



Lilium superbum

Education Center and Botany Lab: A Dream Comes True

This February on a lucky Friday the 13th, PHA received amazing news: Our grant application to the Massachusetts Cultural Council was successful! The Council awarded \$200,000 in support of our proposed Education Center and Botany Lab. This funding, combined with funds from our fall appeal, will be matched by an earlier award of \$500,000 from the Cedar Tree Foundation. In other words: Our dream becomes reality. Construction begins this fall on our new building.

“This new facility is a huge leap forward for our education and research programming,” says Executive Director Tim Boland, “and the realization of a longstanding vision.” He adds, “It’s rewarding to know that, finally, we’ll have laboratory space and

a year-round classroom. We will be reaching more people than ever before and realizing our mission to a fuller extent.”

The new building will replace the structure called the Gym that is on its way towards condemnation, but nonetheless served as inspiration for its replacement, to be built in nearly the same spot. West Tisbury draftsman Peter Rodegast is updating the original plans created by Margaret Curtin, who will continue her involvement with interior design specifications. Tucker Hubbell of Rising Sun Construction will serve as the primary building contractor. Tim adds, “We have incredible people working on this project; everyone involved cares deeply for the Vineyard, the Arboretum, and the spirit

of the place.”

The logistics are moving along at a swift pace, however the building project will not impact our busy summer season. Construction is scheduled to begin in September, and we expect to be finished by June of 2016. We will keep you updated as we move through the season.

We heartily thank everyone who donated to or supported this collaborative project. We are thrilled and grateful. It is especially rewarding as the funds came from members, friends, a foundation, and now the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While the building will offer new possibilities, our summer programs and landscape are ever changing. Please plan to join us this year at PHA.

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The Polly Hill Arboretum

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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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Arboretum Staff

Front row, from left: Ian Jochems, Erin Hepfner, Tom Clark, Betsy Dripps
Back row, from left: Tim Boland, Karin Stanley, Barbara Conroy, Jill Bouck, Ben Madeiras

Photo: Kathy Kinsman

Message from the Director

It is safe to say we are all looking forward to summer! The intensity of our winter storms combined with the persistent snow had me craving green relief. As I write this the carmine buds of our Accolade cherries are poised to burst into glorious pink bloom. Spring is finally here!

The first warm days found the greenhouse and landscape alive with activity. We welcomed back several volunteers who had either been away or were waiting for warmer temperatures to end their hibernation. On the grounds, after assessing and caring for plants that experienced winter damage, we are now busy planting new plants, several never grown here before—horticultural experiments.

While snow was still on the ground Tom Clark and Ian Jochems installed an outdoor exhibit, *Vanishing Acts: Trees Under Threat*, that tells the story of how our favorite trees are facing challenges, locally, regionally, and on a global scale. Global tree conservation is part of our mission at PHA. We are taking action to find solutions.

On our seed expedition to the Ozarks this fall, we collected seed of the critically endangered maple-

leaf oak (*Quercus acerifolia*). I am happy to report a seedling has sprouted in the greenhouse! This is the beginning of a new addition to our landscape. It will join other trees in our collections that are struggling to persist in their native habitat. Arboreta around the world are intent on telling the stories of trees and instilling a sense of stewardship to ensure their future.

We have produced an ample crop of other seedlings. I spent some uplifting moments transplanting the vernal witch-hazel that sprouted in abundance from our Ozark expedition last fall. It's exciting to imagine a future where these shrubs light up our winter days with beautiful flowers—just one amazing attribute of this often overlooked North American native shrub.

Please plan to visit your favorite local Arboretum this summer, and if you have the interest and time, consider becoming a volunteer. We look forward to seeing you!

Welcome Summer Interns

PHA's educational program is a fundamental component of our mission. Student internships have been an integral part of that program since our founding in 1998. Then, as now, our summer internships have been funded by the Feldman family. We are exceedingly grateful for this enduring support that has benefited both PHA and the interns, and furthered the horticultural careers of so many students.

