

SECREST NEWSLETTER

All things Secrest

April 2022

From the Curator -- Discover Something New at Plant Discovery Day

I often explain that one of the Arboretum's key functions is to provide visitors with an experience that illustrates the beauty and diversity of plants, whether through an informal stroll, one of our in-depth monthly Tree Walks, or many other ways. It is through these encounters with our gardens that we hope to connect more people to the world of horticulture and all its wonderful benefits. In this sense, Plant Discovery Day is an especially exciting time here at Secrest. Besides being our



biggest fundraising event of the year (thanks FSA!), it is an opportunity for us to connect people and plants—literally. From new homeowners looking to fill an empty spot in the yard to hopeless plant addicts (you know who you are), we are more than happy to help make that connection. I believe there is a plant (or seven) out there for everyone! We look forward to seeing you on May 14th and hope you will connect with something new. Thus, in the spirit of horticultural discovery, I wanted to point out a few newcomers at risk of flying just below the proverbial radar:

When Spring is Not Enough

The Encore® azaleas are a prolific group of hybrids that have taken southern landscapes by storm over the past decade. Not only do these novel shrubs tolerate full sun conditions, they bloom twice per year, once in May and then again in fall—hence the “Encore” moniker. Though first bred in Louisiana by plantsman Robert E. “Buddy” Lee, select cultivars in the series have demonstrated exceptional cold hardiness. Several will survive and flower heavily following Wooster-esque temperatures of -10 F (USDA Zone 6A) and likely colder if sited near a south-facing wall or foundation. However, they have not yet gained commercial acceptance this far north. We have grown two selections, Autumn Amethyst® and Autumn Royalty®, at Secrest for a few years and will be offering three new cultivars on Plant Discovery Day: Autumn Fire®, Autumn Lavender® and Autumn Lily®, which we believe will perform admirably, barring the next Polar Vortex. Despite this cautionary note, these azaleas are worth a try for two seasons of color.

The Fabulous Boxwood with a Funny Name

Buxus sempervirens 'Dee Runk' is an exceptional boxwood variety with an interesting name. 'Dee Runk' exhibits a distinctly narrow, upright growth habit. Maturing at about 10-12' tall but only 2-3' wide, it is a perfect accent plant or structural element—especially in partial shade and relatively dry soil, where it's happiest. What's behind the name, you ask? Dr. Benjamin Franklin Dewees Runk was a biology professor at the University of Virginia where he later served as dean from 1959-1968. Dr. Runk was affectionately known as "Dee" by his colleagues and friends. His namesake boxwood was selected following years of observation at the Blandy Experimental Farm in Boyce, Virginia, which is not unlike Secrest Arboretum in its mission.

Short but Strongly Scented

In the world of professional plant breeding, the infatuation of the last twenty years has been with *compactness*. How do we create shrubs that will grow to about 3' tall then stop, so that folks don't have to worry about trimming or maintenance of any kind? How can we market more plants to homeowners with tiny yards—or perhaps only a balcony in need of greening? Two answers to these questions have come from our friends at Proven Winners with the introduction of a pair of "Baby" shrubs. Both are genetically miniature versions of fantastic garden staples that offer intoxicating springtime aroma but get a bit large over time. *Syringa* 'SMNDTP', sold as Baby Kim® lilac and *Viburnum carlesii* 'SMVCB', sold as Baby Spice® viburnum are chips off the old blocks. The former is descended from the legendary, iron clad 'Miss Kim' lilac while the latter is a petite form of the classic Koreanspice viburnum. Each shrub matures in the 3-4' range and could find a home in the middle of a perennial border, along a foundation, or even in that big pot on your balcony. Note: the future introduction of Sporty Spice®, Posh Spice® and Scary Spice® viburnums cannot be verified at this time.

-- Jason Veil



Music at the Arboretum in 2022

Friends of the Secrest Arboretum (FSA) and the Ohio Regional Music Arts and Cultural Outreach (ORMACO) announce the return of Music at the Arboretum this summer for our second season. Last year's four concerts brought many first-time visitors to Secrest, many of whom said they would return to enjoy the Arboretum - a hidden gem they didn't know about.

The concerts kick off on May 27, 2022, with Northeast Ohio-based **Neo Dixie**, with an evening of high-energy Dixieland music.

