

Friends of
Laurelwood Arboretum
Connecting People with Nature



2022 Year in Review



From the President (2019-2022)

Dear Friends,

My four-year term as President has drawn to a close. It has been a pleasure serving as President of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum. All of us together have done many things that have sustained the arboretum and advanced the mission of the Friends organization. I very much enjoyed writing about our most recent efforts in this Review. I hope you will like reading about them too.



Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum started out as a small non-profit organization with just a handful of volunteers. But these volunteers were farsighted: They established a mission that we continue to strive for: 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.

We connect people with nature. Among our core values are:

- **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:



Our Programs and Events

So how have we engaged with these values in 2022? Let's look at a sampling of our programs and events last season.

In April, more than 65 people attended a talk at the Knippenberg Center for Education by renowned writer and educator Dr. Douglas Tallamy. Speaking on the topic, "Bringing Nature Home: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard," he spoke in depth about the



Dr. Douglas Tallamy presenting "Bringing Nature Home."

intricate relationships between plants, animals and insects and how the extreme loss of native habitats has led to a massive loss of species. "We are at a critical point of losing so many species from local eco-systems that their ability to produce the oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, and carbon storage, i.e., the ecosystem services that sustain us, will



Lourdes Osorio and Linda Ransom welcoming Dr. Tallamy to the arboretum.

become seriously compromised," said Dr. Tallamy. "The way back from this precipitous decline lies with each of us, each making our own yard a natural habitat for all of the local species that are being threatened." A serious message about conservation that we all should take to heart.

May means rhododendrons at Laurelwood. They are Laurelwood's signature plant and seeing all of our varieties in bloom is one of the year's most stunning sights. Our rhododendron collection includes more than 400 named hybrids and species, many of which were raised and planted decades ago by Laurelwood's founders John and Dorothy Knippenberg.

Once again Joe Di Giacomo, the leader of our Rhododendron Study Team, welcomed visitors to our annual Rhododendron Festival. He led guided tours to the spots with the most



spectacular blooms, and he conducted a workshop where participants learned how to propagate rhododendrons at home from stem cuttings.

Speaking of propagation, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum dedicated the long-anticipated Dorothy Knippenberg Propagation Greenhouse in May. The handsome new structure replaced the original greenhouse built in the 1950s that had fallen into a hazardous state of disrepair. This building enables Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum to propagate a wide variety of plants for placement in the arboretum and for our annual plant sale, and to overwinter the Sensory Garden's tropical plant collection.



Carol Palmer-Yomtov getting ready for the plant sale.

Our very popular annual plant sale was held on Mother's Day weekend in May. You can't get more connected with nature than at our plant sale! This year the record for our most successful sale ever was broken once again thanks to chairperson Linda Wescott, who works year-round on this important fundraiser for the arboretum.



Linda Wescott.

In June, Board member and native plant expert Lourdes Osorio presented "Gardening to Attract Pollinators." Following on the alarm sounded by



Lourdes Osorio presenting "Gardening to Attract Pollinators."

Dr. Tallamy, Lourdes conducted a program on how to improve your own local ecosystem by creating a habitat designed for butterflies, bees, birds and other pollinators. By addressing garden design, maintenance and plant selection, including host plants for particular pollinators, she showed that anyone can create a garden buzzing with life.

Also in June, volunteer Arline Lowe offered two series of drawing/sketching classes for adults, focusing on flowers and other natural objects. Arline is a local artist who recently retired from Seton Hall University as an Associate Professor of Art.

I am sure that you all have heard about the spotted lanternfly by now. The spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest that was first detected in Pennsylvania in 2014 and is now found in most mid-Atlantic states, including New Jersey. This insect has the grave potential to destroy agricultural crops and hardwood trees throughout the Northeast. In July, our Assistant Horticultural Manager Kay Gardiner conducted a workshop showing the many participants how to make spotted lanternfly traps. The workshop is pictured on page 2 of this report.