This year we welcome Jayne Boccella-Perras and Abby Makowski to that roster of student interns. Both are majoring in horticulture: Jayne will be a senior at Temple University this fall, and Abby, a junior, at Michigan State University. To say they are enthusiastic about spending a summer at PHA would be an understatement!

Jayne was attracted to PHA not just because of its location, but by Polly Hill's inspiring philosophy. Abby plans to pursue a career in public horticulture and feels the internship is a pivotal step in that direction. We do too! We are thrilled to have the chance to mentor, share, and further inspire Jayne and Abby. We hope you get a chance to meet both of these exceptional students.

Welcome Tory Stewart

Join us in welcoming Connecticut College graduate Victoria (Tory) Stewart as our 2015 collections management intern. With the ink barely dry on her Bachelor of Arts diploma in botany, Tory arrived June 1 to begin her 9-month internship.

In addition to her studies, Tory has worked as curatorial/field assistant at the University of California Davis Center for Plant Diversity where she mapped and surveyed native plants and worked in the herbarium. She was also a summer intern at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. The Arnold provided hands-on horticultural experience, exposure to collections curation, and the chance to visit PHA where she learned of our internship program. Lucky for us!

As a PHA collections management intern she will gain a wide range of experiences and pursue her interests in horticulture, botany, and sustainability. We suspect she will develop a natural affection for her namesake tree, *stewartia*—a tree dear to our hearts. Welcome to Tory Stewart!

Good News for Amanda

Amanda Wilkins, 2014 PHA collections management intern, was accepted to the University of Edinburgh's master's program in biodiversity and taxonomy of plants. We congratulate her on acceptance to this prestigious institution!

Staff News

In early March, Tim Boland and his wife, Laura Coit, attended the American Public Garden Association's Native Plant Symposium at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. Tim gave a presentation on PHA's native plant production program, MV Wildtype, and was the moderator for a discussion panel, "Defining Native?" In April, Tim travelled to the Scott Arboretum in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, to present a lecture titled "In Search of Wild Seed."

Closer to home, Tim participated in a series of landscape talks in collaboration with the West Tisbury Library. The series included "Healing Fragmented Landscapes with Native Plants" and "Trees Are the Answer! Cultivating Trees on Martha's Vineyard." Additional lectures included "Small Flowering Trees for Landscapes" and "Plants of the West Tisbury Library Landscape," which included a tour of the landscape that was designed in consultation with PHA and features plants produced from our nursery facility.

In celebration of the 45th anniversary of Earth Day in April, the Martha's Vineyard Film Center screened three documentary films produced by Vineyard filmmakers Liz Witham and Ken Wentworth of Film-Truth Productions. Tim, Tom Clark, and Ian Jochems took part in a panel discussion after the screening of *The Story of Seeds*, a portion of which featured PHA's MV Wildtype.

Arboretum Wish List

Herbarium Specimen Framing \$300

In an effort to strengthen interpretation in the Visitor Center, we would like to display three framed herbarium specimens behind the desk. The cost of framing all three would be \$300.

If you would like to contribute to our wish list, please call Barbara Conroy or Tim Boland at 508-693-9426. We extend our gratitude to those of you who have responded to our previous requests.



New Horticulturist Starts Planting

“I can’t believe I get to work here!” is a sentiment Ben Madeiras has shared more than once since beginning employment as the Arboretum’s new full-time Grounds Horticulturist. At the Arboretum we all can relate to this feeling as spring’s arrival makes PHA the world’s most beautiful workplace.

Since his first day Ben has been contributing in a variety of ways, from cleaning up after the long winter, to helping in the greenhouse, to working with and learning from Arborist/Horticulturist Ian Jochems, to enthusiastically stepping in to help with the youth education program. Each day he has been assimilating more knowledge about Polly Hill, the Arboretum, its plants, our mission, and the valuable role PHA fills on the Island and beyond.