On June 24, 2022, Canton-based guitarist/vocalist **Pat Masalko** and Bath-based violinist **Jamieson Bowman** will bring to the stage an evening of toe-tapping, hand-clapping classic Irish tunes.

The Ohio Trombone Consortium showcases the rich tradition of the trombone choir on July 29, 2022, as the ensemble presents historical works written and arranged for trombone, while also presenting the breadth of modern works for the group.

Closing out the summer music festival is **Hot Potatoes: Blues and Swing with a Big Easy Touch** on August 19, 2022, featuring Kerry Kean (lead guitar, fiddle, vocals), Bobby Patetta (rhythm guitar, harmonica, vocals), Tim Akin (upright bass, vocals) and Bruce Pearce (drums, percussion).

These free concerts take place at the John Streeter Garden Amphitheater at the Secrest Arboretum, 2122 Williams Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691. In the event of rain, the concerts will be held at Fisher Auditorium, 1680 Madison Avenue, Wooster, Ohio 44691.

Underwriting and sponsorship opportunities are available. To learn more email Robert Everett, FSA President, at robertgeverett@gmail.com.

Merry Gentry—Friend of Secrest Arboretum

With the rhythmic pulse of the greening landscape and its awakening fauna, a natural music fills our gardens as the season moves from winter to spring. For Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Merry Gentry, music and nature are entwined.

If you have walked through Secrest Arboretum on a Wednesday morning during the past five years, you may have glimpsed Merry Gentry among the volunteers tending the gardens. You also may have met her at a Friends of Secrest Arboretum plant sale or sought her help through the Secrest Arboretum Research Line.

Merry grew up in the music world. Her father was a professional musician and college professor who played the viola and violin, and her mother was a piano teacher. Merry herself is a pianist who enjoys playing as an accompanist. Twenty years ago, she took on the challenge of an adult learning to play the violon and is currently taking lessons via Zoom with her instructor in Stow, Ohio. Participation in several string groups also occupies her time. Both music and gardening create a flow space for Merry in which she becomes totally energized and focused on the experience. She is also a retired occupational therapist who specialized in hand therapy.

Although Merry's mother loved to garden and created many "beauty spots" on their property, Merry did not garden until she lived off campus during her sophomore year at Beloit College in Wisconsin when she had space to grow vegetables. Self-taught, Merry used Rodale's *Organic Gardening*



magazine and reference books as mentors. Once she began her gardening journey, she was “bitten by the garden bug” and has never stopped.

Merry plans her gardens on graph paper and utilizes interplanting and succession cropping to maximize the space she has in her raised beds. She currently has four large vegetable beds, fruit trees, berries, and 4 perennial beds. In her south-facing space, she grows “a little of a lot.”



Merry’s seed starting is done with soil blocks and a self-watering set-up. The plant category determines the starting dates and generally range from 10 to 6 weeks before the last average frost date. She currently uses both an LED light and a compact fluorescent light, each sized at 2’x 4’, to illuminate the planting stand she built. She has recently constructed an Earth Tainer, a self-watering plant container, and finds it help to control flea beetles on her eggplants. In addition, she has placed a disappointing worm bin in her outdoor compost bin thinking the worms would not survive. To her delight she reports, “They have survived three winters and eat all our

garbage with abandon. Then I have worm castings for the garden.”

During years of gardening in various areas of the country, Merry has tested many garden practices and has refined her gardens through both failures and successes. She attests, “Gardening has given me an appreciation of the arc of the seasons as well as the interdependence of the web of life. It helps me organize my time and provides an outlet for stress reduction and exercise. The capriciousness of nature has fostered humility, resilience, and flexibility.”

Merry learned about the Secrest Master Gardener program through Sue Cook, a member of the 2016 program. Sue’s enthusiasm was catching, and Merry went through the program in 2017. Her participation has been of great benefit to Secrest Arboretum. Paul Snyder, Secrest Operations Manager states, “Merry is a regular garden volunteer but also heads up the research line and is very active on the Friends of Secrest board. Merry has a positive attitude and is always willing to help in any way she’s needed. Her extreme dedication to Secrest is what makes her an outstanding volunteer.”

Snyder’s appraisal is shared by Friends of Secrest Arboretum President Bob Everett. Bob states, “Merry became the Friends of Secrest Board Recording Secretary in October of 2020. She has been a core Board member and coordinates the plant sales with Secrest staff. This was especially challenging during our virtual sales. This year Merry is also leading our efforts to host the first Secrest Garden Fair. Over 40 vendors have already registered . . . No matter how much is going on, Merry keeps such a positive attitude that she is always fun to work with. Both Secrest and Friends of Secrest are so lucky to have her.”