The highlight of our community outreach occurred in August. More than 500 people came to the arboretum for Children's Butterfly Day. Through

a series of interpretive displays and tours in the gardens, they learned about the many



Visitors on Children's Butterfly Day.



challenges Monarch butterflies and other pollinators are facing and how each person can help. They also enjoyed circling up for story time and creating butterfly crafts. They ended the day in the Sensory Garden with the exciting release of over 20 Monarch butterflies that had been raised by Laurelwood volunteers and staff.

Although bear sightings are quite rare at Laurelwood, one was photographed in the arboretum on September 2, 2022. We posted this sighting and safety tips on our notice boards in the unlikely event that you see a bear in the arboretum or, for that matter, anywhere else.



A bear in the arboretum!

In addition to the activities described above, we had several events throughout the season for the community. We had 12 free guided walking and cart tours and 17 private tours organized by chairperson Richard Santoro. We hosted Wayne Walks, an activity sponsored by the Township of Wayne, led by volunteers Ingrid Patois, Linda Nardone and Patricia Engrissei, among others.



Volunteer Ingrid Patois (on the left) and her Wayne Walks group.

We also offered two self-paced cell phone tours: one of the arboretum generally and one describing the sculptures in *A Sculpture Trail*.



Taking a cart tour of the arboretum.

We told everyone "What's in Bloom" each month, both on an easel in front of the Knippenberg Center for Education and in our monthly e-news. We also educated the public with our Native Plant Spotlight, articles written by Lourdes that were featured in our e-news each month.



"What's in Bloom" in front of the KCE.

Coming this season is a new initiative from our Plant Collection Management Committee: we will begin geotagging our significant plants. This will include visitor-friendly tagging, both physically and by cell phone, and will allow us to expand our educational offerings to the public. No more having to search for a staff person to ask the name of a particularly beautiful flower!

In all of these ways, we are sharing the mission and core values of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum with the community.

A Sculpture Trail

The official opening of *A Sculpture Trail* last year was quite a splash, so Leslie and Stuart Reiser and their committee decided to take it a bit



Englewoods performing in the KCE.

easier this year. "Easier" for them meant a series of three free concerts in the arboretum in partnership with the Wayne Public Library



Abel Mireles and the LatiNext Project performing near Laurel Pond.

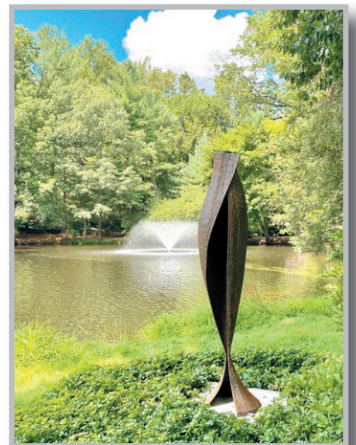
and Broadfoot & Broadfoot – A Collection of Fine Art. The concerts featured *Englewoods*, an eco-focused, award-winning woodwinds musical quintet that played in the acoustically

rich Knippenberg Center for Education under the threat of inclement weather; *OCD Band*, playing popular rock 'n roll covers; and saxophonist *Abel Mireles and The LatiNext Project*, exploring the Mexican-American experience through the fusion of American jazz and Latin music. The last two concerts were held outside near beautiful Laurel Pond and the sculpture "Robber's Roost." These concerts were very well attended with a lot of community spirit on display.

In other Sculpture Trail news, curator Scott Broadfoot completed the planned installation of fifteen sculptures in the arboretum.



Tulipula by Babette Bloch.



Ferrous Couture by Robert Koch.

Our Volunteers

As you walk through the arboretum, you will see volunteers at work. Different groups of volunteers work in the gardens with our staff six days a week from April through October. No wonder the arboretum is so beautiful!

