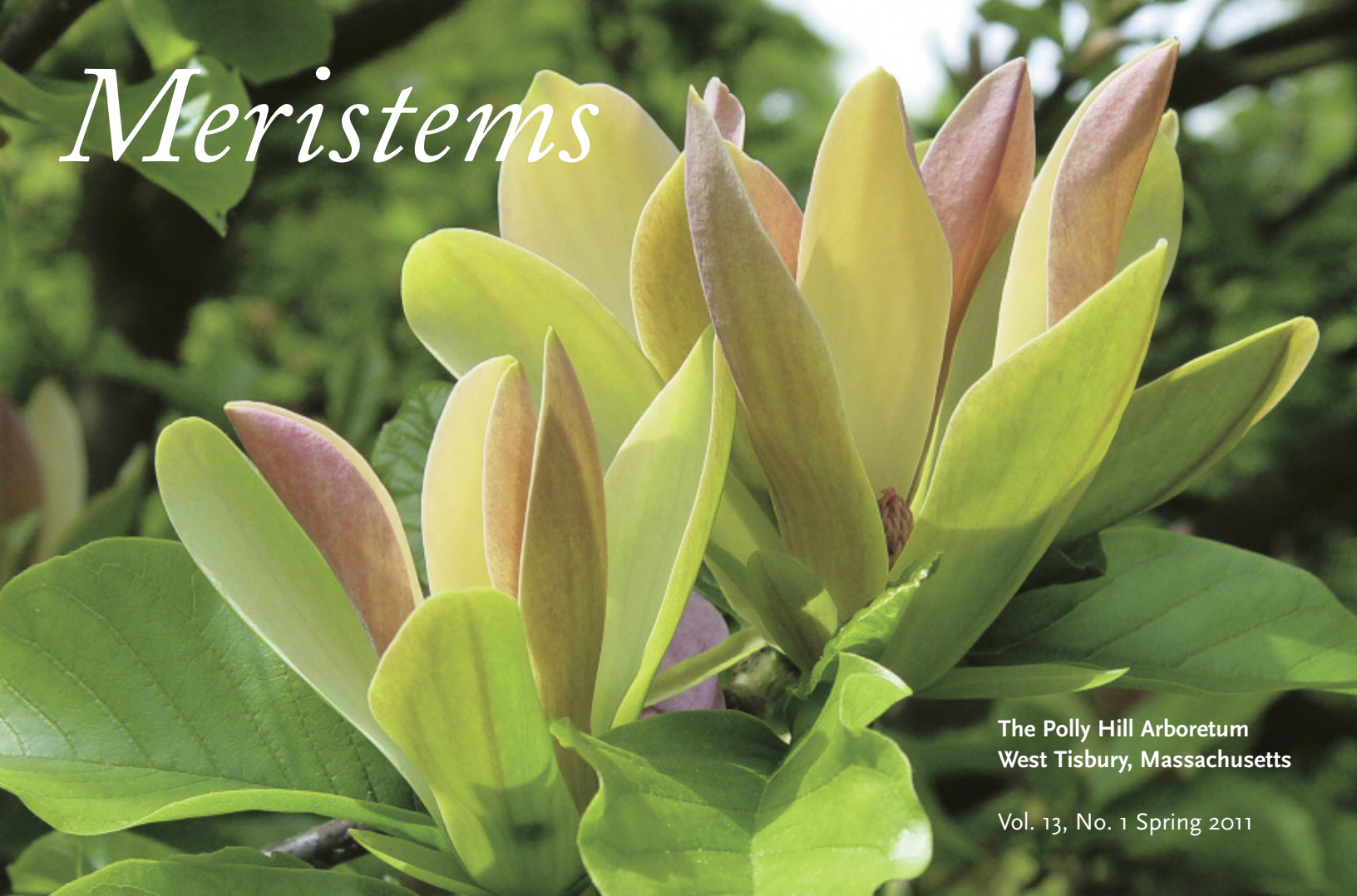


Meristems



The Polly Hill Arboretum
West Tisbury, Massachusetts

Vol. 13, No. 1 Spring 2011

Magnolia x brooklynensis 'Woodsman'

PHA Cultivates a Culture of Sharing

When plant experts visit PHA there is always lots of sharing. We take full advantage of their horticultural knowledge and we share ours. We bring our best curation efforts (labeling, mapping, and maintenance) forward while we introduce visitors to our collections and propagation facilities. What we get in exchange is helpful advice, plant verification, cultural suggestions, and suggestions of new plants to add to our collections.