Merry has become an essential part of Secrest Arboretum through her dedication and participation. Merry believes being a MGVS has allowed her to “grow in ways other than gardening, such as leadership,

project planning and development, and self-confidence.” She enjoys watching the changing focal points throughout the season as she says there is “always something new to enjoy.” She finds the Research Line enables MGVs to connect and interact with the public through researching and finding answers to their questions and advising them about best gardening practices.

Her mission for Secrest Arboretum is to spread awareness of “Wooster’s Hidden Gem.” She would like to see more people visit the Arboretum with the goal of “connecting more people to nature.” With Merry’s participation, Secrest Arboretum is sure to thrive.

-- Pat Warner



Secrest Garden Fair Coming to Wooster

Details:

Secrest Garden Fair

Saturday, June 11

9 am - 4 pm

Secrest Arboretum

2122 Williams Rd., Wooster, Ohio

Handcrafted birdhouses, custom metal art, recycled treasures, awesome pottery and much more will be featured at the Secrest Garden Fair on Saturday, June 11 at Secrest Arboretum in Wooster, Ohio. The free event will also feature local food vendors, activities for children, and Master Gardener-led tours of the arboretum. And don't forget to bring your plant and gardening questions for our Master Gardeners to answer.

The Secrest Garden Fair will feature over 40 vendors, many who were regulars at the popular Quailcrest Farm Spring Garden Fair, which held their last event in 2021. There will also be some surprising new vendors to discover!

Vendors' tents will line the paved walkway beginning at the Visitor Center and meandering up through the picturesque plantings to the children's garden and beyond.

Secrest Arboretum is located on the Wooster Campus of The Ohio State University, at 2122 Williams Drive, Wooster, Ohio.

The event is sponsored by Friends of Secrest Arboretum.

Learn more at friendsofsecrest.com

Beginning Nature Journaling

We are continuing to learn more about the benefits of being in nature. Various studies have found that depression is greatly reduced after taking a walk in nature. A report from the mental health organization, “Mind,” recorded 70% of the participants benefitted by their exposure to being in nature. Encouraging ourselves to make it a habit to do just that, we can use nature journaling as a wonderful motivator to step into nature and discover all its benefits, including increased happiness, improving our creativity and learning more about our natural world.

Various types of Journals

Joseph Grinnell (1877-1939) designed one of the first field journals created to aid scientific investigation for biologists and field naturalists. Being a field naturalist, teacher and the first director to UC Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, his journaling method incorporated detailed observations of specific species, species counts and keeping data of where and when they were collected.

Other journals include phenology journaling which focuses on the study of plant and animal life-cycle events that are influenced by climate and seasonal changes in the environment. These journals are kept by farmers, gardeners, scientists and biologists for centuries. Travel journals are useful to capture impressions of a particular place or event. Personal perspectives are useful to create first-hand accounts to document different environments as well as cultural relationships. John Muir kept travel journals about his trips to today’s national parks between 1867 and 1913.

Lastly, personal nature journaling can be used to record our reflections of personal observations and insights about our environment. One can utilize field journaling techniques (left brain data collection skills) with detailed drawings, musings, personal reflections and creative writings (right brain skills) - utilizing both intellectual and sensory skills to personalize a deeper and more immediate experience.

Getting Started

Materials for nature journaling can be simple to get started. A small blank-page journal and a good drawing pencil or pen are all that are needed. As you proceed you can add a small watercolor painting box, a simple brush, watercolor pencils, a small magnifying glass and a small stool or a sit-upon.

