

SECREST NEWSLETTER

All things Secrest

April 2021

From the Curator...

Among the most common questions we get here at Secrest is “what do you all do in the winter?” Well, beside updating the plant collection database, plant labeling, dormant pruning of trees, plant propagation, and the recent thinning of crowded garden beds, this past winter saw a foray into strategic planning.

Though not immediately evident to the casual visitor, Secrest Arboretum is a multifaceted resource that serves a variety of audiences and purposes. We must first be cognizant of how well the Arboretum aligns with the mission and goals of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), of which we are a part. This means ensuring that Secrest, as a resource, supports the three overarching functions of CFAES: teaching, research, and outreach (i.e., Extension) to Ohio’s horticulture industry and residents. It is critical that the development and use of our plant collection and facilities center around one or more of these important objectives. This responsibility dovetails quite nicely with our more obvious commitment to providing an accessible, beautiful place for all visitors to explore and enjoy.



Planning starts with a vision. In taking inspiration from the CFAES vision statement, “We Sustain Life,” Secrest Arboretum will now be guided by the related statement: **We Sustain Life by Connecting People and Plants**. This principle encapsulates our dedication to promoting horticultural scholarship and an appreciation for how plants improve our lives and communities. We also found it necessary to update the language of the Arboretum’s mission statement:

Secrest Arboretum supports the vision of The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences by providing an accessible, sustainable, well-documented collection of horticulturally relevant trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennial plants. The Arboretum serves the land-grant mission as a living resource for horticultural education, research, and outreach to a diverse range of stakeholders.

Secrest is fortunate to rely on a diverse and talented group of OSU faculty and administrators, horticulture industry professionals, public garden colleagues, Master Gardeners, and devoted community members that comprise the Secrest Arboretum Support Council, or SASC. The SASC’s main purpose is

to guide and facilitate a range of Arboretum activities such as program development, fundraising, collaborative partnerships, and horticultural operations.

Over the last few months, a subcommittee of the SASC has helped us draft an ambitious set of strategic objectives addressing several facets of Secrest's mission. We started with several questions: In what ways can we improve and broaden Secrest's functional value to CFAES, OSU and our many users and potential users? How do we create a more user-friendly, accessible resource? How do we ensure the diversity and sustainability of the gardens? Perhaps most importantly, how can we achieve these goals given our finite human and financial resources?

In upcoming newsletters, I will expand upon some of the essential needs and exciting opportunities that emerged from our winterlong focus on the future of Secrest.

--Jason Veil, Curator

About the Friends of Secrest Arboretum

Friends of Secrest Arboretum (FSA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that traces its history back to 1994 when it was known as Secrest Arboretum Volunteers, Ltd. Most arboreta in this country are their own legal entity and have members to help support the organization. Since Secrest is part of The Ohio State University, membership is not really possible. Hence the reason for this separate organization, which is similar to how most public libraries have a Friends of the Library supporting them.



According to its bylaws, the purpose of the Friends of Secrest Arboretum is “to assist and promote the development of Secrest Arboretum and to help the public use, enjoy, and understand plants for a better life.”

All of the FSA Board members joined the board in 2020, replacing a group of dedicated and long-serving members. FSA's current board is comprised of:

- Robert Everett – President
- Julia Wiesenberg – Vice President (and outreach coordinator)
- Merry Gentry – Recording Secretary (and plant sales coordinator)
- Andrew Cerniglia – Corresponding Secretary (and technology coordinator)
- George Hruby – Treasurer (and strategic planning coordinator).

Membership has multiple benefits in addition to supporting Secrest Arboretum. Benefits include the opportunity to buy plants ahead of the general public at plant sales—and receive a 10% discount! For those who travel and like to visit other arboreta and botanic gardens, membership also includes free

admission to over 330 gardens throughout the US and Canada, with some restrictions on gardens within 90 miles of Secrest. This is made possible through the American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP) and you can learn more about participating arboreta here: <https://ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap/>. FSA memberships also include a discount at Wayne Center for the Arts.

In the spring and summer of 2020, Secrest Arboretum curator Jason Veil met with Robert Everett and George Hruby to develop a new strategy for FSA that will be used to move the organization forward. Some of the strategic goals include:

- ❖ Develop a logo for the Friends and create branded merchandise to further the outreach and funding for the arboretum.
- ❖ Develop the website that was launched in 2020 and supported the fall plant sale. The website will be expanded and updated and will be your go-to place for information about Secrest.
- ❖ Provide a free outdoor summer concert series at Secrest's beautiful John Streeter Garden Amphitheater. FSA is excited to be co-sponsoring these concerts with ORMACO (Ohio Regional Music Arts and Cultural Outreach), an arts group out of Medina. More information about the concerts will be announced when COVID restrictions are eased.
- ❖ Seek additional fundraising opportunities for Secrest to allow FSA to provide more support to Secrest activities.
- ❖ Increase the number of Friends members which will also allow us to provide more support to Secrest.
- ❖ Potentially enlarge the size of the Board.