The tradition of horticultural and botanical experts visiting the Arboretum was established by Polly Hill. The old guestbooks contain the names of many legendary plantsmen and women who made the pilgrimage to Barnard's Inn Farm to see the trees, talk plants with Polly, and share information. The collective camaraderie of

plant enthusiasts is one of the best parts of being involved with plants. We continue this practice today.

Over the past several years the Arboretum has hosted several international tour groups. The fall of 2009 included a visit from members of the Holly Society of America. While walking through Holly Park, the group noticed a special American holly and encouraged us to give it more consideration. The plant has been propagated and will be distributed for a more thorough evaluation, and, if worthy, given a cultivar name.

Members of the Magnolia Society International visited the Arboretum this spring. A special part of the visit was an award given to PHA director emeritus, Stephen Sponberg. The D. Todd Gresham

award is given to individuals who have made significant contributions to the overall knowledge of magnolias. A dinner attended by plantspeople from around the world honored a legendary plantsman from our own backyard!

More sharing: this upcoming fall a group of international oak experts will visit the Arboretum to look at our plant collections and compare the performance of our oak trees with others from across the United States and the world. The visit will also include a look at our oak forest research project and side expeditions to the natural areas of Martha's Vineyard.

Sharing has many benefits. We are very proud of the ripple effect—increased awareness of PHA's plant collections and programs worldwide.

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The mission of the Polly Hill Arboretum is to perpetuate the experimental tradition in horticulture established by Polly Hill by sharing knowledge of plants and scientific procedure through educational programs, research, plant conservation, and exploration. The Arboretum seeks to preserve its meadows and woodlands, to promote an understanding of its collections, and to encourage their utilization for scholarship, observation, and the enjoyment of all.

Meristems © The Newsletter of the Polly Hill Arboretum

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The rehabilitation of the Far Barn preserves our agricultural history.

Message from the Director

I am accustomed, now, to the seasonal rhythms of the Vineyard. When answering the familiar question, How do you survive the winter? I realized that I enjoy the solitude of the off-season. When not reading by the woodstove, I embrace the outdoors through hiking and running, and walking around the Arboretum—inspirational whatever the season! This past winter we all watched the Far Barn undergo rehabilitation with a sense of pride that the spirit of the old building will remain for future visitors and students.

Yet, I admit, a winter trip off-island especially to a sunny location is a welcome break. I felt fortunate this winter to have the opportunity to travel to California to participate in a not-for-profit leadership program at Stanford University. The focus was on mission, strategy, and economic sustainability. At times the process was overpowering—like drinking from the fountain of knowledge through a fire hose!

Part of the training program focused on the question “What role does your institution play in your community?” Not-for-profit institutions come

in many forms and serve a multitude of functions. Generally they bring social value to the community, i.e. they add to the quality of our lives by serving our needs. When I look at the Arboretum in this light, we are primarily educators. We educate through our plant collections, education programs, research, and publications like the one you hold in your hands. We are an arboretum, a plant science institution devoted to our founder’s spirit of experimentation, observation, study, and sharing.

All of us at PHA (staff, board members, interns, and volunteers) are passionate about what we do here. Perhaps what is most remarkable about what we do is the environment in which we do it—a beautiful, historic landscape with a unique sense of place that inspires a sense of wonder in all who visit. There are so many wonderful things to see and interesting things do at the Arboretum. Is that why I rarely leave? Please join us for an exciting summer ahead!

Recognition of our Historic Landscape

Homestead, Cowbarn, Far Barn: these old farmstead buildings along with our stone walls and open meadows form the backbone of the Arboretum. While the Arboretum is known for its remarkable collection of woody plants, it is equally significant as a rare surviving agricultural landscape, one of the few publicly accessible Island properties to preserve a continuum of land use from the late 17th century to the present.

And now, thanks to assistance from the West Tisbury Historic Commission, we have received recognition from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). After extensive review, the MHC has listed the Polly Hill Arboretum as a Historic Area on the Inventory of the Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. MHC defines an Area as

a geographically defined area which encompasses a distinct group of interrelated buildings, objects, structures, landscapes, or sites which exhibit a common history of use, associations, and/or form and appearance.

