and humus applications in 2017. Christmas tree mulch was completely depleted from its application on our paths. Weeds were hand pulled or weed-

wacked. We are systematically removing Kudzu, an invasive non-native that has appeared at Laurelwood.

Wayne Township crews continued to mow lawns in a timely fashion. They also removed two large oak trees that were split and deemed a safety hazard. The township continued the arboretum's hemlock spray program.

Lilac Walk was reinvigorated with the installation of 12 new lilac cultivars. Other new plantings include *Callicarpa* (on Fairway), *Cephalotaxus* and *Picea* (both at the 2nd Bridge Rock Garden), four *Leucothoe* (on Fairway), *Caryopteris* (on Fairway), muhly grass (Sensory Garden), asters, *Coreopsis* and *Liatris* (all in the Pollinator Garden), 830 daffodils and 200 'Purple Sensation' allium (various locations).

An arboretum functions only as well as its **infrastructure**. In 2017, approximately a mile of roadways was resurfaced with stone and widened. Bridges were sealed and teak benches were oiled. We began a pond remediation program with site engineering and flagging to address the silt buildup in Laurel Pond; work is scheduled to begin next year. An Eagle Scout completed his project to reinforce the streambank in the Reflecting Pool in the South Rock Garden. More stream erosion control was completed near the 1st Bridge. Rock and log retaining walls were installed along Ridge Road and Fairway. Logs were placed in various locations to prevent pedestrian, dog and vehicle infringement. The Greenhouse Committee is reviewing engineering and architectural plans for the 2018 construction of a new propagation greenhouse.

We offered many opportunities to **learn** and enjoy Laurelwood, including scout programs, Gardeners' Journal meetings, and a variety of educational programs for the public. A bird watching logbook is available at the Knippenberg Center for visitors to record sightings at Laurelwood of waterfowl, perching and songbirds, and birds of prey. The Native Plant Demonstration Garden and Native Tree Tour brochures are being reviewed and updated, and we are creating a Sensory Garden brochure.

Our seasonal horticultural staff of three is hardly enough to care for a 30-acre elaborate public garden. Thank goodness for our Laurelwood Arboretum **volunteers**. A weekly seasonal e-blast reached 147 volunteers to announce garden chores, activities and locations. Tuesday onsite volunteers increased in number from 15 to 24 by the end of the year.

A special horticultural project was the layering of rhododendrons (90 were made and tagged). We propagated 23 'Laurelwood Sunset' evergreen azaleas, grown in Oregon and returned home. Volunteers potted up the rooted cuttings, and the plants will spend the winter in our holding pen outside the Educational Greenhouse. The plants may need another two years to grow before they are sold or installed at Laurelwood. Three crews of greenhouse volunteers continue horticultural maintenance through the winter, propagating cuttings and nurturing plants that are not winter hardy.

We honored and recognized our volunteers with events that included pruning, propagation, winter container and fairy-making workshops; a recognition luncheon; a birthday bash; a summer barbeque at the home of our Volunteer Coordinator Linda Ransom; and an end-of-season Halloween appreciation party.