We’re happy to have Ben here and he’s thrilled to be here. In fact since welcoming Ben as PHA Horticulturist, we are reminded daily of our sound decision. “I am so excited to contribute to the growth and forward movement of this place,” says Ben. Indeed, Ben arrives at PHA at a time with momentum—important projects, big

and small, abound—all fundamental to fulfilling our mission.

Born and raised on Martha’s Vineyard, Ben values what makes the Vineyard community unique. Involvement with the horticulture program at the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School fueled Ben’s interest in plants that soon grew into a full-fledged career. He acquired experience in residential horticulture through positions of increasing responsibility with various landscape companies. And as his interest in plants and landscapes grew, PHA became one of his favorite places on the Island.

Ben pursued his plant passion beyond high school graduating with an Associate of Science degree in landscape contracting from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He went on to earn a BS in landscape architecture from the University of Massachusetts Amherst graduating cum laude in 2012. Informed by his formal education and grounded by his Island upbringing, Ben explains in his application, “I want to work in a place where I can participate in the betterment of the Island’s



Ben Madeiras

Photo: Kathy Kinsman

environment and community.” PHA is such a place.

A milestone in an Arboretum career is your first tree planting. For Ben it was a Serbian spruce planted as part of our Arbor Day celebration. By the time you read this article, he’ll have planted many more. Please take a moment to meet Ben and welcome him to our staff on your next visit.

Spring Celebration

In the midst of this particularly snowy and cold winter at the Arboretum, we pined for that sure harbinger of spring on the Vineyard: daffodils. Their sunny blooms

complete the perfect pastoral scene at every turn on the Arboretum grounds, and all over the Island. What better way to celebrate a well-earned spring than to invite families

to PHA for a celebration?

At the event, daffodils from Island gardens lined the steps to the Far Barn inviting guests to an informal flower show. Inside 39 different labeled cultivars of daffodils, provided by the daffodil experts at Brent and Becky’s Bulbs, were displayed in Mason jars. Visitors were encouraged to vote for their favorite. Later the results were shared on Facebook. In addition, a volunteer led arts and crafts for children of all ages—an elderly gentleman even made a paper daffodil for his wife! The staff-led tour of spring flowering plants was so popular, a second one was offered following the completion of the first!

During a time of year that is otherwise quiet, it was heart-warming to see so many families enjoying the Arboretum on an early April weekend. Look for another spring celebration next April, just when you need it most!



Vases of daffodils displaying 39 different varieties filled the Far Barn

Family Programs

Family Book Series

Looking for more family activities? New this season the Arboretum will offer a free book series designed for children and their caregivers. Tuesdays in July and August at 10:30 am, nature-based children's storybooks will be read aloud, followed by a walk or activity related to the book. Books will be selected for children 3 to 8 years old, though all ages are welcome. Bring a small blanket to sit on. Pack a picnic lunch and extend your visit! (Please note: All children must be accompanied by an adult. In case of rain, we meet in the Far Barn.)

And don't forget our popular . . .

Family Backpack Tour

The Arboretum is the perfect place for families to discover nature together. Our Family Backpack Tour makes it easy. These fun and informative educational backpacks contain an Arboretum tour and map, field guides, magnifying glasses, sketch pads, and other materials to engage the entire family in nature study during their visit. Backpacks are available at the Visitor Center between Memorial Day and Columbus Day from 9:30 am to 3 pm.



Island students learn about endangered trees during a visit to our *Vanishing Acts* exhibit (on view through June 28).

Vanishing Acts

Developed by the Morton Arboretum, this traveling exhibit (on view through June 28) seeks to increase public awareness of the precarious future of the world's endangered trees. On a visit to *Vanishing Acts*, students of all ages embark upon a global journey to explore compelling tree stories from around the world. They learn about trees as a resource, why they are threatened in

their native habitat, and how they can be conserved. Five of the featured trees are planted on the Arboretum grounds. In addition to our regularly scheduled spring school fieldtrips, several other classes have taken advantage of this one-time educational opportunity. Interpretative lesson plans and a teacher guide are available.