There are several organizations that exist to support Secrest Arboretum and there are relationships between them. In addition to the Friends of Secrest Arboretum, there is also the Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) program. The MGV program is part of OSU Extension, but in Wayne County it is administered by Secrest Arboretum's Paul Snyder. Three of FSA's board members (Merry, Julia, and Robert) are also MGVs.

The Secrest Arboretum Support Council (SASC) is a group of 25 people, many from the Wooster campus of OSU, but also from the community, MGVs, Green Industry, and the Columbus campus. This group advises Secrest on certain activities and provides important feedback to Jason Veil. A committee on this council recently completed a five-year strategic plan for Secrest. Three of FSA's board members (George, Julia, and Robert) are members of the SASC.

We always need more volunteers. If you have a skillset you are willing to contribute, please contact FSA outreach coordinator Julia Wiesenberg at jwiesenberg@hotmail.com. We are currently looking for a Board Treasurer. Our current treasurer will be moving to be closer to family and we are looking for someone who is familiar with accounting and has a few hours every month to enter records into QuickBooks and submit sales tax.

We look forward to seeing you at Secrest!

Robert Everett, President, Friends of Secrest Arboretum

Thoughts from Paul

I was asked recently by master gardeners to come up with a calendar of sorts that explains what to do each month in the garden. As I began to think about this and write down ideas, I realized that this idea was a little deeper than just gardening activity.

Where do we begin gardening? Some might recommend starting with a soil test, others with a plan, and still others with a plant list. While those answers are all correct, I don't believe they are the correct place to begin. If we begin with those things, then it is likely we might grow weary of gardening or simply have the wrong perspective and end up doing damage.

We begin gardening by recognizing that we are dust. We. Are. Dust. That is where we begin. Before you just turn the page and move on, hear me out. Another way to say this is that we are mortal. We share commonality with the things we place in our garden and desire to tend. In ancient Judaism humans are like trees planted by streams of living water that in season, bear fruit. It is also in ancient Judaism that we discover that we are dust just like every other living thing, yet different in that we have the capacity to create.

In our gardens we seek the flourishing of our plants and of our own bodies. And until we recognize the common ground that we share with the biosphere around us, we will never garden correctly. We will always be tempted to think that we have nothing to learn from our garden. We may be tempted to think that we somehow sit at a higher level than our garden because we are the ones 'caring' for our plants. But we are not the only ones bringing beauty and order out of the chaos we call a garden.

Soil microbes and ground-dwelling arthropods are turning the mulch and leaves we put around our plants into nutritious humus. Bees and other pollinators are responsible for the fruit we get to see and taste. Caterpillars and seeds are responsible for feeding the birds whose songs we love to hear that first still morning of spring. It is a symbiotic relationship in which we bring out the greatest potential in our plants and they in us.

You see, we are part of our garden just as much as our garden is part of us, that is, it tells a narrative that we are writing in time and space. The things that make a garden a garden wouldn't be a garden without our involvement in creating a functional ecosystem. But gardens are more than just a garden, they are narrators telling a story that mark the passage of time and our place in it.

Our garden, when looked at through that perspective becomes more than just a garden. It becomes that place of healing and respite that we intend it to be. Now we can begin to garden.
-Paul Snyder

Finding a Way to Give Back

For the inexperienced, beautiful gardens seem to arise magically from the landscape; Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) know differently. Whether creating a formal garden, a cottage garden, a kitchen garden, or restoring a woodland, MGVs appreciate planning and beautiful design. Throughout their

gardening lives, Lori and Bob Everett have taken design to a high level. With their IT backgrounds and Lori's interior design experience, this dynamic couple have created many personal gardens that delight the senses. In addition, Bob and Lori reach beyond their personal space and are dedicated Secrest Arboretum MGVs.

Lori finds the challenges of interior design and outdoor design similar. She states, “I can exchange the word ‘furnishings’ for ‘plantings.’ I try to maximize ambiance by combining elements in a pleasing and effective *feng shui* way! This means thinking and rethinking combinations of texture, balance and color. It is a constant experiment and challenge. I move plants around the way I move furniture around to maximize their placement for functionality and beauty. It is an endless but very fun puzzle working on piecing it all together.” Lori loves the process of revising and reviving the Everett gardens. Gardening has caused Bob to appreciate natural beauty and the passing of time. In their gardening partnership, Bob’s expertise is with the hardscaping. Lori keeps extensive records of their plantings to help improve garden design.

Although both Lori and Bob came to the gardening world under the influence of others, their paths were very different. Bob's earliest garden memories involve his mother, an avid gardener. At age eight Bob created a small woodland garden under overgrown lilac bushes in his Bay Village backyard by transplanting violets and other woodland plants from the neighboring woods. Even at that young age, he amended the soil by using organic matter from a decaying log. Lori’s first experience involved a wooden sign her father helped her create for her school’s project to protect its new landscaping. Her sign read, “Cross only if you fly!”