Elaine Fogerty

Executive Director, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum

ADMINISTRATION

Board of Directors 2017

Alice Moskowitz – President

Jim McHugh – 1st Vice President

David Kooistra – 2nd Vice President

William Lauber – Treasurer

Ruth Hayden – Recording Secretary

Robin Abrett

Margaret Kerstner

Sara McHugh

Mary Joe Sichak

Bill Mains

Linda Ransom

Executive Director

Elaine Fogerty

Board Attorney

Stuart Reiser, Esq

Office Manager

Pam Himeles

Horticultural Manager

Joan Scott-Miller

Honorary Board

Alex Fadynich

Nancy Fadynich

Dr. Al Fitzburgh

Dawn Healey

Barbara Hegranes

Carol Huber

Roland Reynolds

Diane Stern

Advisory Council

Joseph Di

Giacomo

John Hegranes

Bonnie Joachim

Andrew Lawn

Peter Lowry

Betty Montagne

2017 PROGRAMS

- *All the Presidents' Gardens* by author Marta McDowell
- *Garden Safari photo program* by Mary Jo Sichak
- *Happy, Healthy Hydrangeas* by Executive Director Elaine Fogerty
- *Plein Air Watercolor Workshop* by Andrea Geller, artist and university art educator
- *Laurelwood's Legacy: Hybrid Rhododendrons* by Joseph Di Giacomo, Chairperson of the Rhododendron Study Committee
- *Plant Propagation Workshop* by Elaine Fogerty
- *Dividing Perennials Workshop* by Elaine Fogerty
- *What's In Your Attic?* by Carolyn Remy, antiques appraiser
- *The Steve Alexander Trio in Concert*
- *Container Gardening for Winter* by Helen Kensinger, Landscape Designer, Canete Garden Center
- *Plants: An Expressive Drawing Workshop* by Andrea Geller, artist and university art educator
- Monthly *Gardeners' Journal* Series - Horticultural discussion group led by Dawn Healey
- Three very successful reading and activity programs for young school children

SCOUTS

- An Eagle Scout candidate, Tim Tiullo, completed a stream reconstruction project in the South Rock Garden
- Scout and Cub troop events included working on gardening and plant growth badges
- Scouts toured the arboretum where they learned about its environment and many unique trees and helped mulch the Dorothy's Way path
- Eight Girl Scout events included Daisies, Brownies, and Junior Scout groups who participated in a variety of activities that included nature walks and scavenger hunts, seed planting, flower structure lessons and earning specific patches, and badges

EVENTS

- Spring Plant Sale with programs and tours
- Earth Day Celebration
- Trip to Chanticleer Gardens in Pennsylvania
- Art Displays in the Knippenberg Center by renowned local artists and longtime supporters Bob Shine and Prabha Sahasrabundhe
- Jazz Concert by Steve Alexander and The Jazz Generation



Bob Shine at the exhibit of his artworks

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

OFFSITE

- Wayne Day
- Green A-Fair at William Paterson University
- New Jersey Botanical Garden Holiday Open House decoration of main entranceway and grand staircase

TOURS

Volunteer tour guide sessions were held throughout the season. There is now a well-educated and enthusiastic group of tour guides.

- 5 Public Tour Days – approximately 325 attendees
- 15 Private Tours – approximately 200 attendees

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Press – articles submitted weekly to local news outlets about arboretum activities, before and after events
- Annual Newsletter – overview of the year's significant past and upcoming activities
- Notice Boards outdoors and inside the Knippenberg Center displayed upcoming events and visitor and membership information.
- Website www.laurelwoodarboretum.org was upgraded throughout the year with new information and features.
- E-news sent out monthly highlighted upcoming events and timely horticultural information
- Email flyers reminded members of upcoming events and important information
- Facebook posted up-to-date information about upcoming events and important member and visitor information

Site Management

IMPROVEMENTS

- Roads and pathways regraded
- Engineering for pond dredging completed
- Planning underway for upper greenhouse replacement
- Brook above South Rock Garden reinforced to control erosion
- Road to second bridge lined with large stones to reduce erosion

HORTICULTURAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS ADOPTED

- Selected plants netted to protect from deer grazing and buck rubbing
- 'Laurelwood Sunset,' new azalea hybrid developed by Dr. Al Fitzburgh, prepared for propagation
- Lilac Walk redesigned and expanded with new lilac cultivars
- Continuation of identification, cataloging, mapping and tagging of trees and shrubs
- Soil mix standards established for greenhouses
- Soil testing of six selected sites to assess fertilizer needs
- Reestablishment of 2nd Bridge Rock Garden

- Selected native plants, rhododendrons and azaleas propagated
- The South Rock Garden Restoration Project, spearheaded by the Watnong Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, is an ongoing effort

Finance and Fundraising

Funding for the Arboretum was obtained from three sources: Wayne Township, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum and Grants.

The Wayne Township Laurelwood Arboretum Budget is managed through the Parks and Recreation Department. It covers employee wages and related payroll taxes, administrative expenses, accounting, insurance, utilities, security, and site expenses.

Additionally, Wayne Township has provided a portion of the funds required for construction of a new greenhouse to be built in 2018.

Our nonprofit organization, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum, is funded by membership dues, donations, and fundraising initiatives. These funds help to support the park's maintenance and operations as well as public programs, tours and community activities.

Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum was awarded grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, the American Rhododendron Society, and The Ira A. Roschelle, MD Family Foundation.