First Mother's Day Event

In early May the Accolade cherries bloom, the magnolias break bud, and azaleas are beginning to pop—a lovely setting to honor moms on their special day. This year on Mother's Day, PHA was open for picnicking. Many families lounged on blankets among the flowering trees enjoying time together. A 10:30 tour was offered (later than usual) to let families

relax and take in the beautiful morning. Staff were on hand to take family photos that were then printed and offered as a Mother's Day gift from the Arboretum. To complete the Mother's Day package, the Arboretum sold select flowering shrubs and perennials—a welcome present for any mother, or anyone for that matter!

Summer Program Preview

Many of our 2015 summer programs will address themes related to *Vanishing Acts: Trees Under Threat*, the travelling exhibit displayed at PHA from March through June. We will focus on trees, seeds, natural history, plant conservation, and the benefits of trees to society as well as other topics of horticultural and botanical interest.

We start in June when Curator Tom Clark, Executive Director Tim Boland, and Horticulturist/Arborist Ian Jochems share stories from last year's collecting trips to the Southeast and the Ozarks in search of seed of endangered plants (and other plants!). Learn why the Arboretum goes afield to collect, what seeds were collected, and how they will add to our collections.

In August for the David H. Smith Memorial Lecture, we go further afield to learn about collecting rose species in Asia. Bill McNamara, executive director of Quarryhill Botanical Garden, will present his expeditions in search of wild rose species. Quarryhill, located in Glen Ellen, California, has one of the largest collections of species roses in the world.

We also welcome two additional garden directors this summer. Our annual Lisina and Frank W. Hoch lecture features Longwood Gardens' director, Paul



Sir Peter Crane, Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and former director of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK, will share the history and botany of the mysterious and ancient ginkgo tree on August 19 at 7:30pm.

Redman, telling the story of one of the world's greatest gardens from its legacy of horticultural grandeur to its current focus on research, education, and the arts. And Arnold Arboretum director Ned Friedman will explore how Darwin looked to the world of horticulture to gain insight into

his theory of evolution in "Mutants in our Midst: Darwin, Horticulture & Evolution."

Additional evening speakers include Amherst College professor Ted Melillo on biopiracy (the robbery of indigenous environmental knowledge and organisms) during the 18th and 19th centuries; Tim Wood from Spring Meadow Nursery explores the world of hydrangeas; and author Richard Horan shares his quest to link trees with great writers.

We are very pleased to welcome Sir Peter Crane, renowned botanist, Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and professor of botany. Sir Peter will share the history and botany of the mysterious and ancient ginkgo tree. Don't miss this special lecture!

For a study of native Island trees, we welcome back Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's director of stewardship Kristen Fauteux and MV Land Bank ecologist Julie Russell for an in-depth ID workshop. For identification on a smaller scale, join naturalist Charley Eiseman for a walk-and-talk as we track the tiny animals covered in his field guide, *Tracks & Signs of Insects and Other Invertebrates*.

We are excited to offer something new this summer for families—a family book series. Every Tuesday morning in July and August a volunteer will share a nature-based children's book with children and their caregivers. An Arboretum walk or activity related to the book will follow. (See panel on page 5.)

Other special programs include our annual Martha's Vineyard garden tour; a return of Bill O'Callaghan and Robin Tuck's sculpture and story exhibit, *A Walk through Imagination*; a pruning workshop; making herbal salves; our popular drawing from nature series; and landscape history at PHA.

For our complete summer schedule including dates and times, look for our education brochure mailing or visit our education page at pollyhillarboretum.org. To receive email program updates, contact Karin at karin@pollyhillarboretum.org. We thank our friends and sponsors—Bartlett Tree Experts, Donaroma's Nursery & Landscape Services, Heather Gardens, Middletown Nursery, and SBS: The Grain Store—for their generous support of our lecture series.

Fairy Castles, Forest Creatures & Strolling Minstrels – They're Back!

