

SECREST NEWSLETTER

All things Secrest

January 2022

Barnhart Rice Homestead Landscape Demonstration Garden

This multi-year initiative, involving an array of internal and external stakeholders, addresses a unique opportunity to transform the dated, unappealing landscape surrounding the Barnhart Rice Homestead, or “Stone House” on the CFAES Wooster Campus. The result will be an interactive Landscape Demonstration Garden serving multiple audiences, beginning with its very inception and construction.

The entire project, from site assessment and design to landscape construction, planting, and maintenance will be documented in a series of online instructional videos serving OSU students, industry professionals, and homeowners, as well as promoting CFAES to potential students and future collaborators. Inspired by popular home improvement shows like *This Old House*, *Curb Appeal*, and *Fixer Upper*, the engaging, informative videos will feature expert insights, hands-on demonstrations, and highlight key aspects of Ohio’s thriving horticulture industry. The videos could invite viewer



feedback and questions to be addressed in future episodes. If so, this project has the potential to generate significant interest on social media.

The Landscape Demonstration Garden will serve as a living instructional resource for students while also illustrating appropriate design elements, informed plant selection, and proper maintenance techniques to Secrest Arboretum visitors. The scale and footprint of the house are relevant and relatable. Plus, its proximity to the Secrest Welcome and Education Center and nearby parking provides excellent visibility and accessibility. The overarching design, while and cohesive and harmonious, will include

several distinct theme gardens that address common horticultural and environmental challenges.

Each thematic section will be accompanied by creative signage that introduces important concepts and reinforces the landscape’s practical attributes. The completed garden will function as an attractive, immersive horticultural showcase for plant breeders, growers, and suppliers that familiarizes students,

professionals, and consumers with sustainable practices, superior plant varieties and innovative landscape products.

The garden will drive workforce training and multidisciplinary research for years to come. As with all landscapes, the plantings will evolve over time and support varied opportunities for experiential learning via specialized maintenance techniques, design modifications, and new plant introductions. In addition to CFAES Horticulture Technologies and Turfgrass Management students, the project can provide experience to Agricultural Communications students through assistance with the design and production of videos, signage, and other content.

POTENTIAL DESIGN THEMES

- Edible plants
- Screening and privacy plants
- Low-maintenance plants
- Turfgrass options and alternatives
- Dwarf and space-saving plants
- Plants resistant to unwanted herbivory
- Shade-tolerant plants
- Plants requiring or tolerant of wet soil
- Plants requiring or tolerant of dry conditions
- Plants that attract and benefit pollinators
- Plants that support birds and other wildlife
- Ohio native plants
- Container gardening
- Tactile, textural, and fragrant plants
- Therapeutic plants

POTENTIAL VIDEO SUBJECTS (2022-2023)

- Landscape design
- Site assessment
- Soils and soil amendments
- Sustainable, functional plant choices
- Transplanting (hand-digging) mature plant specimens
- Transplanting (bare root) mature plant specimens
- Plant breeding, introduction, nomenclature, marketing, and production
- Proper planting techniques
- Popular hardscape materials and installation techniques

FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

The total project budget is highly dependent on the initial design parameters, material choices, and types of features ultimately incorporated into the landscape over several years. Phase one (Summer-Fall 2022) can include initial steps such as site assessment and design, demolition, and the installation of one or

more important hardscape elements or the first theme garden. Successive years will see the establishment of additional theme gardens and landscape features as resources permit.

This is an exciting opportunity to partner with a wide array of stakeholders, including donors, academic departments, student groups, professional organizations, industry suppliers and practitioners, Extension staff, Master Gardener Volunteers, and others. We look forward to connecting with collaborators and funders who recognize the educational, promotional, and aesthetic benefits of this project over the long term.