Our garden initiatives in 2022 and continuing into 2023 include a new wildflower garden taking shape near Lilac Walk and a new native habitat garden near Ridge Road. We are also transforming the area we call the "Back 40" from a storage area for leaves, mulch and compost into another beautiful destination, an Environmental Preserve around the Upper Pond. These projects require substantial

volunteer effort, which we are very fortunate to have. They also require funding to purchase supplies and plant material. Led by our grant writer, Joe Di Giacomo, we have applied for and received grants for these projects from Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and the Marturano Thompson Foundation.

Many of our volunteers work behind the scenes. Barbara Hegranes, for example, prepares a thank you letter for each of our new and renewing members, as well as for everyone who has otherwise made a donation to Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum.



Barbara Hegranes.

With 500-plus annual memberships and many contributions and memorial donations to process, she is a very busy volunteer, preparing over 1,000 letters a year! This is astonishing, not only for Barbara's effort but also for what it represents in terms of support for our organization.

Bonnie Joachim is one of the founders of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum and continues to be one of the most active volunteers on our roster.



Alice Moskowitz and Bonnie Joachim.

This winter she led a review of our programming from top to bottom to ensure that it remains consistent with our mission and core values. I can't even begin to list all the other things that she does for the arboretum, but if we had a chief cook and bottle washer she would be it!

Alice Moskowitz, who preceded me as President and who taught me everything I know about Laurelwood, handles all of our publicity and is a whiz at press releases and mailings.

With the waning of the pandemic, we have created an all-volunteer *Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum Greeter Corps* to welcome visitors to the Knippenberg Center for Education. Edith Coka-Jordi, who has been volunteering at the arboretum for the past few years, is chairperson. We are now able to keep the Knippenberg Center open Tuesdays through Sundays from 12 noon to 4 pm from April through October, allowing our visitors to ask questions, take a break from their walks and view the artwork on display during the season. Speaking of artwork, last season the Wayne Hills High School Student Photography Club Exhibition showcased photos taken at Laurelwood, and the popular Community Art Show featured a variety of nature-themed artwork.

In addition to our long roster of individual volunteers, several groups volunteered their time to beautify the arboretum, including the Wayne Hills High School Leos Club, Columbia Bank, the Wayne Hills High School Green Team and Donnelly Energy.

We also welcomed two adults and five teenagers from North Jersey Catholic Heartworks for a four-day volunteer service project. Supervised by Assistant Horticultural Manager Kay Gardiner, the group rerouted and refurbished a 100-foot pathway that overlooks the Reflecting Pool in the South Rock Garden. In 95-degree heat, they dug out a new route and carted away rocks and soil. They then brought in gravel and spread it along the new path.



The new pathway overlooking the Reflecting Pool in the South Rock Garden built by . . .

. . . North Jersey Catholic Heartworks volunteers.



Not only is the pathway safer, it also shows the Reflecting Pool to its best advantage.



Eagle Scout Troop 192 building our new notice board in the Vale Road parking lot.

Finally, Scout Jared MacCullen and Troop 192 built and installed a notice board in the Vale Road parking lot for Jared's Eagle Scout project. I can't tell you how long we have been talking about adding a notice board to complement the

one we have in the Pines Lake Drive West parking lot, and it finally came to pass!

"We are happy to welcome such hardworking teams of volunteers," said Horticultural Manager Joan Scott-Miller. "With only four outdoor employees, Laurelwood thrives because of our volunteers. We've seen how group volunteering fosters team building, cooperation and camaraderie, so the benefits flow both ways."

Carol Palmer-Yomtov is our Volunteer Coordinator, and she is perfect for the job!

For some reason, whenever Carol puts the call out for volunteers, they answer in numbers. Some people may think it's because Carol does such a good job with snacks, including full-blown luncheons at our annual volunteer welcome and farewell events. However, we know that it goes much deeper than that – Carol fosters a level of camaraderie that no one wants to miss.



Carol Palmer-Yomtov and Clelia De Souter getting the Dorothy Knippenberg Propagation Greenhouse ready for its dedication.

