



PennState

THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE  
Volunteer Update

2019 Fall Newsletter

arboretum.psu.edu

### Note from the Volunteer Program

Summer's swelter is still upon us, but we're moving into the season "When the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder's in the shock, and you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey cock." Soon it will be time to rake up the leaves, put our home gardens to bed, and buckle down for Pumpkin Festival! Whether you want to spend your time at the Arboretum pulling weeds, guiding tours, serving cider at Pumpkin Festival, or just gazing at gorgeous gourds and spectacular squash, we look forward to sharing the harvest season with you.



Are you as excited for fall as this jack-o'-lantern ghost seems to be?



Seedlings from this spring are now full-grown and flowering!

### "Adopt a Seedling"

Thanks to Arboretum volunteers, 91 zinnia and 65 tomato seedlings found new homes during National Public Gardens Week. The "Adopt a Seedling" event in the Glass House didn't require an elaborate set-up. Memorable visitor experiences grew out of a few trays of plants, two tubs of potting soil, re-used plastic pots, and priceless time and effort from Dennis and Sandy Hall, Jane Wettstone, Rich Hirsch, Beth Shafranko, Beth Jeziorski, and Latha Bhushan. A diverse group of garden visitors got the chance to get their hands into the dirt and walk away with a living, photosynthesizing reminder that

ANYONE can be a gardener!



Lynn Ammon serving as the public face of the Arboretum

### Greeters Shine at the Arboretum's Entrance

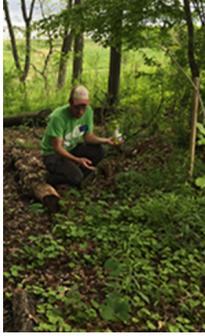
Did you notice a white tent near the Arboretum parking lot this summer? The tent served as our weekday morning greeter station, where Arboretum volunteers met visitors with information, parking passes, and garden guidance.

Over the course of the spring and summer, greeters made the Arboretum function more smoothly by alerting the children's garden when school and summer camps arrived, directing buses to off-site parking, and diverting dog walkers to the trails in the Arboretum's natural areas. They also made the Arboretum a more welcoming place by answering visitor questions like *Where do we find parking passes?*, *What's the best way to the Wildflower Trail?*, and *How do we get to the Creamery from here?* More than one volunteer went the extra mile and hand-delivered parking passes to visitors as they got out of their cars, a kindness that was especially appreciated by people with mobility issues or small children in tow. Greeters got to know familiar faces and meet travelers from far away.

The tent has been packed away for the season, but greeters are still stationed at the Overlook Pavilion on football weekends. If you think you might like to help in this way, send an email to Kelly Oleynik ([keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu)) and let her know that you'd like to be put on the list for call-outs.

### Volunteer Impact in the Arboretum's Natural Areas

It has been less than a decade since the first volunteers started working in the Hartley Wood and the Prairie Restoration Area. Volunteers who participated in those early efforts remember the wood as crisscrossed by paths and densely overgrown at the margins. "The manpower required to cut back the perimeter growth would have been overwhelming," volunteer Rich DiMarcello recalls. Eventually, machinery was used to clear brush and native sumac seedlings were planted at the forest edge to prevent invasive weeds from recolonizing the interior.



Mike Toolan pointing out a patch of violets and bloodroot growing along the side of the Marilyn Quigley Gerhold Wildflower Trail

Restoration of the overgrown prairie began during the same time period. Volunteers cleared vines, honeysuckle, and privet from the top of the hill, dragging the brush up into an old pasture for removal to a composting facility. When hauling the brush uphill became too difficult, volunteers started logging it downhill through a tunnel-like path that led to the Bellefonte Central Rail Trail. This work prepared the area for controlled burns that have since kept the prairie brush-free.

In April, Arboretum volunteers enjoyed some of the fruits of these efforts when they toured the Marilyn Quigley Gerhold Wildflower Trail with Mike Toolan, the Arboretum's natural areas program assistant. While the battle against invasive weeds like privet, oriental bittersweet, and garlic mustard continues, it is now possible to explore the wood using well-maintained trails and see wildflowers planted by volunteers. While it's impossible to predict exactly when the wildflowers will peak, mid-May is often a good time to look for them. If you take a walk through the wood next spring, keep your eyes peeled for an array of native species, including bloodroot, black snakeroot, wild columbine, and red and white trilliums.

Work on the Wildflower Trail will resume this fall. Contact Mike Toolan at [mjt5194@psu.edu](mailto:mjt5194@psu.edu) if you would like to participate.

### Jack-o'-Lantern Judges



A ribbon-worthy jack-o'-lantern

Did you know that Arboretum volunteers help judge the Pumpkin Festival jack-o'-lanterns? Holly Seftor and Carolyn Hoynes are two of the volunteers who have served as judges in years past.

Pumpkin Festival judges don't have to be jack-o'-lantern carving prodigies. Both Holly and Carolyn describe themselves as more likely to grow a pumpkin, use it as decoration, or transform it into tasty seeds or pies than to carve a jack-o'-lantern!