However, it was when Bob and Lori purchased their first home in suburban Chicago that gardening became a serious undertaking for the Everetts. Their elderly neighbor Martha, whose whole backyard was a flower garden, wanted to be sure the couple cared for the outside of their house. She inspired Lori by giving her plants and showing Lori how to treat her bearded irises for borers. Reminiscing about Martha, Lori states, “She became a wonderful friend and teacher for me.”

While living in the Chicago area, Lori and Bob became involved with volunteering at the Morton Arboretum, having remained members for over 35 years. One of their volunteer activities involved the Morton Arboretum’s Oak Savanna Restoration Project. As volunteers, they spent hours removing invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn from beneath the oak trees. When they purchased a new home that contained an acre of wooded land, they used the techniques learned from this project to restore the native plants and wildflowers of their wooded property. Bob learned from Tony Tyznik, a Morton Arboretum landscape architect, “. . . how critical it is to listen to what your trees and plants want to tell you.”

During this period, Lori became a Master Gardener in Kane County, just west of Chicago. She volunteered for several years but due to working full time had to end her participation. When she and Bob moved to Wooster seven years ago, they volunteered as Friends of Secrest. Lori was delighted to



learn that Secrest Arboretum was going to offer a MGVP program. Because she was retired and had time, she was able to recertify in 2016. She convinced Bob that he would enjoy the program, and he joined the 2017 MGVP class.

Their Secrest connection had been both good for them and for the arboretum. The Everetts appreciate the beauty of Secrest. Lori enjoys “. . . the uniquely beautiful terrains of planting vignettes.” Bob values “How close

and personal it is.” He says, “There is something special about getting to know the entire staff and seeing how much they care about Secrest.” During their time at Secrest, Bob and Lori have observed the improving garden design. They credit Jason Veil with opening up areas with “new paths . . . that reveal what was hidden inside.” As MGVPs some of the projects Bob and Lori have volunteered for include working in the Secrest gardens, working the Research Line, and helping with the plant sales. Their thoroughness at researching answers for Research Line questions has helped many gardeners find answers to their gardening questions. Bob who currently serves as president of Friends of Secrest Arboretum is anxious for the day when The Welcome Center will be in full use again.

Volunteering is in the Everett blood. In addition to the hours they give to Secrest Arboretum, Lori works with Life Care Hospice, and Bob has just ended six years on the board of the Wayne County Historical Society. Both will continue to volunteer at the Historical Society, Lori as the Acquisition Chair. They both have been involved with the OAGC Region 14 as officers. Through their volunteering, they have met new people, have gained knowledge, and most importantly have found a way to give back to the community.

--Pat Warner

Featured Seasonal Plant

If you're walking through the shrub section of your local garden shop this spring and suddenly find yourself overwhelmed by an intoxicating fragrance, chances are you're headed in the direction of the *Viburnum carlessi*. This popular species is also called Koreanspice viburnum. It boasts vigorous growth, pink blossoms changing to white and is one of the best choices for springtime fragrance with a spicy sweet scent. There is also a dwarf variety called Spice Baby™ ('SMVCB') for small spaces. This low maintenance shrub requires average soil and moderate feeding and watering.

Some other popular species are the *Viburnum xburkwoodii* also known as Burkwood viburnum which is also fragrant with a maroon fall color. Doublefile Viburnum, *Viburnum plicatum*, produces large showy snowball-type clusters of white flowers with reddish fall foliage. 'Kern's Pink' is a selection of this species but the pink flowers lack fragrance and is sterile so it does not produce fruit.



There are over 150 species of viburnum. So if you're looking for a easy to grow flowering shrub that will add beauty to your landscape from early spring through fall, a viburnum may be a good addition. Many put on a spring showy display producing white, sometimes tinged with pink, flower clusters. Besides having attractive foliage and growth habits, many but not all boast fragrant flowers, stunning fall foliage and colorful fruits appreciated by birds and other wildlife. An added plus is that they are also deer resistant.

With such an assortment of size, shape and fragrance, it pays to do your homework before selecting. Some can tolerate wet soils while others prefer drier soils. Just remember to plant several to get good cross pollination for optimum fruit production.

The above favorites along with the following can be found along the garden paths at Secrest Arboretum. To find them just follow your nose.

Viburnum xbodnantense 'Dawn'

Viburnum xjuddii

Viburnum xpragense

Viburnum carlesii 'Diana'

Viburnum dilatatum 'Cardinal Candy' and 'Michael Dodge'

Viburnum plicatum f. *plicatum* 'Mary Milton' (no fragrance)



--Sue Cook

Arboretum Events

Because of the uncertainty of the times, we are not publishing an events list in this issue. Check the Secrest Arboretum website for the most up-to-date information.

--Newsletter editors: Janet and Herb Broda