In addition MHC has determined our property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places since it fulfills the National Register criteria for historic and architectural significance. They note, "The property's buildings, structures, and landscape features together reflect the history and evolution of this place across three centuries of Vineyard history, from early farm to summer retreat to arboretum."

These designations acknowledge the continuum of historic land use this property represents, the care it has been given over the years, and the unique contributions made by Polly Hill.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects important in American history, culture, architecture, or archaeology. The National Register encourages recognition "and the use of the places of our past to create livable and viable communities for the future." To receive this honorary listing more work needs to be done with MHC to complete the nominating process.

To learn more about our historic landscape and the MHC recognition join Karin Stanley, PHA staff member, amateur historian, and West Tisbury Local Historic Commission board member for a walking tour this summer. Tours take place on June 16 and August 25 at 10am and are \$5 or free to PHA members.

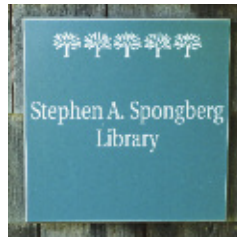


Our historic stone walls form the framework of the PHA landscape.

Polly's Top 10 Books

Most gardeners value books as a source for information, ideas, and pictures. Polly's bookshelves were lined with hundreds of titles from which she regularly drew knowledge and inspiration. In cataloging and organizing the PHA archives, Karin Stanley discovered Polly's annotated list of her top ten horticultural books. The books on the list, many still regularly consulted by PHA staff, reflect Polly's personal interests that, in turn, formed the foundation of the Arboretum we know and love today. Polly credits Richardson Wright's *The Story*

of Gardening as "the first book that got me interested." We certainly owe Mr. Wright a debt of gratitude! For more information on our library collection, visit our website "library" page, or better, stop by for a visit.



The Stephen A. Spongberg Library is open by appointment.

Wish List

Our wish list contains unfunded items that would enhance the services we provide at PHA.

Family Explorer Backpacks – \$75 each
The Arboretum is the ideal place for

families to discover nature together. Our new family backpack tour will help make this experience even more fun and informative. Each self-guided educational backpack contains an informative Arboretum map, field guides, magnifying glasses, sketch pads, and other materials to engage the entire family in nature study during their visit. Please help us fund these packs.

Herbarium Field Press - \$85 each
The Arboretum uses field presses to take plant samples of our collections and naturally occurring plants on the island. They allow for easy transport of pressed specimens back to our offices. The samples are used for plant identification classes and to help verify the cultivated specimens in our garden. We need two new presses for our interns!

Herbarium Block Weights - \$100 each
These highly specialized weights are made of high density wood. They are used to flatten field collected specimens in preparation for mounting on herbarium sheets for long-term storage.

Should you be interested in funding one or more of these items, call Barbara or Tim at 508-693-9426. We extend our sincere thanks to those of you who have generously responded to our previous requests.

Polly's Top 10 List

- The Story of Gardening**
by Richardson Wright
Polly notes, "the first book that got me interested."
- Garden of Trees and Shrubs: Practical Hints for Planning and Planting an Arboretum**
by Fred Lape
Polly notes, "consulted this book a lot, early and often."
- Trees for American Gardens**
by Donald Wyman
- The Flowers and Gardens of Japan**
by Ella Du Cane
- Gray's Manual of Botany**
by Merrit Fernald and Asa Gray
Polly notes, "2 years at U of D to learn how to use it."
- Rhododendrons of the World**
by David Leach
- Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs Hardy in America**
by Alfred Rehder
- Azaleas and Hollies**
by Fred Galle
- A Handbook of the World's Conifers**
by William Dallimore and Bruce Jackson
- Wyman's Garden Encyclopedia**
by Donald Wyman



A garden of Japanese azaleas as depicted in *The Flowers and Gardens of Japan*. Painting by Ella Du Cane.



Come explore together! Photo by Gary Mirando

Summer Program Preview

We are planning a variety of programs for our summer season and, as always, most events will take place in the Far Barn.

In celebration of our refurbished Far Barn we launch our summer lecture series with a wine and cheese reception followed by a talk on arboretum activities by PHA executive director Tim Boland. Up next, native plant advocate and author Carolyn Summers will discuss garden design using native plants. Garden design on a larger scale will be addressed by Pat Cullina, vice president of horticulture and park operations for Friends of the High Line, New York's unique public park located along an abandoned elevated rail line.