I recommend a small 5.5 x 8.5 mixed media sketchbook (Strathmore or Canson brand), a Prang watercolor painting set (inexpensive, but good colors) or a Daler Rowney Aquafine watercolor travel set (great smaller



size and includes a brush.) Good drawing pencil brands are Derwent Graphic Pencils or Faber-Castell. Lastly, Princeton “Velvetouch” brushes - (Size 6) are a good quality, fine pointed brushes.
How to Record in your Nature journal

First, write down the date, time of day, place and possibly the weather. This helps to bring recollection to a specific memory. As you are observing an area, pay attention with all your senses. What sounds do you hear? What do you observe when you look up? ...or down? What do you smell? Begin to let your mind open to what may be unusual, interesting, or notable. Look, listen and observe. You may want to write about how you are feeling - how the wind feels on your face- or what you are seeing- animal tracks or buds starting to emerge. You may see a beautiful flower and begin to make a quick sketch of it. (*See creating a contour drawing below.) Is it still budding or fully bloomed? What does the color remind you of? The Outdoor School at Oregon State University uses “I Notice, I Wonder, it Reminds me of...” prompts to support exploration of outdoor areas. These prompts are a great way to focus your nature journal:

- **I Notice:** Focus on drawing or writing about what you can observe with your senses. What sounds do you hear? What colors, shapes, and behaviors can you see? Try to describe what you observe (blue, smooth, etc.) instead of just identifying it (an egg).
- **I Wonder:** As you write or draw, note questions you have about what you are observing. Did you observe an interesting pattern or behavior that you wonder about?
- **It Reminds Me Of:** Does what you are observing remind you of something else you have observed? Does it remind you of an event in your life when you observed something similar or felt the same way? A nature journal is a great place to record memories, feelings, and connections.

How to begin drawing in a nature journal

Contour line drawing is an easy method to improve observation and hand-eye coordination skills. Using contour line begins with drawing the outline of an object, without any shading. The name, “contour” comes from the French word meaning “outline.” Starting a contour drawing by observing the object and its shape. Focus your eyes on some part of the edge of the object and begin moving your pencil recording the shape as you slowly move your eyes around the object.

Try to spend just as much time looking at the object as drawing. Go back and add other details within the object, observing details like the lines in a leaf. Go slow and steady and try to make continuous lines as your hand coordinates with the movement of your eye. With practice you will feel more comfortable with this method and improve your drawing skills. Add color and shading with pencil or watercolor as your progress. Here are some samples of simple contour sketches.



You can use your own backyard to begin your journal: Observe the birds coming to a feeder, draw the seedlings as they emerge from the garden or watch butterflies feed on the blooms. Make it a habit to carry your journaling supplies with you before a walk or going outside and have them at the ready by your door. Stop to observe the sky, the weather, the tree leafing or the birds singing. Even if you have only 15 minutes, record what you observe at the time - stop and observe and put it in your journal. You may find it something to look forward to doing and help define your routine or your day. Hopefully, it can be a meditative and transformative way to enhance your creativity, engage your senses and feel uplifted. It is essential that we acknowledge that we need our natural world to continue to thrive and stay healthy. All living beings count on it - including ourselves! Happy Journaling!

-- Rachel Fife Derr

Evidence of Spring

Spring has begun! We have been anxiously awaiting its arrival since the first warm days of February. As I write this, the magnolias are flowering, and the crabapples are turning green. But what is actually happening? What causes the plants to wake from their winter dormancy and their buds to quickly produce leaves in the spring? Continue reading.



In mid to late summer plants begin their preparations for winter, they produce buds to get a jumpstart on the growing season next year. Inside the buds are fully formed leaves and flowers. In addition to this, plants have adapted to various climates over time, 'learning' that water loss over the winter when the ground is frozen is an issue. Evergreen plants with needles or scales for leaves, are adapted to such conditions (they typically have a thick cuticle which reduces transpiration water loss), while plants with broad leaves cannot typically sustain such tissue over the winter without severe desiccation and necrosis (There are a plethora of broadleaf evergreens that are exceptions). Therefore, plants have developed ways to adjust to these changes. They produce abscisic acid, a plant chemical that slows growth, causes dormancy, and signals the formation of the abscission layer, causing the leaves to eventually fall off deciduous plants.

Abscisic acid concentrations are highest in the fall, causing the tree to enter a state of physiologic dormancy called endo-dormancy.

Over the winter, abscisic acid begins to break down. Once conditions are met and the abscisic acid has broken down, the buds begin to produce auxins (aids in tip elongation), gibberellins (cause stem growth) and cytokinins (aid in root growth and cell division), which activate cellular activity. Increased day length also triggers the production of plant growth regulators. Just under the bark of young twigs, is green tissue (you can see this by scraping off a little bark with your fingernail during the winter). The green color indicates the presence of chlorophyll. The chlorophyll responds to the increased daylength of spring.