William Lauber

Treasurer

Membership

We hosted several membership outreach events in 2017 in an effort to attract new members. A group of more than 50 realtors from RealtyOne held their monthly breakfast meeting at the Knippenberg Center, followed by guided tours of the arboretum. INOA (Information Network on Aging) had their spring and fall meetings at the Knippenberg Center and is now a corporate member of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum. We distributed membership information at events at St. Joseph's Hospital and Chilton Memorial Hospital. We welcomed the TriCounty Chamber of Commerce for a breakfast meeting and tours and St. Tomothy's Lutheran Church's Prime Timers for a slide show and meeting.

Diane Stern

Membership Chairperson

Plant Collection Management

The committee made significant progress in 2017. We continued to work on general trees shrubs, rhododendrons, maintenance of the Native Plant Garden and care of new and existing plants. Detailed information was gathered for all plant groups and can be viewed at the Knippenberg Center on the database or by reviewing plant identification reports.

The way plant identification is approached is important. This year we identified plants throughout the arboretum based on blooms and other known characteristics. We gained more experience with the wide array of plants in the arboretum. With that understanding, it has become apparent that a more focused approach is needed. This could be accomplished by working only on predefined collections of interest, thereby establishing parameters and narrowing the scope of this project. For example, select tree collections could be defined by characteristic (evergreen, deciduous) and category (conifer, broadleaf) for major tree groups.

The arboretum also has a significant collection of shrubs. Rhododendrons are at the center for defining the history of this property. Other important shrub collections include Mountain Laurel, Butterfly Bush, Lilac, Viburnum, Deutzia, Clethera. While work is well underway on some of these collections, a more focused effort is needed by selecting special shrub collections for identification.

We use a site map extensively to create accession numbers and permanent plant tags. We might consider refining the map by adding landmarks and further division of sections.

We should continue the summer internship program from William Paterson University based on the needs of the arboretum. One or two interns should be sufficient—one to work on special assignments and the other to work with the Plant Management Collection committee.

Betty Montagne

Chairperson, Plant Collection Management

Rhododendron Study Team

The Rhododendron Study Team continued its efforts to identify and catalog the arboretum's rhododendron collection, which we estimate at 500 to 600 rhododendrons. We have identified 272 named rhododendron hybrids and species and entered data on each plant into our computerized plant collection database. A plant record was created for each rhododendron including its parentage, color, bloom time, flower truss and foliage descriptions, plant growth habit, cold hardiness, name of hybridizer, and its location in the arboretum. We have tagged 214 of the identified rhododendrons using a unique permanent anodized aluminum alloy plant tag.

We were successful in registering an evergreen azalea, which we named 'Laurelwood Sunset,' with the Royal Horticultural Society, which serves as the International Cultivar Registration Authority for the genus *Rhododendron*. We are raising 23 two-year-old rooted cuttings from the parent plant in the arboretum's fenced pen behind the educational greenhouse. In June, we started to propagate an additional 35 cuttings from 'Laurelwood Sunset' in a root box in the educational greenhouse. These cuttings should be ready for potting in the spring of 2018.



Dr. Al Fitzburgh, Joe Di Giacomo and Betty Montagne working in the field to tag rhododendrons

Through the efforts of Dr. Al Fitzburgh, arrangements were made with Mercer Community College in West Windsor, New Jersey to propagate our selected rhododendron cuttings at no charge. We sent about 25 cuttings to the college in August for custom propagation in one of its three greenhouses.

We were awarded a \$2,580 grant from the American Rhododendron Society for the publication of a booklet on the role of Laurelwood Gardens and John and Dorothy Knippenberg in rhododendron hybridizing. Grant funding provided for the purchase of two portable three-panel educational display boards, which will be used for presentations and exhibits about rhododendrons. We plan to publish the booklet and host our first exhibit in the spring of 2018.

We developed a photographic slide show of selected rhododendrons in bloom in the arboretum, which has been posted to the Laurelwood website. We also developed a PowerPoint presentation on the history and role of rhododendron hybridizing at Laurelwood, which was shown at the annual meeting of the Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum in November.

Our efforts to identify rhododendrons in the arboretum would not have been successful this year without the assistance of Dr. Al Fitzburgh, former President of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum and former President of the Tappan Zee Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. His guidance and knowledge have been invaluable.

Joe Di Giacomo

Chairperson, Rhododendron Study Team