Morton Arboretum director of collections Kris Bachtel will share his experiences plant collecting in China and explain why plant collecting expeditions are important in our rapidly changing global climate. And, later this summer, we welcome Eldredge Birmingham, director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, who will discuss the conservation work of the premier tropical biology research institute.

This year's David H. Smith memorial lecture features Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens director of horticulture/plant curator Bill Cullina. In his talk, "The Web of Life: Taking the Long View," Cullina will explore what a long-term geological perspective can bring to concerns like rarity, extinction, and the concept of "native."

Other programs include workshops with Holly Bellebuono of Vineyard Herbs and a visit from John Forti, curator of historic gardens and landscapes at Strawberry Banke Museum. Also Don Sibley will speak about the art of bonsai and Susie Bowman will present a program on butterfly gardening.

We enthusiastically thank our friends and sponsors—Bartlett Tree, Eden Market/Tea Lane Nursery, Heather Gardens, Middletown Nursery, and SBS—for their generous support of our lecture series. All Wednesday evening lectures are also sponsored, in-part, by the Martha's Vineyard Cultural Council. For our complete summer schedule look for our education brochure mailing or visit our education



This year's David H. Smith memorial lecture features Bill Cullina.

page at www.pollyhillarboretum.org. To receive email program updates contact Karin at karin@pollyhillarboretum.org.



Garden Tour

What a time we had! Our first Delaware Valley garden tour was a resounding success. In mid-May our group of 14 met in Wayne, Pennsylvania, for two and a half days of garden bliss. The tour included visits to the private gardens of Eve and Per Thyrum and Andrew Bunting, and many public gardens: Winterthur, the Scott Arboretum, Chanticleer, Mt. Cuba Center, and the Jenkins Arboretum. The highlight of the trip was a private tour, reception, and dinner at Mt. Cuba Center, a garden and horticultural institution in northern Delaware. Director Rick Lewandowski rolled out the red carpet for this very special experience. Actually, it was the personal attention we received at each garden that made this a truly memorable trip. Polly Hill and Tim Boland both have had a connection to the people and plants of the Delaware Valley and, now, so do our lucky tour participants. Watch for more trips in the future.



Happy gardeners at the conclusion of the Delaware Valley garden tour.

Magnolia Society Visit

In May following the Magnolia Society International's annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, more than 40 magnoliaphiles (translation: human beings crazy about magnolias) visited PHA to study and enjoy our diverse collection of magnolia trees as well as take in the many other botanical splendors of the season. Their visit provided PHA with the opportunity to tap the knowledge and experience of several internationally recognized magnolia experts and to share our remarkable landscape with an appreciative audience. Because of our cool spring weather, the participants were welcomed by many blooming magnolias. Their post-conference tour of mainland collections unfortunately featured trees well past their peak. Many commented that our trees saved their best display for their final tour visit. We smiled and agreed!

PHA Forest Ecology Study Update

PHA research associate Dr. David Foster of the Harvard Forest begins the second full year of our long-term ecological forest study. The PHA woodlands that were so severely impacted by successive infestations of fall cankerworm are rebounding with exuberant understory growth. The loss of the mature oak canopy has resulted in increased light to the forest understory, along with less competition for water. As a result, the woodland shrub layer has responded with tremendous growth, and young tree seedlings are also appearing. The 9 plots established for the study will be monitored for succession changes in species diversity along with the physical and chemical characteristics of the soil. As this project progresses more detailed information about our changing forest will be shared with our membership and the Vineyard community.

Welcome Back Alyssa!

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Alyssa Janilla back to PHA as our 2011 collections management intern. Alyssa may look familiar; she was a summer intern in 2008. After her PHA internship she returned to the University of Wisconsin—River Falls where in 2009 she received a BS in horticulture. Since then, she has completed a horticultural internship at the Smithsonian in addition to gaining considerable experience through hands-on work at greenhouse and nursery operations in her native Stillwater, Minnesota. She asserts that PHA is a source of infinite learning

opportunities and she looks forward to, once again, enthusiastically immersing herself in all that PHA has to offer. Alyssa aspires to narrow her horticultural focus and hone her academic skills in preparation for graduate school in public horticulture. The mentorship of young horticulturists like Alyssa reflects the PHA's interest in growing people along with plants. The sharing of knowledge and enthusiasm for plants is the best part of the plant-people connection. Be sure to welcome back Alyssa when you visit this summer. We are so thrilled to have her back!