Our Staff

Our outdoor employees are just the best! Whatever the weather, whether wet and cold or, like last summer, hot and dry, Joan Scott-Miller, Eddy Lantigua, Felix



Joan Scott-Miller and Kay Gardiner welcoming Columbia Bank volunteers.

Fernandez and Kay Gardiner are out in the arboretum making it more beautiful every day, supervising our volunteers, welcoming our visitors and answering their questions.



Eddy Lantigua and Felix Fernandez in front of their new cedar fence.

Changing of the Guard

At the 2022 Annual Meeting in November, members of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum elected a slate of nominees for the Board of Directors and officer positions for a two-year



The Board of Directors in action.

term beginning January 1, 2023. There were several changes in the composition of the Board at this election, and I'd like to mention just a few.

Bill Lauber has served on our Board and as our

Treasurer for the past six years, coming in at a time when we really needed someone with professional accounting experience. Six years later, we have an effective system of fiscal management, and our financial records are in great shape. Having accomplished these goals, Bill decided to retire from the Board at the 2022 Annual Meeting. To fill his big shoes, we turned to Tina Woiski, who hit the ground running. We are fortunate to have had Bill on the team and to have Tina going forward.

I would also like to mention that Board member Gary Molan has agreed to become Site Manager, responsible for the arboretum's infrastructure and safety improvements. Gary's twice-weekly patrols of the arboretum in the winter to repair plant enclosures that were breached by deer are just one example of his dedication.



Gary Molan.

Five new people joined us on the Board of Directors at the 2022 Annual Meeting: Edith Coka-Jordi, Clelia De Souter, Lorraine LaShell, Richard Santoro and Treasurer Tina Woiski. We welcome them and their new ideas. Most of the officers and directors of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum are pictured on the cover of this report.

With my four-year tenure as President winding down, the Nominating Committee looked far and wide for the next President, and then found a perfect successor already serving on the Board: Georgette Moesch. Since joining the Laurelwood volunteer family in 2017, Georgette has made

significant contributions to the arboretum in several capacities. To mention just one, as Vice President of Operations Georgette arranged for the acquisition of three new utility carts for our staff last summer, allowing us to retire the increasingly unreliable carts that were



Georgette Moesch, Linda Ransom and Joan Scott-Miller receiving a check for the purchase of a new utility cart from Columbia Bank Foundation Executive Director Julie Holland.

already used when we purchased them. One of these carts was purchased with a grant from Columbia Bank Foundation. I can say without reservation that Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum is in the best of hands with Georgette.



New Board member Lorraine LaShell and President Georgette Moesch.

In Memoriam

I would like to dedicate this 2022 Year in Review to Alex Fadynich, who passed away in January of this year. One of the original founders of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum, Alex became its first president. He and his wife Nancy continued to volunteer for many years and did so much to make Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum what it is today. We will miss our good friend Alex very much. We hold Nancy in our hearts, and look forward to welcoming her back into the gardens in the spring.



Alex and Nancy Fadynich in the Founders Garden.

My Thanks

As I mentioned at the beginning, it has been a pleasure serving as President of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum for the past four years. I would like to thank the Township of Wayne, which owns Laurelwood and which has entered into a partnership with the Friends organization to allow us to manage this treasure. In particular, Mayor Christopher P. Vergano and Director of Parks and Recreation Tim Roetman have been steadfast supporters of our work and we could not have made the progress that this report describes without them.

I also would like to thank all of our members and donors, whose contributions have been and continue to be the lifeblood of Laurelwood Arboretum.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff and all of the volunteers for their hard work and their friendship. As there are so many who do so much, I have included a list of the leadership team and staff, as well as a list of volunteers, at the end of this report.

I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board of Directors and remaining involved in a few projects. For example, we continue to seek solutions for the substantial damage that deer are causing in the arboretum, threatening our mission to preserve Laurelwood Arboretum for future generations. The 32 netted enclosures and 250 wire cages surrounding many of our plants



are not a long-term solution. In addition to spoiling our beautiful landscapes and separating our visitors from the nature that they come to the arboretum to enjoy, they are not effective when breached by deer, which happens on a daily basis. And the nets and cages do not stop the degradation of our woodlands. With the

disappearance of seedlings and the rest of the understory due to deer browse, there will be nothing to replace the mature trees when they die other than a scrubland of invasive plants that deer don't eat. Our work continues.



