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New York State Wines at their best

The exceptional flavors of New York States wines can be sampled at Grapevine Farms in Cobleskill, on Friday, November 16, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Representatives from wineries in the Finger Lakes region will highlight their most recent offerings, many of which are packaged for the holidays. These experts will answer questions regarding all aspects of their winemaking production process.

A percentage of the sales at Grapevine Farms' gift shop and purchases of the wines will benefit the Landis Arboretum in this third annual fundraising event. Sampling fee is \$10. Register by calling 518-875-6935, but walk-ins are welcome!

Fall Color: Along the Native Plant Trail

—Ed Miller

There are many places at the Arboretum where a visitor can appreciate fall color, but the Native Plant Trail offers a particularly vivid example of the full spectrum found in native Northeast trees and shrubs. The Native Plant Trail begins near the wetland on the path to the Great Oak.

A few hundred feet along this trail is a family grouping of sumac species. Everyone is familiar with the staghorn sumac's bright red fall color. Also located here are three less familiar species that often outshine the common roadside sumac.

A little farther is a black gum, the tupelo. Its glossy leaves turn brilliant red

before most of our more northern species. A friend who taught school once said that where she lived the tupelo is called "teachers' tears," since it turns red right after Labor Day just as school starts.

In the grouping of oaks you will certainly recognize the red oak, with its rich red fall splendor. Notice how the scarlet oak upstages the red.

Six hundred feet from the beginning of the trail is a grouping of plants that like sun. Shiny and fragrant sumac are planted here, and both turn bright red in the fall. Several species of the very colorful shadbush also grow here.

The next two plant groupings are birch and hickory. Some of these species turn golden in the autumn, especially the pignut hickory which is praised for its rich gold — foliage in many nursery catalogues.

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Invasive Species: Become a Beetle Buster

Second Article in a Series

Most recently, we have been battling two new major threats to our environment, the first of which is the Emerald Ash

Borer (EAB). This invasive, native to Asia, is highly destructive to ash trees. It was accidentally introduced into the United States in the 1990s and has since spread to 14 states, including New York. The potential impact of this insect rivals that of Dutch elm disease.

The EAB has already killed an estimated 100 million ash trees and is expected to decimate most of the ash trees in North America. That's over 7.5 million trees and over 3.5 billion dollars in annual damages in the United States alone.

Adult EABs begin emerging in May and June. Females begin laying eggs shortly thereafter. Eggs hatch quickly, and within two weeks the tiny larvae bore through the bark and into the trees' vascular tissue. The larvae overwinter in the tree, continue feeding and then

pupate and emerge in the spring. Then the life cycle starts again. The adult beetles are a dark metallic green color and approximately 1/2 inch-long x 1/8 inch wide.

EABs can fly a half-mile from the host tree, making the insects' spread fairly rapid. Many infestations were started by people moving firewood or infested nursery stock into non-infested areas. Transport of firewood outside of quarantined areas is illegal, yet remains a problem.

The second fairly recent invasive threat is the Asian Longhorn Beetle (ALB). Authorities suspect that the ALB first entered the United States inside wooden packing crates from Asia. First discovered in Brooklyn, New York, in 1996, the beetle has caused tens of thousands of trees to be destroyed in several states, including Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. It has a wide range of trees it considers desirable for food, including maple, elm, birch, horse chestnut, poplar, willow, and ash.

The only good news is that the Asian Longhorn Beetle is a lazy flyer. It does not like to go far looking for food, so efforts to contain this insect to the quarantine zones have been relatively successful. If the ALB were to reach rural areas, it could become one of the most destructive and costly pests ever to enter the United States.

Most of the ALB's life is spent as larva inside a tree. The adult female beetles live approximately 3 months and can lay as many as 90 eggs, chewing a site just under the bark to lay a single egg. Once the egg hatches, the larva emerges and immediately begins feeding on the tree's vascular tissue, weakening the tree and eventually killing it. Most larvae will overwinter in the tree, pupating in late spring and early summer. After a number of months, the adult beetle breaks out of its pupae casing and chews its way out of the tree. The exit holes are 3/8 inch in diameter and perfectly round. The newly emerged beetles mate and the females begin laying eggs to continue the life cycle.

Next Issue: What you can do about invasive species.

THE LANDIS ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER is published quarterly for its members. The Arboretum's mission is to foster the appreciation of trees and other plants and their importance in our environment.

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The Arboretum is located at 174 Lape Road, Esperance, NY. It is one and one-half miles north of Route 20 in Esperance. Follow the signs from the village to Lape Road. The Arboretum is one-quarter mile straight ahead. Visit our website for more information and directions.



I'm a Birder, Not a Bird-Watcher

—Lee Lattimer

When meeting a new acquaintance and interests are discussed, I put birds near the top of my list. “Oh,” they say, “You’re a bird-watcher.” “No,” I reply indignantly, “I’m a birder.” There is a difference.