Judges are provided with pens, paper, light, categories for judging, and whimsical pumpkin-themed hats which Holly says "would make any Brit peagreen with envy." They split into teams, with each team concentrating on pumpkins on a single side of the Event Lawn. Even though judging jack-o'-lantern artwork is a subjective process and community members sometimes voice their support for their favorites, both Carolyn and Holly said that judges were able to decide on their favorites in a bias-free way. Carolyn noted that she gave high marks to children's pumpkins that were clearly the work of children. In the end, both Carolyn and Holly felt that the ribbons were all well deserved by the jack-o'-lanterns that received them.

### Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

**Greeters** - We anticipate increased need for greeters during football home game weekends (Sept. 14, Oct. 5 (Homecoming), Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Nov. 30.)

**Pumpkin Festival** - The Arboretum's largest annual event won't happen without volunteer support! An estimated 10,000 people will visit the botanic gardens over the course of the festival, and volunteers will be key players before, during, and after. Opportunities will be available to individuals and groups. Save the following dates and watch your email for call-outs!

- Pumpkin Giveaway - Sunday, October 6, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Jack-o'-Lantern Registration - Friday, October 11, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Pumpkin Festival - Friday, October 11, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday, October 12, 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Festival Cleanup - Sunday, October 13, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Winter Celebration** - Start the giving season by giving some time to the gardens! Whether you find your bliss stringing lights, serving hot chocolate, or guiding families through their visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus, there will be abundant opportunities to help create holiday magic. The celebration will start at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 13. Details about volunteer opportunities will be forthcoming in November.

### Upcoming Events

**Living-Fossil Trees of Penn State**, Friday, September 27, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Join Dr. [Ruh Wilf](mailto:ruh212@psu.edu) for a tour of living fossil trees of central campus. RSVP to [ruh212@psu.edu](mailto:ruh212@psu.edu) by September 26.



### Volunteer Resources

[Volunteer Application](#) - For that friend who would make a great volunteer.

[Online Logbook](#) - Record your hours and help the Arboretum keep track of what volunteers are doing.

[Volunteer Handbook](#) - Suggested reading for all volunteers.

[Docent Manual](#) - Suggested reading for docents and those who want to know more about the Arboretum.

[Children's Garden Handbook](#) - Suggested reading for children's garden volunteers.

[Learning Resource Network](#) - Complete your "Building a Safe Penn State" training here. This is a one-time requirement for those who will spend 7 or more hours volunteering at the Arboretum.

[PSU Alert](#) - Sign up to receive information about campus weather and emergencies via social media.

[Events Calendar](#) - Keep up with what's going on at the Arboretum.

[Arboretum T-shirts](#) - Get a jump on holiday shopping!

### Volunteer Opportunities

#### Horticulture

Help maintain the botanic gardens. Weekly sessions Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Requirements: All experience levels welcome! Wear clothes that can get dirty and closed-toe shoes. No advance notice of participation is necessary unless you are attending for the first time. First-time gardeners should contact [Kelly Oleynik](#) so that we know to look out for you.

#### Greeters

Welcome visitors to the garden and direct them to amenities. Stationed at the Overlook Pavilion on weekends when large numbers of visitors are expected (e.g., football weekends).

Requirements: All experience levels welcome! Want to be a greeter? Contact [Kelly Oleynik](#) and ask for your name to be placed on the list.

#### Entrance Greeters

Provide direction, a friendly welcome, and parking passes on weekday mornings (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) during the busy season.

Requirements: All experience levels welcome! Want to be an entrance greeter? Contact [Kelly Oleynik](#) and ask for your name to be placed on the list.

#### Docents

Guide tours through the botanic gardens. Call-outs for docents are sent by email.

Requirements: Familiarize yourself with the docent manual. Thinking about becoming a docent? Contact [Kelly Oleynik](#) and ask to shadow a tour. Ready to be a docent? Contact Kelly and ask for your name to be placed on the list.

#### Children's Garden

Provide guidance to children as they explore the Childhood's Gate Children's Garden. More support is always welcome in this garden hotspot!

Requirements: Children's garden volunteers must obtain the clearances required by Penn State. Need help with your clearance, or want to start the process of becoming a children's garden volunteer? Contact [Kelly Oleynik](#).

#### Events

Support public events including art openings, Pumpkin Festival, and Winter Celebration. Call-outs for events are sent by email.

Requirements: All experience levels welcome!

**To participate in any of the above opportunities, please contact Kelly Oleynik.**

[keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu)

(814) 867-2591

Recruit a friend!

#### Gerhold Wildflower Trail

Remove invasive species, plant native ones, and maintain the Gerhold Wildflower Trail in the Harley Wood.

#### Wildflower Trail Days

Requirements: All experience levels welcome! Clothes that can get dirty and closed-toe shoes are a must. Contact natural areas program assistant [Mike Toolan](#) to participate.

#### Avian Education Program

Participate in bird banding and other avian events.

#### Bird Banding and Bird Walk Schedule

Requirements: All experience levels welcome! Contact Nick Kerlin at (814) 238-3487 or [bluebird6771@verizon.net](mailto:bluebird6771@verizon.net) to arrange participation.



"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others." - DeAnn Hollis

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