USDA Bark Beetle Trapping

What is that contraption? Bird feeder? Rain chain? Sculpture? No, none of the above. It's a Lindgren funnel trap . . . still wondering? Let us explain. Visitors to PHA this summer may come across three strange-looking devices. These temporary additions to the landscape are part of collaboration with a USDA pest alert program to trap, identify, and detect various species of exotic wood-boring and bark beetles in southern New England. Included on the list is the "bad boy" of exotic insect

pests, the Asian long-horned beetle. This and other target species are not known to occur on Martha's Vineyard, but do occur in other parts of Massachusetts. Through September, PHA staff and interns will regularly monitor traps, collect captured insects, and dispatch them to a regional USDA facility for identification. PHA's cooperative role aligns with our scientific mission relating to the health of trees, indentifying threats, and the environmental assessment of our forests.



Collections management intern Alyssa Janilla (in green) helps install beetle traps.

Board News



Claire Sawyers joins PHA board.

We are pleased to welcome two new members to the PHA Board of Directors: Claire Sawyers and Doug Sederholm. As the director of the Scott Arboretum in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, Claire Sawyers brings a wealth of experience in public horticulture to the Board as well as a long-time connection with PHA. She was inspired by Polly Hill and advised David Smith and Stephen Sponberg with the initial formation of the Landscape Design Intent Plan for the Arboretum. Claire looks forward to working with PHA and feels she will gain as much from her association with us as she can contribute.

Doug Sederholm is an attorney living in Chilmark with his wife, Susan Gilligan (a special education teacher at the West Tisbury School), and two sons. Doug also brings a wealth of professional experience to the Board. He is a member of the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) where he currently serves as chair of the land use planning committee. He was chair of the MVC in 2007–2008 and has also served on the Town of Chilmark finance advisory committee. Doug has had a lifelong interest in the natural world and hopes to help grow the Arboretum's role in the Vineyard community.

At the same time we bid fond farewell to two members: Corinna Borden Hill and Cynthia Walsh. Corinna has recently



Doug Sederholm joins PHA board.

stepped down from the Board. She and her husband, Walter, will be relocating to the Hudson River Valley where Walter will join a physicians practice and Corinna will pursue her food and nutrition interests. We thank Corinna for all of her enthusiastic support and look forward to seeing her in the future as she begins this exciting new chapter in her life.

Cynthia Walsh has also stepped down from the Board. We also thank her for her hard work and dedication to PHA, as both a board member and loyal volunteer. As a West Tisbury neighbor Cynthia has deep ties to Polly and the Arboretum and we look forward to her frequent visits.

Staff News

Arborist/senior horticulturist Steve Masterson attended a three-day Rutgers symposium in February focused on the practical application of current arboricultural research. Steve attended lectures, workshops, and demonstrations regarding the latest developments in plant health care, fertilization, pruning and planting, and other related topics.

In March Executive Director Tim Boland participated in the Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders, a residential two-week program offered through the Center for Social Innovation at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. Key topics of this intensive program included leadership, strategic change, and marketing. Tim gained a better understanding of how to integrate the Arboretum's organizational mission with economic strategy, and extensive training in strategic planning. Tim's participation was made possible through a prestigious Chanticleer Scholarship in professional development.

Tim also remains involved with plants! He recently published "Oak Diversity and Ecology on the Island of Martha's Vineyard" in *International Oaks*, the journal of the International Oak Society. This paper outlines the landscape history of the Island and the species diversity of our oak habitats. Tim was also recently nominated and accepted into the International Dendrology Society (IDS). The IDS is devoted to the study and protection of trees around the world.

Welcome Summer Interns

No sooner than one pair of summer interns departs, we begin the process over again: inquiries, applications, interviews, selection. By the end of February we had 29 applications in hand from students in 19 states. This year the process culminated with the selection of Sarah Dickert and David Weller. Sarah graduated this year from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in landscape contracting and a minor in horticulture. When you meet her, be sure to ask about the medieval garden she helped

develop last summer!