Success will be largely determined by the number and type of partners willing to donate time, expertise, and a range of materials and services. Industry partners such as landscape design/build firms and garden centers can benefit from exposure to consumers and potential employees. Partners who have expressed interest include the Ohio Landscape Association, Proven Winners®, Spring Meadow Nursery, and Friends of Secrest Arboretum.

FUNDING AND IN-KIND DONATION NEEDS

- Landscape consultation and design expertise
- Landscape construction services
- Trees, shrubs, perennials, and annual plants
- Hardscape materials and installation
- Lighting, décor, and outdoor living amenities
- Interpretive signage

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Featured Plant—*Corylus americana*

The featured plant *Corylus americana*, commonly known as the American hazelnut or filbert, provides structure, wildlife sustainability, and three-seasons of interest to the garden landscape. This vase-shaped shrub can reach an average height of 8-12 feet and a width of 8-10 feet. Although adaptable to many settings, the American hazelnut prefers a well-drained site in the understory. Because it can be thicket-forming, pruning sprouting stems is necessary to maintain a preferred shape. This deciduous plant, a member of the beech family (Betulaceae), is native to the eastern and central United States and reaches into southern Canada.



The American hazelnut is monoecious (both male and female flowers on the same plant) and is wind pollinated. In early spring the male catkins turn yellow, lighting up the branches as they prepare to release pollen. The inconspicuous budlike female flowers have red stigmas. Gardeners can observe the frilly husked nuts as they form during the summer months. The shrub's scientific name, *Corylus americana*, reflects the nut's structure, as *Corylus* is derived from the Greek word *koros* meaning helmet. In the fall, the plant's dark green serrated leaves turn yellow, red, or maroon.

Containing vitamin E and oils, the hazelnut is a highly nutritious wildlife and human food. Those wishing to enjoy this flavorful nut will find themselves competing with their local squirrels and chipmunks. Nut-eating birds such as pheasants and turkeys also seek the hazelnut. The leaves are a favorite food of numerous insects and moth caterpillars, including the walking stick, the *Corylus* Dagger Moth, and the Polyphemus Moth. Native Americans are reputed to have enjoyed utilizing this plant to flavor soups.

An especially fine specimen of the plant is located just west of Miller Pavilion along the pathway. To find the *Corylus americana*'s locations in Secrest Arboretum, go to the arboretum's webpage at <https://secrest.osu.edu/home> and click on the **Search Plant Collection** tab.

--Pat Warner

Discovering our Natural Community through Nature Journaling

Nature journaling is the practice of keeping a personal record of our observations and response to our natural world. While enhancing observation skills, it taps into the creative process interpreting our relationship with nature helping to capture our thoughts, feelings, and creative ideas. This might be in the form of observational recordings, drawings, poetry, quotations, and our own personal musings. A nature journal is a wonderful tool to record and later reflect on our observation and insights about our environment.

A journal should provide a relaxed practice in order to connect more closely with nature and result in creating a personal interpretation of our experience. A quote from Australian, Paula Peeters, who is the creator of the blog, paperbarkwriter: "A journal should be a playful, helpful, adventurous, extension of yourself. A sandpit for exploring your responses to the world. Something a bit frowsy, a bit lop-sided, a bit ramshackle at times. But at other times it will resonate with a rare quality. It might be beauty, it might be insight, it might be as simple as two lines that perfectly capture the bird you glimpsed flying by. But you will catch your breath and be quietly amazed at what you've created. That sentence or story or picture will be yours: your unique response to the world."

The process of taking time and attention to the appreciation of the uniqueness, details and beauty of nature increases our mindfulness and the enjoyment of being caught up in the moment. Mindfulness is defined in the dictionary as follows: "A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique."

Mindfulness is making an intentional choice to pay attention to the moment and one's immediate experience. This practice helps to increase our observational skills and help cultivate our curiosity and child-like inquisitiveness. This process can help us to record our sensory observations to when, where and how we have placed our mindful attentions. A journal should be a creative expression of these discoveries. It can be a shared experience with family members or an experience enjoying the solitude of being alone with nature.