Bird-watchers put up a feeder and sit inside and observe, so their knowledge is necessarily limited. They may recognize a cardinal or goldfinch, but they think they hear a phoebe in the winter, when it’s really a chickadee. Birders, on the other hand, go birding—exploring various habitats in search of different species. We work at it. A day in the field isn’t a good one if it doesn’t include bug bites, bruises, sunburn, and sweat.

Think you have what it takes to be a birder? Feel you’re up to the challenge? There are a few things you need to know:

Basic Equipment

Not much equipment is needed except for a good pair of binoculars and a field guide. These should not be used at the same time. Birds have other things on their mind than letting you identify them, so they won’t stay in the same spot for long. Use the binoculars to identify specific marks (colors, spots, etc.) and use the guide after they’ve gone. Don’t try to memorize the whole book, but do familiarize yourself to have some idea of where to look.

Songs and Calls

You’ll hear more birds than you’ll see. Birds’ communication is usually sorted into songs or calls. Songs are of the “Hey there little lady, come see my etchings” variety, while calls are more of the

“Back off, Jack” type. There are CD sets and apps that can help you learn the sounds but, as with the guide, don’t try to memorize them all. With practice you’ll be able to identify quite a few, although a refresher listen will be needed every spring.

Location

Since each bird species is found in a specific habitat, the more diverse the location the better. This is what makes the Landis Arboretum such a wonderful place for the sport. Its fields, forests, and ponds attract everything from blackbirds to yellowthroats. It even has several nest boxes for our state bird, the Eastern bluebird. Landis also sponsors several programs hosted by expert birders such as:

- **SPRING HAWK WATCH.** The Schoharie Valley is a natural corridor for hawks heading north in the spring. On a Saturday in late April we gather to survey the skies for them. On occasion even a bald eagle has been spotted!
- **EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK.** Birds are most active just after dawn. In late May we gather at 6 am to walk, look and listen for as many species as possible. This year we counted over 40!
- **HALLOWEEN OWL PROWL.** Evenings are the time for night owls. On an evening near Halloween, we wander the woods calling owls with voice and recordings. If lucky we’ll even spot one.

Whether you decide to do your birding alone or in a group, feel free to wander and wonder at the avian fauna at our Arboretum. Landis—it’s for the birds, man!

Miller, *continued from page 1*

Beyond the hickories are about 25 species of roses, but this is not your usual rose garden. The rose family is a large one, and it includes apple, cherry, plum, and many other tree species. Perhaps the most colorful of this family is the chokeberry. The leaves of both the red and black berried species turn brilliant red. Some people eat the puckery berries—with a lot of sugar!

Next in line is the willow family. In this area none has particularly colorful fall foliage. Photos taken in the Rocky Mountains show groves of dazzling gold aspens and given enough elbow room, these young specimens might be colorful here at Landis too.

A favorite fall foliage tree is the sugar maple. The trees planted along the trail are not

mature enough to show off, but nearby are several mature trees that predate the Native Plant Trail. There are also a few red oaks to compete with the maples for attention.

At the end of the trail, the highbush blueberry and swamp azaleas should be colorful after a frost or two. Along the spur trail in the wetland, a dozen or more chokeberry and many winterberry have been planted. While these are delightful now, in the future they will be a spectacular addition to the fall landscape.

It’s never a bad time to come to Landis to walk its trails and enjoy the scenery, but autumn is an exceptional season to visit.

—Ed Miller is founder and curator of the Native Plant Trail.

CHARITABLE GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES:
Maximizing the Benefits of Economic Success

—Jim Paley, Landis Arboretum Board President

Many persons have had the good fortune to participate in the very positive performance of several investments over the past few years. They have seen what began as a relatively modest commitment grow to several times its original value because of our robust economy and the participation of many companies in it.

The income and estate tax provisions of the Internal Revenue Code encourage charitable giving by providing for an unlimited deduction for gifts to qualified charities from an estate and for limited income tax deductions for lifetime charitable transfers as well.

Persons who desire to benefit charities are often concerned that the cost of philanthropy will be so high they will be unable to benefit their favorite charity or charities to the extent that they would prefer.

An attractive strategy for dealing with this problem is to utilize shares of appreciated securities instead of cash to fund the charitable gift. Gifts of stock to a charity have the following advantages:

- The value of the charitable gift for tax purposes is the fair market value of the security given on the date the transfer is effective.
- Where appreciated stock is used to fund the charitable gift, the donor receives a current year's income tax deduction equal to the fair market value of the stock on the date it is effectively transferred to the charity. The deductible total of all gifts of appreciated securities to qualified public charities in one taxable year cannot exceed 30% of the "adjusted gross income" of most individual donors for the current taxable year.
- Adjusted gross income" is the amount found on the very bottom line of the front page of the 1040 Federal Income Tax Return and represents gross income less such items as deductible IRA contributions and penalties for early withdrawal of savings. If the market value of the stock given to the charity exceeds the 30% limit, the unused charitable deduction may be carried forward and utilized as an itemized income tax deduction for up to five future taxable years.

- The donor of appreciated stock to a qualified public charity does not have to report any taxable income relating to the donated stock on his or her 1040 Return for the taxable year of the gift. This is so even if the charity (a tax-exempt organization) sells the stock immediately upon receipt of the gift.