David graduated this spring from the University of Minnesota where he majored in environmental horticulture. His interest in a PHA internship stems from a desire to work at a public arboretum and learn new skills. As we have from Day One of our internship program, we extend a heartfelt thank you to the Feldman family for their support and continued dedication to this vitally important PHA program.

Beach Plum: An Edible Island Favorite

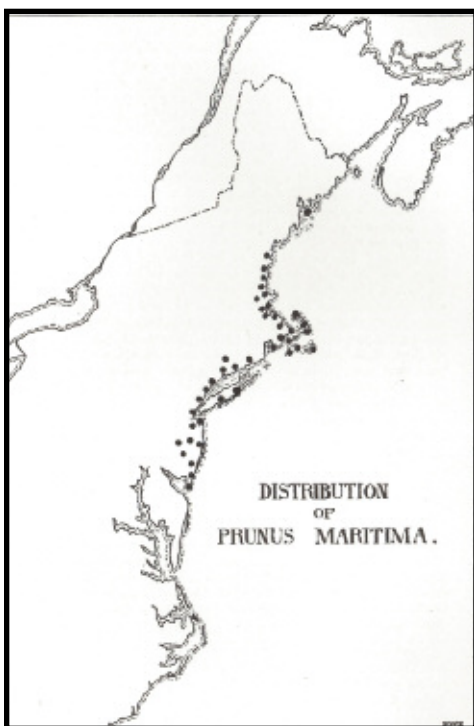
by Tim Boland

Picture this: dense, twiggy colonies of dark, gnarled branches buried in sand along the barrier dunes of Lambert's Cove Beach. What is this tough plant that thrives in such a challenging environment? The answer is obvious each May when these same branches erupt with beautiful white flowers. It's our native beach plum (*Prunus maritima*). This exceptional spring display lasts a few weeks, then, something even better follows. Over the following months plump, tasty fruits ripen often creating a bountiful crop for harvest by the end of the summer.

As its common name implies, beach plum is found in or around beaches in sandy, exposed, full sun locations. More shrublike than a tree, its natural range extends along the Atlantic coast from New Brunswick, Canada, south to Virginia.

When in bloom you'll notice it in many Island locations. A devoted group of beach plum enthusiasts reside on Martha's

Beach plums natural range extends along the Atlantic coast from New Brunswick, Canada, south to Virginia. This map was produced while botanizing by plane. Compiled by Edgar Andersen and pilot Oliver Ames, 1932. © President and Fellows of Harvard College. Arnold Arboretum Archives.



Fruits ripen in late summer.

Vineyard, many with favorite plum trees in undisclosed locations from where to secure a harvest. Ask for a jar of beach-plum jelly, but don't ask where the fruit came from.

At one time the beach plum was thought to have great potential for commercial orchard production. A book published in 1892, *Cultivated Native Plums and Cherries* by L.H. Bailey, details efforts made to establish named varieties as well as cultural recommendations for different parts of the country. Regional study included the work of Edgar Andersen, a geneticist at the Arnold Arboretum in the 1920s and 30s. Andersen was interested in exploring the genetic diversity within the species but first had to determine its geographical distribution. Frustrated in his own attempts to document populations by car, he enlisted the help of a pilot named Oliver Ames. They took to the sky during the bloom period, botanizing by plane, and developed

a distribution map along the Atlantic coast. The white blooms of beach plum create a spectacle even from the wild blue yonder!

Beach plum madness caught fire here on Martha's Vineyard when summer resident Ruth Eldridge White began her attempts to commercialize the fruit in the 1930s. She describes her motivation, "The development of an industry from this native product seemed a sensible practical idea to me. A great industry has been developed on the Cape through the Cranberry . . . Why shouldn't the beach plum make as important an industry as the cranberry? The flavor is certainly more appealing. That sweet bitterness comes from a life of hardship, I guess." Yet this wild plum has resisted large scale domestication. Perhaps that's part of its allure.

Today there is no viable industry on the Vineyard but there are plenty of devotees who harvest the fruits in early to



The bright white bloom of beach plum

scape for use as a low-branched shrub, and design-wise can be used much like dwarf ornamental crabapples. Critical components for beach plum culture include full sun, free-draining soil, and organic nitrogen at moderate levels.

Interest in local food production has led to a resurgence in efforts to domesticate this wild fruit that has thus far been difficult to tame. For additional information on beach plum culture, harvesting, and myriad fruit recipes and uses, see the Cornell University website, *Beach Plum: a new crop for new markets* (<http://www.beachplum.cornell.edu/>).



