



THE LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Morgan Arboretum Association

"All is leaf"
- Goethe

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Spring 2009

THE ANNUAL PLANT SALE

on April 24, 25 & 26
and May 1 & 2
from 9:00 to 16:00

Come browse through our selection of trees and shrubs at the Arboretum nursery located at the corner of Chemin des Pins and Chemin Sainte-Marie



The Plant Auction

will be held on Sunday May 3
from 12 noon to 13:30
at the Conservation Centre

The sale will continue afterwards until 16:00

All are welcome

It's something about the woods

It's something about how the sap-pails contrast with the rough bark of the trees; something about how the end-of-winter snow sculpts itself around the roots; something about the dripping sap, not quite heard; something about how the sky is so blue that the whole world becomes a little blue to be in tune...

It's something about brand-new leaves, tiny and fragile, bursting out from every bud and branch; something about a smell of freshness, a sense of warmth and welcome; something about a spray of yellow lilies with an unexpected chipmunk, now there, now not ...

It's something about the reds and golds, the smell of autumn, the crunch of leaves underfoot; something about the Spring Peeper, now the color of dry leaf, singing to itself as it searches for a warm quilt of leaves to burrow into for the winter...

I have spent the last decade or so of research working on how we can tell whether we are doing a good job of forest management. Many others have been working on this problem as well, and we are starting to have a good understanding of what we can measure to judge the state of the forest. These measures span a spectrum from economic products to biodiversity, good soil, clean water, and cultural and social values. They are being built into forest management plans and practices across the country.

But the better our understanding of what to measure becomes, the more I feel that we are missing something important. It has something to do with the kinds of things in the lines above; those critical things that draw us into the forest in a very personal way. Albert Einstein is said to have said that "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted". I think that this applies to how we experience forests, and in particular, how we experience the Morgan Arboretum.

One of the things that is emerging from medical research that speaks to these 'unmeasurables' is that spending time in the woods is very good for our mental health. It reduces our stress levels, broadens our perspectives, and improves our ability to focus. It helps us stand aside from the issues that are chewing at us, and we return from the woods renewed and refreshed. And all of this is before we count the benefits of the physical exercise.

Maybe, someday, we will be able to understand these good effects of the woods on our well-being, and perhaps will count them, just as we can measure the effects of exercise on physical fitness. In the meantime, let's just say "It's something about...". And let's make time to spend in the Arboretum.

I'll see you there!

Jim Fyles
Academic Director

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The MAA gratefully acknowledges these individuals and organizations who supported its mission in 2008-2009 through their generous contributions of money, plants, equipment and services.

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We would like to express our appreciation to the additional 148 people who generously contributed donations of less than \$50 to the Arbo 50 Fund and the Road & Trails Funds for a total of \$3634. As you know, every dollar invested has an impact on the perpetuity of the Arboretum.

Thank you
for your support



What's new with membership renewal?

As some of you have probably noticed, we have changed our renewal procedure this year. Those who indicated their preference for an electronic version of the newsletter on last year's membership form have received both the newsletter and the renewal form by email this time. We hope that you will approve of this initiative and see no inconvenience in printing the form yourself. However, if printing is a problem, please drop by the Gatehouse to register or contact us to request a hard copy by mail. We are committed to making this transition easy and to respecting your choice. Note that the new form asks for your mailing preference for next year's renewal package. If you have email access and the ability to print, choosing the electronic way makes a lot of sense. It reduces not only our ecological footprint, but also our printing costs. When savings are reallocated to worthy projects, your contribution ends up having a far more beneficial impact on our community.

You will likely find comfort in knowing that the annual fees have remained the same. Should you decide to make a donation in addition to the membership fee, we will thankfully provide you with an official receipt for tax purposes.

We hope you will renew your membership and continue to enjoy being a part of the Arboretum.