The George Landis Arboretum has an account at a brokerage firm to accept your stock donations. You will sign one transfer authorization form and everything else is done on our end.

For more information please contact

**Jim Paley at 426-6250 or
Fred Breglia at 875-6935.**

AN EXAMPLE OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES

As a result of the rules governing charitable gifts, it is easy to see that the donor of appreciated stock to a charity can satisfy his or her charitable intent at an economic cost equal to the cost of the donated stock when it was purchased, not its fair market value on the date of the gift.

For example, let us suppose that a donor has pledged to give a qualifying charity \$10,000 during the Year 2012. Let us further suppose that this donor owns shares of a common stock currently worth \$10,000 for which he paid \$5,000 more than one year ago.

If this investor were to sell his shares in the open market, he would have to pay a Federal income tax of \$750 (15% of the \$5,000 long-term capital gain). If the shares were donated to the charity in satisfaction of his \$10,000 pledge, the taxpayer would receive a Year 2012 itemized income tax deduction of \$10,000 (the current fair market value of the stock) and would not realize any taxable capital gain. The economic cost of the \$10,000 contribution would have been \$5,000, the cost of the shares.



**Capital District Chapter
of Forest Owners
Association**

Carl Wiedemann leads a group at the official opening of the Arboretum's new Sustainable Forest Trail. NYFOA's mission is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in NYS.

The trail, a project of the Capital District Chapter of the NYFOA, is dedicated to the memory of Michael C. Greason, NYFOA member and forester. A Sustainable Forestry Trail Guide is available to visitors to the Arboretum.

LANDIS PORTRAITS: A series about the people behind the plants at the Arboretum

—Nolan Marciniac

Ken and Marian Hotopp have transformed the Arboretum's book sale from a few folding tables to a bookshop that has become an integral part of the seasonal plant sales, replete with comfortable chairs, floor-to-ceiling bookcases, faded oriental rugs, music—and nearly 4000 volumes.

Both Marian and Ken credited the book sales' success to the work of many volunteers coming together, including Herm Finkbeiner, Ben Fox, and Bob Grimm. Of special note is the inspirational Merv Pritchard, an "eccentric English gentleman" and retired anaesthesiologist who was involved early on. They especially thanked those who contribute used books to the sale. All kinds of books are welcome—and rainy and cold days, too, they pointed out, to bring people indoors and looking at books. "Sooner or later someone takes a fancy to a certain kind of book. You never know," Marian noted.

SPOTLIGHT on Sponsors

—Gail Browning

Sterling Insurance, Inc.

Sterling Insurance, Inc. was founded in 1895 by a group of citizens who wanted to help one another in the event of fires or other disasters. From the very first, Sterling has maintained a commitment to community involvement. Since then it has grown to a company with over 300 independent agents throughout New York State. Its Cobleskill corporate headquarters is set in a serene landscape overlooking the Schoharie Valley, a place all at Sterling take pride in helping to protect.

Residents of the area are certainly grateful for Sterling's commitment in the aftermath of last year's devastating floods. Sterling's response to hurricanes Irene and Lee was, according to President Steve Harris, nothing short of unprecedented. ". . . we are most proud of how we responded to what may very well be the single largest claims event in our storied 117-year history," Harris said. "We received over 1700 claims in a very short period of time We set up

Marian, an English major admitted that she once wanted to be a librarian. She likes barns and books, she said, and the notion of recycling, and the book sale joins all three. She conceded that these days a lot of people are using electronic devices to read, but, she said, "There's just something about old dusty books that people seem to enjoy."

For Ken, the book sale is just one more example of the cooperative effort that makes the Arboretum what it is. He recalled that painting the Farmhouse and ridding the Arboretum's land acquisition of thousands of used tires were also cooperative efforts. He likened the Arboretum to family and every plant sale to a family reunion of sorts. Marian concurred that the people make the Arboretum special. "There are people with a lot of talent," she said, "very gifted people who come together. It's an equalizing experience, though. Everybody is working together." "There are no egos running around," Ken added.

They come from very different backgrounds. Marian grew up on a fruit farm in the Hudson Valley, and Ken in Brooklyn.

They met at Syracuse University and, four children and seven grandchildren later, will be celebrating 53 years of marriage.

As a county agricultural agent for Schoharie County, Ken was aware of the Arboretum even before he was asked by then director Gloria van Duyne to join the Board. He served on the Board of Trustees for six years and as its president for four. Marian began volunteering weeding the perennial beds. "I love to get my hands dirty," she said. And she'll always remember the view: "On a clear day you can see nearly to Albany."

For Ken, it's the spirit of "can do" that distinguishes the Arboretum and keeps it a "different and special place in the Capital District." He is certain that the Arboretum will remain a "comfortable, positive, inviting" place that will encourage first-time visitors to visit again.

In the end, the book sale is the Hotopps' special gift to the Arboretum, a reflection of their love of books and of the Arboretum—and their own brand of "can do."

Anne Frey instructs participants in a hive inspection at the second of two beekeeping workshops sponsored by the Arboretum.