Yellow-fruited forms also appear on the Vineyard.

mid-September to make their own jams, jellies, and preserves. I have never made jam; my travels around the Vineyard harvesting fruit are for seed collection purposes. We grow beach plum from local seed to offer young plants at our plant sale. Each year we can't grow enough to meet demand!

Attempts to improve the selection and culture of beach plum have revealed that it makes a decent orchard crop. One troubling aspect for commercial fruit production is that beach plum tends to be alternate bearing—fruiting heavily one year but not the next. This may be a resource allocation strategy of the plants, balancing vegetative growth with flowering and fruiting or it may have to do with weather-related factors. Certainly it's a wonderful ornamental edible plant for the home garden as well as useful for erosion control. The beach plum is suitable for the land-



Beach plum thrives in a seaside sandy location.

Hope-of-Spring Magnolia by Tom Clark

***“The first day of spring is one thing,
and the first spring day is another.
The difference between them is
sometimes as great as a month.”***

– Henry van Dyke

This perceptive observation penned in 1899 certainly proves true here on Martha’s Vineyard. Spring arrives slowly on the Island; most plants cautiously waiting to break bud until well after the calendar officially proclaims: the First Day of Spring.

There is a tree with the delightful name hope-of-spring magnolia (*Magnolia biondii*) that often greets the vernal equinox with flowers. Too brazen to care about lingering cold and wintery spring weather, it is the first of the magnolias to bloom at the Arboretum. And if the brave flowers escape the frosts of early spring, they are a welcome tonic; a veritable sight for sore eyes.

The elegant flowers of Chinese willow-leaf magnolia, another, less poetic, common name for *M. biondii*, form a slender white chalice lightly suffused with a touch of yellow and streaked pinkish-purple toward the base. The beautiful flowers emit a delicate fragrance, fresh and slightly fruity, lighter than the heady perfume of some other magnolias. As the blooms pass over, they open wide revealing the inner botanical workings of the flower.

Aside from their visual appeal, the flowers also have medicinal applications. Many species of magnolias are valued in Chinese folk medicine however *M. biondii* is considered the best for a range of uses. Preparations derived from the flower buds appear to be particularly effective in treating sinus-related allergy symptoms. These claims have been largely substantiated by extensive research that has identified the various compounds responsible.

The tale of how this precocious bloomer was introduced to western gardens begins in 1906 (a year before Polly Hill was born) when it was discovered in Hubei, China, by the Italian botanist and missionary Reverend P. C. Silvestri. He named the new magnolia in honor of another Italian



Open flowers of *Magnolia biondii* reveal the floral parts inside.



Early and elegant, hope-of-spring magnolia may bloom as early as mid-March.

Diana Reische

botanist, Antonio Biondi. Other western plant explorers including the industrious E. H. Wilson observed the plant in the wild. Perhaps with a tone of frustration, Wilson wrote in a letter, "It is the only Magnolia I found in China which I failed to introduce into gardens." It would take 70 years before plants took root in North American soil and a few more years to reach Martha's Vineyard.

Credit for introducing *M. biondii* to horticulture goes to Boston College botany professor Y. C. Ting. His first efforts to obtain seed were thwarted by a strong earthquake that cut short his trip to his Chinese homeland in 1976. Undeterred, he made a successful trip the following year when he secured a supply of magnolia seed and consigned it to the Arnold Arboretum. Seeds were germinated there in the greenhouses. Later, plants were propagated by cuttings and the resulting progeny distributed to members of the American Magnolia Society.

Polly, among the first gardeners to experiment with the new introduction, received a rooted cutting from the Arnold in 1982. She planted it in her nursery in the shadow of the *M. macrophylla* 'Julian Hill', a large-leaf magnolia she had named and registered in 1982—an auspicious year for magnolias at the arboretum!

The PHA's only specimen of this rare Chinese species grows at the north end of the pine grove not far from the Visitor Center. Here it is snugly embraced by several brethren including willow-leaf magnolia (*M. salicifolia*), a Japanese species to which it is closely related. In hope-of-spring's native central China it may reach nearly 40 feet but the PHA specimen is a little more than half as tall after 29 years, nearly as long as it has been in western cultivation.