The benefits of nature journaling can increase our curiosity to inspire research on learning more about our natural world. Walking in nature, even for a short time, can help us feel better, calmer and less anxious. The benefit of recording our discoveries and reflections in a nature journal will help to increase our mindfulness, our creativity, and our connection to the natural world. Nature journaling can help rejuvenate a sense of solace and peace as we learn to unplug ourselves from the bombardment of newsfeeds and the daily challenges we encounter.

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." - John Muir

Clare Walker Leslie, author of "The Curious Nature Guide," writes: "Small Wonders: Brief images of nature can help stitch our days together. They can lift us above the humdrum of what we are doing and take us, if just for a moment, out into the vastness of nature. These brief images urge us beyond ourselves. Like little pearls on a strand, they can be noticed and pocketed for whenever you need them."

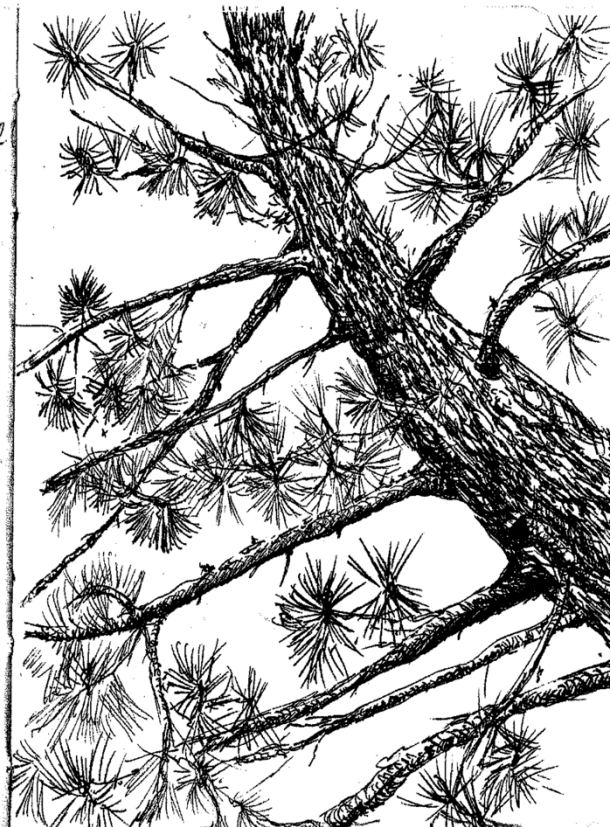
Bethany Beach, Delaware 9-10-19

Pitch Pine tree - A conifer which grows 50-60 ft tall. It's branches are often contorted, which can give a ragged but picturesque crown. A very unusual trait of the tree is the presence of needles growing directly from the trunk.

Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.
A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain,
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer



(Entry from Rachel's Nature Journal)

May the visual quiet of wintertime help to reset our energy for spring and be a time of reflection, restfulness and serenity. Look forward to learning how to begin a nature journal in the spring Secret Newsletter edition- discussing supplies, helpful drawing ideas and writing prompts to begin a journey into Nature Journaling!

--Rachel Fife Derr

Living in the Season

A dash of whimsy and a fabulous color array immediately draw visitors into Jane Bilek's gardens on the Bilek farm in Holmes County. Whether it is her garden sculptures, her overflowing tropical container plantings, or her flowering groupings, the gardens reflect her admiration for nature's beauty. When asked what she most enjoys about gardening, Jane Bilek exclaims, "Just being in the garden pulling weeds and soaking up the sun while taking in all the beautiful colors and textures of the flowers lights up my inner soul."

Jane's introduction to gardening occurred in her childhood home in Middleburg Heights where she helped her parents with their vegetable and flower gardens. She has fond memories of her dad's favorite King Alfred daffodils. However, it was her older sister, Cora Styles, who inspired Jane to explore nature's wonders and experience adventure.