We are pleased to welcome back potter Bill O'Callaghan and storyteller Robin Tuck for another version of *A Walk through Imagination*. This year's story, "The People of Pim," will lead you on a tour through the magical landscape at the Arboretum. Along the way Bill's whimsical sculptures tell the tale of a little changeling boy who helps a community bring back plant lore and the belief in fairies with help from the mystical People of Pim. A charming exhibit for young and old alike: July 15 to August 31.





Our Plant Conservation Mission

by Tom Clark

Let's start with a few facts. First and foremost, plants are not optional; they are essential to life. Period. Second, our planet's wealth of plant diversity is threatened by a litany of challenges nearly all of which are linked to human activity. Third, botanic gardens and arboreta have a key role to play in plant conservation. And finally, PHA is an arboretum that actively contributes to conservation efforts.

Looking at plant conservation from a broad perspective, the number of plant species threatened is daunting—an estimated 20 to 25 percent of the world total of nearly 400,000 species. The perils faced by different species comprise a matrix of contributing factors, and the political, regulatory, and social context in which conservation groups are obligated to work is complex.

It's hard to imagine that a single institution could tackle this crisis single-handedly. Enter Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) to provide strategic guidance and direction. In 1999 the concept of an international plant conservation initiative was proposed, and after years of international collaboration (in 2012), BGCI published *The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)*. This document establishes five ambitious objectives and 16 specific targets. Hundreds of public gardens around the world have aligned their conservation activities with GSPC, including PHA. GSPC also set a bold, imperative deadline—the year 2020.

So how does a small arboretum on the island of Martha's Vineyard fit into this big picture? PHA's foundation is built on its incredible diversity of plants developed through Polly's philosophy. Our plant

Sciadopitys verticillata

Japanese umbrella-pine is a splendid conifer for Island landscapes, but is threatened in the wild.

Our Plant Conservation Mission, *continued*

collections and staff, guided by our mission statement and leadership, contribute to PHA's readiness to substantively contribute to meeting certain targets. For example Target 8:

Protect at least 75 percent of threatened species in ex situ collections, preferably in the country of origin, and make at least 20 percent available for restoration and recovery.

Ex situ conservation is the conservation and maintenance of samples of plants *outside* their natural habitat in the form of whole plants, seed, pollen, vegetative propagules, tissue or cell cultures. It is the opposite of in situ conservation, the preservation of natural populations *inside* their native range. For PHA a key aspect of our conservation efforts is focused on the maintenance and development of ex situ plant collections.

But how do we determine which plants are threatened? Don't we first need to know who's on first? GSPC Target 2 tackles this. It sets the goal of assessing the conservation status of all plant species as they occur in the wild in order to effectively inform

conservation action. This complicated but essential step results in "Red Lists" where each species is categorized in one of seven ranks, ranging from Least Concern to Extinct.

As an example, Vineyard native black oak is of Least Concern according to its Red List. And although the shadbushes (*Amelanchier*) have yet to be assessed, our native Nantucket shadbush (*A. nantucketensis*) will likely fall into one of the threatened categories. Several recent Red Lists have detailed the conservation status of significant garden plants, including magnolias, rhododendrons, oaks, conifers, and maples—all cornerstone genera at PHA. The foundation of these valuable collections was laid by Polly Hill and she, decades ago, was growing several threatened species in her arboretum, including several species of fir (*Abies*), Japanese umbrella-pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*), the exquisite *Rhododendron makinoi*, and even one that is extinct in the wild, the Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*).

Have you wondered about PHA's emphasis on wild-collected seed? Simply having representative specimens of

threatened species in our collections is important, but it's the provenance of those plants that dictates their value. From a curatorial standpoint the most prized plants



Rhododendron makinoi
The felted new growth of *Rhododendron makinoi* extends the season of interest of this deer-resistant favorite vulnerable in its native Japan.



are those grown from wild-collected seed from well-documented sources in the plant's native range. Such collections provide the greatest genetic diversity. This is why PHA regularly leads, or participates in, collecting trips to various parts of the world, and why we collect right here on Martha's Vineyard.