Anne Godbout on behalf of the Admin Team

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO DOG OWNERS

**June 1st is the deadline to renew dog registrations this year.
This will enable us to take new registrations earlier in the year.**

The Dog Committee

of the Morgan Arboretum Association is responsible for dealing with dog related issues, from the evaluation of new dogs, to organizing cleanups, to developing and enforcing the rules related to dogs in the Arboretum.

Over the next several months there will be a move to ensure that the current dog rules are more consistently respected. Of particular concern are reports of dogs on the Blue Trail, dogs not kept under control when encountering other members on Center Road and the issue of dog 'presents' not being picked up. As always, the dog rules can be found on our web site at http://www.morganarboretum.org/ENGLISH/maa/maa_dogs.html

If you have a 'dog' issue or complaint, please contact the staff at Pines Cottage, they will record the details and pass them on to the Dog Committee for action.

Ian Claudi
MAA President

A Nature Walk

with Arboretum naturalist Chris Cloutier

In the spring, the Arboretum once again becomes a beacon for wildlife and a mass of beautiful spring flowers. But how much do we actually notice? Many areas of the Arboretum are teeming with plant life and creatures which might well go unnoticed if we didn't purposely seek them out. As summer beckons, the budding leaves gradually create a dense green shroud for the undergrowth, and once summer has settled, the blossom gives way to fruit, the only evidence of warblers are their songs, and the only sign of frogs is their ripples in a pond. So the best time to enjoy what nature has to offer is in the spring, and here are my suggestions for making the most of your visit.

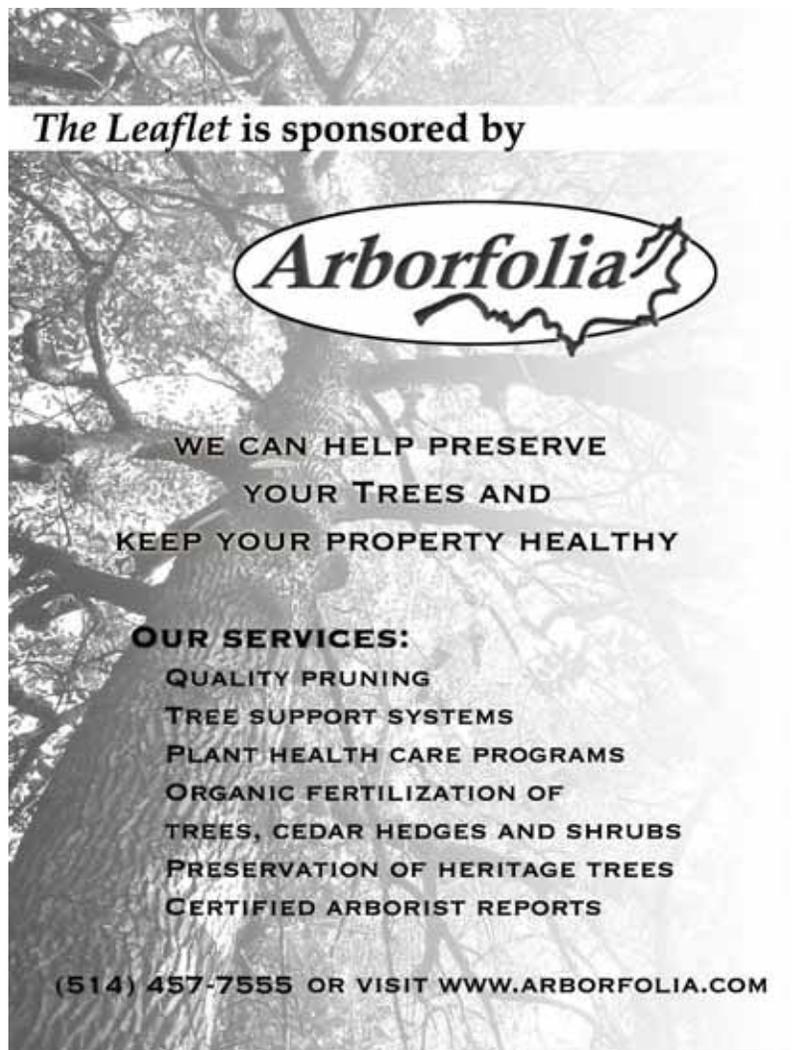
As the days get longer and the temperature rises, many beautiful flowering plants can be seen popping up across the forest floor, thriving in the increased sunlight that penetrates the forest canopy while the trees are still in bud. The simple beauty of these plants is a treat to behold, think of the pure lines of trilliums, trout lilies, spring beauties, starflowers and solomon's seal, to name but a few. These species belong to an ecological group called "spring ephemerals" from the Latin *ephemerus* or "short-lived", in reference to the fact that their above-ground stage lasts only a few weeks. They rely on the brief window of opportunity provided by a well lit forest floor to make reserves of energy for the year. This short growth period makes them a particularly vulnerable group within the greater forest scheme. Any damage to their fragile structure is detrimental and could be fatal.