Our efforts to propagate hope-of-spring magnolia should result in opportunities for more Vineyard gardeners to grow this still rare plant that bridges the gap between winter and spring. Perhaps you'll plan a visit to the Arboretum to look for the hope-of-spring; mark your calendar for the first day of spring: March 20, 2012.

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Fortunately for PHA, Diana Reische is often the first to welcome people to the Arboretum. Fascinated by both people and plants, Diana has been sharing her enthusiasm for PHA for well over ten years. In her post at the Visitor Center she quickly engages visitors in friendly conversation helping them to make the most of their visit based on their interests.

With a degree in journalism from Columbia University, Diana has always been interested in people and their stories. From the very start she found Polly Hill's story compelling. She comments, "I was lucky enough to begin volunteering at the Arboretum when Polly was still out and about on her yellow golf cart, and to have had the opportunity to know this truly remarkable and generous woman. She never failed to give others credit for growing her garden, or to share her decades of knowledge about the plants with strangers as well as with those of us who volunteered."

Diana became interested in the Arboretum after reading about volunteer opportunities in the newspaper. She was looking for something to do for the community during her summers on the Vineyard where she could meet people and learn something new. Although a long-time gardener she didn't know much about trees and shrubs and was excited to discover more. When she took the PHA guide training she realized it was a perfect fit. Like other volunteers Diana has recently found an Arboretum project



Diana Reische points out features of her favorite tree, the stewartia.

which taps into her professional career. Using her writing experience, Diana pitched in to update the PHA volunteer handbook.

She also enjoys being part of our family of volunteers. She notes that PHA is very good to volunteers, recalling the first volunteer thank-you party when then executive director Steve Spongberg made the delicious hors d'oeuvres by hand. Our staff-hosted volunteer party with a spread of homemade delicacies is now a tradition. Diana won't miss it!

Over the years Diana has found her Arboretum volunteer work to be rewarding. She says, "my time at the PHA has given me a deeper appreciation of the world of plants and of the people who study and protect them." We truly appreciate Diana's enthusiasm and loyal support. She will be at the Visitor Center most Tuesday mornings throughout the summer to talk plants.

Visitor Center Volunteers Needed

Would you, like Diana, enjoy greeting visitors and learning more about the Arboretum and our plants? Consider becoming a Visitor Center docent. Every day from Memorial Day through Columbus Day we rely on volunteers to

welcome the public. We truly appreciate our front line ambassadors who meet and greet the public and make our first impression. For more information on joining our team, contact Nancy at 508-693-9426.

THE POLLY HILL ARBORETUM

MAILING ADDRESS

PO Box 561
West Tisbury, MA 02575

508-693-9426 Tel
508-693-5772 Fax
www.pollyhillarboretum.org

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

The Homestead
809 State Road
West Tisbury, MA 02575

VISITOR CENTER

795 State Road
West Tisbury, MA 02575

ACCESSIBILITY

The Visitor Center is wheelchair accessible.

VISITOR CENTER HOURS

Memorial Day weekend to
Columbus Day: 9:30 am–4 pm

ARBORETUM GROUNDS HOURS

Sunrise–sunset, year-round

TOURS

Memorial Day weekend through
Columbus Day: 2 pm daily

ADMISSION

\$5 suggested donation
Free to members and children under 12

FREE PARKING

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

See www.pollyhillarboretum.org

mer.i.stem: *n. botany.* The growing point or area of rapidly dividing cells at the tip of a stem, root, or branch.



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ARBORETUM DESTINATIONS



The large stone fireplace near the Far Barn incites curiosity. The orange-green cast to the stone is from maritime starburst lichen (*Xanthoria parietina*) that grows on the limestone mortar. With its craggy lichen-covered rocks, the fireplace appears as old as the

adjacent stone walls, however, it was built in 1940s as a sort of outdoor kitchen. Nearly every Friday during the summer, Polly's mother, Margaret Butcher, hosted a party at the Far Barn; she had the fireplace built by local stonemason Jim Norton to facilitate

her entertaining. It is believed that crane, rack, and the andirons were made by Jim's brother, Orin Norton, an Edgartown blacksmith. The bottom pieces of the andirons are purported to be chunks of rail from the Martha's Vineyard railroad that ran from Cottage

City to Edgartown between 1874 and 1896. Although rarely fired up anymore, the fireplace continues to create a homey feeling to its corner of the Arboretum.