For example, pinkshell azalea (*Rhododendron vaseyi*): this native of the

Left: With continued support from the American Rhododendron Society Research Foundation, Tom Clark will return to the southeast United States to collect additional rhododendron seed with a special emphasis on the Oconee azalea, *Rhododendron flammeum* (pictured left). Tim Boland will join PHA Research Associate and head of collections and curator, Matt Lobdell of the Morton Arboretum in a collection trip to South Carolina with a focus on endangered oak species. This collection collaboration and Tom's return trip supports The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC).

western North Carolina mountains is listed by the Rhododendron Red List as vulnerable. Plants Polly Hill raised from seed (from her Delaware garden) have flourished here for decades. Our 50-year old specimens are gorgeous, but they offer little in terms of direct conservation value. That's why I participated in a collecting trip last year to secure seed from its native range to develop a conservation collection of this rhododendron species. As a result, hundreds of genetically diverse pinkshell azalea seedlings are in production and in time (some!) will be planted on the grounds. Others will find their way to peer institutions to enrich their collections and help secure the future of this species.

As PHA continues to evolve we intend to strengthen our relevance to those on the Island, and beyond, who value our work and who turn to us as a resource. How? By following our mission and continuing to develop a collection of plants that engages people with the plant world, offers opportunities to educate students, engenders appreciation for the essential role plants play in our lives, and meaningfully contributes to plant conservation. Failure is not an option.



Seed of the pinkshell azalea, *Rhododendron vaseyi*, collected by Tom Clark on his 2014 southeastern United States trip has germinated in abundance, adding to the conservation value of the PHA collections.

Right: *Rhododendron vaseyi*

Nearly 100 species of rhododendrons are cultivated at PHA, including the vulnerable pinkshell azalea.



Franklinia alatamaha. The Franklin tree, a close relative of *Stewartia*, is extinct in the wild but grows at PHA.



A Tale of Two Lilies

by Erin Hepfner

Observing lilies in the wild elicits a feeling of being blessed by nature. That nature can produce such unique and colorful specimens, diverse yet recognizable, is extraordinary. Of the roughly 100 lily species worldwide, 22 are native to North America. Only two are native to Martha's Vineyard. Do you know them?

The first native lily, and the more well-known, is the wood lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*). Of the native North American lilies, the wood lily has the greatest range, extending from New England to the southern Appalachians, prairies of the Great Plains, and meadows of the western mountains. The wood lily grows in various open areas including coastal sandplains—habitats that are rare along the East Coast and a protected ecosystem on Martha's Vineyard. In these dry, sandy, open areas, the wood lily produces its characteristic,

show-stopping flowers in shades of vivid red-orange.

The wood lily is recognized by its deep orange 6-petaled flowers (technically 3 petals and 3 sepals to be precise) atop a single stem of whorled leaves. Able to grow to 4 feet in some locations, on Martha's Vineyard its height is closer to one foot. Severe deer browse has caused the decline of this species as has the successional growth of meadow into shrubland and forest.

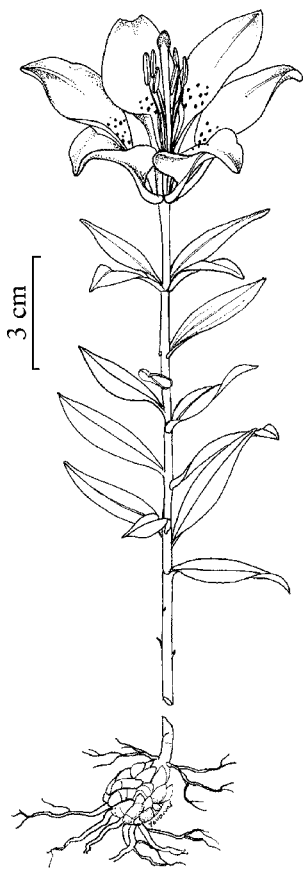
The other native lily is the Turk's-cap lily (*L. superbum*). Superb in many ways—graceful stalks, 4 to 8 feet tall, bear pendant orange flowers with recurved petals. Naturally occurring from the southern Appalachians to the Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain, Turk's-cap lily can be found most often, although not exclusively, in thickets, meadows, and open forests with rich, moist soil. Martha's Vineyard is nearly

the northern point of its range.