With the hope that we will find a solution to our deer problem, I look forward to the future of Laurelwood Arboretum with the expectation that our many committed volunteers working together will only add to the progress we've made for the benefit of the whole community.

Thank you, and see you in the arboretum,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda E. Ransom". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Linda E. Ransom
President 2019-2022

Photo credits: Lorraine Meyer
Carol Palmer-Yomtov
Linda E. Ransom
Joan Scott-Miller

Graphic Design: Jorge Losch

Board of Directors and Officers

Georgette Moesch
President

Bonnie Joachim
Vice President

Gary Molan
Vice President
Site Manager

Tina Woiski
Treasurer

Nancy Shimmel
Recording Secretary

Linda E. Ransom
President Emerita

Neal Bellet
Edith Coka-Jordi
Clelia De Souter
Joseph Di Giacomo
David A. Kooistra
Lorraine LaShell
Alice Moskowitz
Lourdes Osorio
Carol Palmer-Yomtov
Richard Santoro
Linda Wescott

Stuart Reiser, Esq.
Board Attorney

Staff

Pam Himeles
Officer Manager

Joan Scott-Miller
Horticultural Manager

Kay Gardiner
Assistant to the Horticultural Manager

Eddy Lantigua
Felix Fernandez
Gardeners

Christian Wantula
Park Ambassador

Volunteers

Nancy Alexander
Marie Androski
Neal Bellet
Patricia Bird
Rosemary Blum
Marsha Borkowski
Boy Scouts
Scott Broadfoot
Jim Capra
Edith Coka-Jordi
Columbia Bank
John Crowell
Clelia De Souter
Rashmi Dhekne
Joe Di Giacomo
Donelly Energy
Patricia Engrissei
Nancy Fadynich
Rosemarie Gala
Janice Gardner
Joan Geswaldo
Jack Grassa
Tilly Grassa

Sean Hartman
Ruth Hayden
John Hegrane
Barbara Hegrane
Carol Heimbach
Heidi Herc
Kathie Hetherington
Pam Himeles
Sean Holzli
Sue Horesta
Carol Huber
Brenda Jeziersky
Bonnie Joachim
Margaret Kerstner
Shirley Khemlani
Lorraine LaShell
Azadeh Lassman
Bill Lauber
Susy Liebert
Arline Lowe
Gerry Lowry
Jennifer Mastrangelo
Roger Mazowiecki

Peter McHugh
Lorraine Meyer
Pat Michalchuk
Georgette Moesch
Gary Molan
Alice Moskowitz
Lynne Munn
Kathy Muttick
Sharon Nikado
North Jersey
Catholic Heartworks
Lori Origlio
Lourdes Osorio
Carol Palmer-Yomtov
Voula Papadopoulos
Ingrid Patois
Warren Phillips
Jeanne Pisatowski
Laura Pise
Ken Pokrowski
Alison Porter
June Ra
Linda Ransom

Leslie Reiser
Stuart Reiser
Jeanne Reynolds
Marcia Rokema
Rich Santoro
Lillian Sayeg
Margaret Scarpelli
Barbara Schroeder
Amanda Seminara
Barbara Shapiro
Azaiza Sharif
Nancy Shimmel
Stephanie Sunshine
Pat Sutcliff
Trees Unlimited
Karen Turro
Jane Van Eeuwen
Barbara Waibel
Carol Wasiowich
Ann Watts
WHHS Green Club
WHHS Leos Club
Linda Wescott
Tina Woiski

In 2022, our volunteers logged over 13,000 hours on Laurelwood projects, which represents over \$400,000 in value to the Township and our community based on the standard hourly rate assigned to volunteer labor in New Jersey by Independent Sector.