As a Baldwin Wallace student with an interest in wildflowers, Cora joined the college bird watching group so that on their field trips she could explore nature and search for native flora on the ground while they watched the sky. She brought along Jane, who was six years younger, to help in her search. Jane recalls the beauty of the woods and wildflowers and fondly remembers Cora's adventurous spirit. After Cora graduated, she taught English in Thailand for five years. The exploration continued years later when Jane took Cora with her to tour Thailand. They also visited India, where Jane experienced the contrasting beauty and peace of an early morning Taj Mahal sunrise with the chaos and noise of the evening sunset. Later, they traveled five days and four nights in a wooden dugout canoe in Venezuela's Amazon Jungle and were awed by the tropical plants and animals. Accompanied by her sister, Jane has twice climbed Mt. Kathadin, the highest peak in Maine and the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. In addition, Cora arranged a hiking trip to the bottom of The Grand Canyon, where Jane spent the night at Phantom Ranch. Experiencing the many landscapes her sister introduced her to has influenced Jane's art, garden design, and knowledge of plants.



Jane's mother, a ceramics artist, instilled an appreciation of color and texture in Jane. Jane studied at the Cleveland Institute of Art for a year and worked with color separation at American Greetings for four years. When she and her husband, Leonard, moved to Holmes County in 1979, Jane opened a shop in their barn and named the business The Pretty Penny. The shop featured Jane's artwork and collectibles. Although Jane no longer holds regular hours, her shop is open on request. In addition, Jane has worked at Moore's Greenhouse in Shreve for 30 years where she designs container plantings.

Jane's involvement with Secrest Arboretum began in 1998 when Wayne County Extension offered a Master Gardener class. To fulfill her required volunteer hours, Jane began volunteering at Secrest where she weeded garden plots with Wanda Kaufman and Meryl Schaefer. Over the past ten years, she has enjoyed volunteering in the arboretum greenhouse where she has learned "so much about transplanting and propagation." Jane loves to weed, and she takes pleasure in tending the nursery containers to keep them weed free. She enjoys October golf cart rides with Paul Snyder to gather Dawn Redwood cones and acorns for greenhouse propagation.

Throughout the years, Jane Bilek has witnessed many welcome changes at the arboretum including the addition of hardscape and the location in the arboretum of the new Secrest Arboretum Welcome and Education Center. She finds the walkways provide a framework and direction, allowing visitors to enjoy the gardens, and she looks forward to the time when all plantings are properly identified for visitors. Although she mourns the loss of Secrest's towering Seven Sons Flower trees (*heptacodium miconioides*) to the 2010 tornado, Jane relishes the textures and colors of the current arboretum plantings, and she enjoys walking and driving through Secrest Arboretum to observe the changing seasons.



Jane has worked and developed her own gardens for forty-two years. She advises other gardeners that planting success involves understanding an individual plant. If its location, light, water, and soil requirements are met, a plant should thrive. In addition to a vast variety of in-ground plantings, Jane's gardens include over 200 containers. For watering, she uses a 100-foot hose that she has mastered handling without kinking on her hose paths. Still a wildflower enthusiast, Jane's gardens contain towering common mullein. Among the most unusual wild plants she has witnessed in Ohio are the Indian pipe and deadman's fingers.

Among her containers are many tropical plants, such as *hoyas*, bird-of-paradise, *caladiums* (elephant ears), orchids, and *brugmansias* (Angel trumpets). Some spend their winter dormancy in her basement, while others reside as winter houseplants. When the weather warms, she employs her two-wheel cart to transport the containers to their light-dappled

transition areas and eventually back to their warm weather positions in the garden.

Jane advises every gardener to “enjoy what you have.” Jane walks her gardens every morning with a cup of coffee and an empty container for deadheading as she regards the changing beauty of the morning gardens.