Despite not being a federally or state protected plant, its occurrence has been noted as rare on Martha's Vineyard. Its rarity is due, in part, to the lack of ideal habitat—moist, open sites with filtered light. Few sites like this exist on-Island; streambanks are the most likely location. Similar to the wood lily, deer readily consume the buds of the Turk's-cap lily. In addition to deer, the demise of *L. superbum* can be attributed to invasive species competing for the fertile, moist soils.

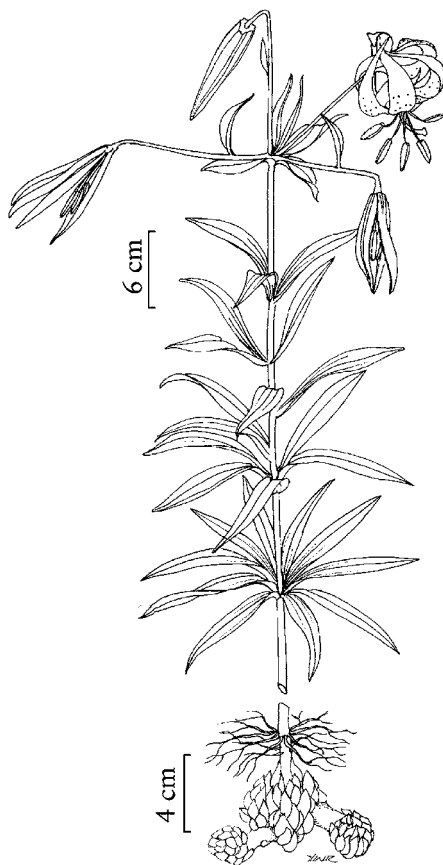
On a disconcerting trip to find it growing in the wild, where there had once been a population, Executive Director Tim Boland and I found only a single stem.

Sometimes confused with Turk's-cap lily, the tiger lily (*L. lancifolium* formerly *L. tigrinum*), a common garden plant, appears as an imposter upon a quick glance. Both have orange pendant flowers borne from a



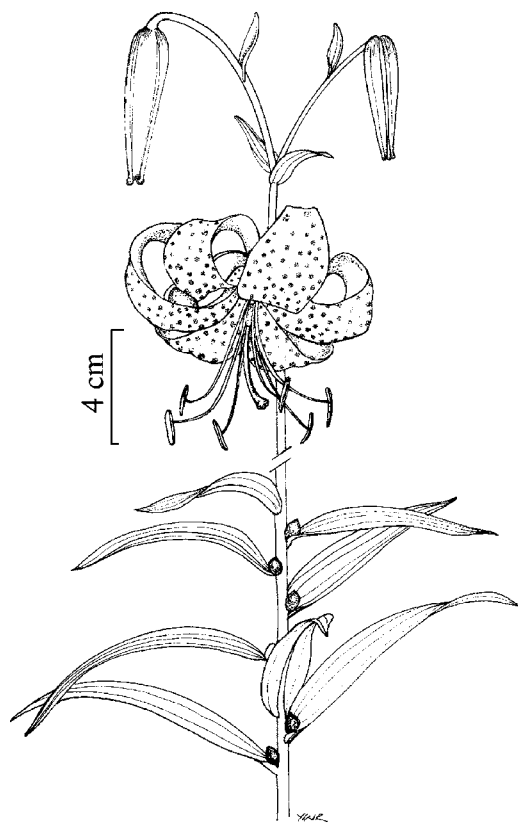
L. philadelphicum – Wood Lily

Upward-facing flower(s) borne atop a single stem are identifiable characteristics on the native wood lily.