Once the endo-dormancy is overcome and the abscisic acid has broken down, the plant can emerge from dormancy when the temperatures are right. However, not all temperatures are equal. Only temperatures above 50°F cause the plant to exit eco-dormancy, that state in which the plant has overcome endo-dormancy and will now grow once the conditions are right. Most woody plants require 60 days at temperatures below 40 °F for this to happen.

Once favorable conditions arrive, the leaves can emerge. If the plant does not have enough chilling hours, the leaves cannot emerge even if temperatures rise to a favorable level. Interestingly, plants do not track hours spent below freezing. Rather, they track hours between 40-50 degrees, and hours below freezing will increase the physiologic hardiness of the plant. Temperatures just above freezing and above 50 °F are less effective at satisfying the chilling hour requirement for plants. Once the chilling hour requirement for a plant has been satisfied, it is no longer in endo-dormancy, it has entered eco-dormancy. At this state, it cannot readjust to cold temperatures; growth begins before the green tips appear on the plant.

Another thing that happens is the starches that are stored in the xylem and roots begin to break down as temperatures rise. These starches are converted into sugars, which contribute to biologic activity within the tree. In the bud state, the plant has stored fully formed leaves over the winter and quickly pumps these tissues full of water, causing their rapid expansion. —the leaves literally burst through the protective scales (on most species) as they expand.

So next time you see green tips on a plant indicating it is exiting eco-dormancy, think about all that is going on underneath that we cannot see. Think about the oak trees whose leaves emerge later in the spring, they are not sleeping, but are very much awake and are getting things ready for growth. Such astounding changes are occurring around us all the time. Take some time to enjoy it.

-- Paul Snyder

Featured Plant of the Season

Every spring, thousands of visitors come to the Secrest Arboretum to see the collection of crabapples in bloom. It is a spectacular sight that provides unmistakable evidence that spring has arrived in Wayne County. According to Paul Snyder, there are 782 crabapples in the collection on the Wooster Campus with 179 different cultivars represented.

The crabapple is found throughout Ohio and is native to the upper two-thirds of the Eastern United States. It has fragrant white-pink blossoms that are an important early source of pollen for bees and a food source for birds that overwinter in Ohio. The flowering lasts from 1-2 weeks.

Like many plants, the crabapple is associated with love, marriage and fertility. Some also say that the flowers are symbolic of youth, surprise and joy. According to the Petal



Republic website, “There’s a traditional belief that if you throw a crabapple seed into the fire while saying your special someone’s name, it’s true love if the seed explodes”.

Crabapple trees usually grow 15-20 feet tall. There are also dwarf and semi-dwarf varieties that range in height from less than five feet to ten feet. The fruit ripens in mid-fall and often remains on the branches through winter. Although the fruit is usually red, some cultivars produce yellow, maroon or orange fruit.



Erik Draper and Jim Chatfield collect disease data every year and are currently working with a plant pathologist in Columbus to figure out the origin of a new rust fungus, Japanese Red Rust. The second time it was reported in the US was at Secrest in 2020. There is discussion about planting a juniper block near the crabapple plot to do further research on the rust (juniper is the alternate host for the rust).

It's hard to predict when the crabapples will bloom. If the temperatures are cooler, then it will take longer for the blossoms to appear, and a warmer spring will cause them to appear sooner. Some of the Secrest trees may be blooming by the first week of May. ‘Strawberry Parfait’ buds are starting to swell. People may consult the Ohio Growing Degree Day Calculator or check out the new webcam under the “What’s Happening Now” tab on the Secrest homepage.

<https://weather.cfaes.osu.edu/gdd/>

<https://secrest.osu.edu/node/159>

Upcoming Events

May 11, 2022 – Guided Tree Walk, 1:00 – 2:30 pm

May 14, 2022 – Friends of Secrest Plant Discovery Day, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

May 19, 2022 – A Plant Spectrum: From Native Plants to Problem Invasives, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

May 27, 2022 – Music at the Arboretum, NEO (North East Ohio) Dixie, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

June 2, 2022 – Floral Botany, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

June 8, 2022 – Guided Tree Walk, 1:00 – 2:30 pm

June 9, 2022 – Whiz Bang Science Show, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

June 11, 2022 – Guided Bird Walk, 9:00 – 11:00 am

June 11, 2022 – Secrest Garden Fair – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

--Edited by Herb and Janet Broda