Jane enthusiastically shares her gardens and knowledge with others. She has been a member of Ripley Gardening Club for 38 years. In addition, many Holmes County residents have enjoyed her award-winning floral displays at the Holmes County Fair. Among her many volunteer activities, she has helped with flower arranging classes at The Ohio State Agricultural and Technical Institute (ATI), and she has created display containers for special events put on by Every Woman’s House.

A conversation with Jane Bilek is informative and enjoyable, and the listener is sure to pick up a gardening tip or a suggested new plant to try. Jane quotes Henry David Thoreau (author of *Walden*) to describe her feelings, “Live in each season as it passes; breathe in the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit and resign yourself to the influence of each.” Jane’s Bilek’s gardens speak for themselves.

----Pat Warner



Winter Tree Identification

Winter is a great time to go outside, gather some twigs and sit down in your warm house to identify them. It is also a great time to learn what the whole plant looks like in winter. My Woody plant ID classes were in the winter, so naturally, this is how I learned to identify woody plants. You might think winter tree identification is going to be difficult, and it can be, but I believe it is somewhat easier than using leaves to identify plants. I know, call me crazy, but I really do, and here’s why.

When you identify plants by their leaves you have different terminology to describe the leaf type, leaf shape, leaf base, and leaf tip. You also have terminology to define the leaf margin. All these dozens of terms can be confusing (is it serrulate or denticulate?). I have also been asked by people for a good bark key, I haven’t come across one yet (though I did find one published in 2020). I’m not certain, but I believe it is because bark can vary so much by the age of the tree. The color of bark can be interpreted differently because we all see colors differently. Finally, there aren’t that many descriptive characteristics of bark to be used to as a primary means of identification. As you learn plants, you will also begin to know them by their bark.

That is why I prefer twigs. One of the best ways to identify twigs in winter is to buy a good dichotomous key. A dichotomous key is a series of true and false questions that are used to identify many things. A key that I recommend is *Woody Plants in Winter* by Core and Ammons. This book is an old one, but a good one. Another good book is *Fruit Key and Twig Key to Trees and Shrubs* by Harlow. Once you have your book, you'll need a 10x hand lens, a pair of pruners, and a pocket or utility knife.

Then, spend some time going over the glossary of terms in the back, but don't spend too much time doing this. Instead, grab a sample of a native plants you know and dive into the key. As you work through the key look up the terms you don't know.

You'll be surprised how many terms you do know or can figure out, and you'll be equally surprised by how many you don't know. You will become familiar with how the key works and where you might make mistakes if you start with a species you already know. I recommend working through the key several times with known specimens before moving on to plants you do not know.

It is also helpful to write down the steps you took to get to where you are, so if you make a mistake, you can work back to your mistake instead of all the way back to the beginning. This is always helpful when working with a new key. I did this when I was using a key to identify weevils in the Herms Lab. The key was at least three inches thick and took a great deal of time to work through. I had many frustrated moments when I got to the description of the weevil, and it didn't match what my specimen. You'll be

frustrated too when your red maple sample keys out to be poison ivy several times. Take a break and come back to it later. Tree identification should be fun and challenging, not something that brings out the anger within us.

Go ahead, buy a key (yes, you'll want to buy one so you can mark in it) gather some twigs, and try to identify some trees.

--Paul Snyder



Upcoming Events

Guided Tree walks, – second Wednesday of each month, 1 PM. Start in March

Witchhazel Discovery – February 17, 1-2:30 PM

Conifer Identification – February 18, 12:30-3:30 PM

Pruning Workshop – March 8, 9 AM-2 PM

Secrest Garden Fair - Saturday, June 11, Secrest Arboretum

The juried event will promote handmade arts and crafts, plants and food. Applications are being accepted. A printable form is available at www.friendsofsecrest.com/garden-fair Master gardeners will lead tours of the arboretum grounds. For more information, visit www.friendsofsecrest.com or contact Merry Gentry at gardenfair2022@gmail.com or 330-461-4160.

For details and registrations for all events, visit secrest.osu.edu



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