L. superbum – Turk's-cap Lily

The native Turk's-cap-lily with pendant flowers



L. lancifolium – Tiger Lily

Dark bulbils in the upper leaf axils distinguish the non-native tiger lily from the Turk's-cap lily.



The recurved orange petals of *L. superbum* exemplify the common name Turk's-cap lily.

tall stalk; however, obvious differences of the tiger lily include deeper orange petals with darker spots, bulbils in the upper leaf axils, and a sporadic, alternate leaf arrangement. Tiger lily is native to China, but has naturalized as a garden escapee across much of eastern North America.

During Polly Hill's gardening years, she acquired seed from native populations of Turk's-cap lily through her association with Island naturalists. She nurtured the seedlings—keeping them in dappled light and fertile soil and protecting them from deer. PHA visitors can see the impressive descendants of those seedlings in our collections today. Polly may have inadvertently saved our native Turk's-cap lily! This highlights an often unrecognized role of arboreta and botanic gardens worldwide: plant conservation.

Next time you're walking in a sunny meadow in July and August, be on the lookout for the bright blossoms of wood lily amidst the grasses and wildflowers of Island meadows and fields. And if you find yourself along a stream, and spot a Turk's-cap lily, gasp, snap a picture, let us know, but remember neither lily is for picking, they're for protecting!

Right: A typical wood lily growing among other native perennials and shrubs in an Island coastal sandplain grassland.

Sydell Rabin

Tuesday mornings throughout the summer volunteer Sydell Rabin arrives at our Visitor Center with enthusiasm for her job. She embraced the role of PHA tour guide ever since the Arboretum became public in 1998. Her lively personality and intelligence radiates. Visitors will learn a lot about PHA, and be thoroughly entertained.

Sydell's relationship with Martha's Vineyard began in the late 1960s when she and her husband, Arnold, began coming to the Island, first renting, then buying a summer home in West Tisbury in 1991. She learned of Polly Hill and her Barnard's Inn Farm through the book, *Martha's Vineyard: Gardens & Houses*. As a result, she and Arnold came to visit and soon were chatting with Polly on the Cowbarn porch.

When the farm became the Polly Hill Arboretum, Sydell was determined to be a part of the place. And so began her long "career" as a volunteer tour guide. Sydell enjoys the people she meets. She doesn't mind if visitors know more about botany than she does; she knows her strength is storytelling. On her tours Sydell shares how Polly grew her plants from a seed and how her practical thinking led to a sense of design for the property.

Sydell made her career as a writer and high school English teacher. She can transform the visual into descriptive language with ease. As she leads groups through the grounds, she may suddenly stop, perhaps ardently noting the fern-leaf beech is "nature's most elegant



Sydell Rabin

contribution" or sharing some other exuberant description of the beauty of a tree. Her tours are inspiring.

Over the years Sydell has enjoyed watching the Arboretum grow and change. She appreciates the juxtaposition of the old and the new; noting how one can look from the original, now preserved, tree nursery over to the new Littlefield nursery and greenhouse complex. As for the trees, she finds them more beautiful every year!

This summer join Sydell—bring your out-of-town guests—for one of her energetic Tuesday morning tours. Or pursue volunteering and help share the enthusiasm. We welcome your participation. For more information about volunteering, contact Erin Hepfner 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: 10 am 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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THEN & NOW

Polly's Japanese Stewartia



1965



2014

Polly Hill received a Japanese stewartia (*Stewartia pseudocamellia*) seedling from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 1961. She planted it in a raised bed along the east wall of the outbuilding known as the Gym. The bed was constructed by George Magnuson and Everett Whiting with stone culled

from a rock pile left by the Littlefield family prior to 1924. At the base of the stewartia Polly planted broom crowsberry, heather, bird-foot violet, and sempervivum. Though the herbaceous plants have disappeared, the stewartia flourished and has grown into one of the finest specimens in North America.

With the Gym slated for demolition to make way for our new Education Center and Botany Lab, we have made special provisions to protect this exceptional tree. The footprint of the building has been moved six feet to the west to accommodate the stewartia and its future growth.