Throughout spring and early summer, one of the best places to glimpse wildlife is at the water's edge. The old quarry beside the scout's cabin and the pond at the northwest corner of the orange trail come alive with the sights and sounds of wildlife. As spring approaches, the stillness and calm of the woods gives way to the bellowing calls of frogs at the pond's edge. Many of the calls you can hear come from a tiny frog, the spring peeper, so named because it sings loudly during the spring. It is the smallest species of frog encountered at the Arboretum. Not much larger than your thumbnail, it can produce a surprisingly loud call, sometimes compared to the beep of a car alarm! Spring peepers are not the only frogs out and about at this time of year. Green frogs, wood frogs, and grey tree frogs can also be seen if you look carefully. Check out some of the temporary ponds left by the retreating snow. These vernal pools may seem lifeless at first, but are actually an oasis for the many creatures that are often only to be found here. The inhabitants of these pools include critters like salamanders and fairy shrimp as well as an abundance of other insect species in their aquatic stage, such as our friend, the mosquito.

"People who claim they don't let little things bother them have never slept in a room with a single mosquito."

- Unknown -

Insects are a common sight, though we tend to only notice those that are either strikingly attractive or a nuisance. We often overlook the fact that insects and arachnids are the most abundant and diverse groups of animals worldwide. For sure, we all know some of the most conspicuous representatives, but of all the different types of insects you came across last summer, how many can you actually name?



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One way to truly appreciate these tiny invertebrates is to look for them in their natural habitat. At the Arboretum, some of the best places to find insects and other creepy crawlies are the Blossom Corner and the open spaces of Dale Field and Pullin's Pasture. Blossom Corner, with its bounty of nectar-containing flowers, is a virtual treasure trove for nectar-feeding insects. Tiny pollinators, the real workers of the insect world, can be seen busily collecting nectar and pollen from the colourful spring blossoms. We are all familiar with butterflies, bumblebees and honey bees, but if we take a closer look at some of the flowers, we will often discover much more. Most of the other critters to be found in the blossoms are not as appealing or awe-inspiring as the beautiful butterflies, but interesting nonetheless. White crab spiders, ambush bugs and praying mantis can all be seen tucked away in the flowers and foliage, waiting for other insects to stumble too close.



Adult Praying Mantis in typical defense position. Photo by Tibor Duliskovich
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Praying_mantis_in_defense_pose.JPG

"We hope that, when the insects take over the world, they will remember with gratitude how we took them along on our picnics."

- Bill Vaughan -

Take a walk through one of the many fields, and the ground will sometimes seem to be moving all by itself. At any time of day, creatures are stirring about in the undergrowth, so venturing into their domain is a sure way to catch a glimpse of them and marvel at some of their amazing feats.

Continued on page 8

Nature Interpretation Series

Saturday **May 2** 20:00-22:00

Frog Songs: the Symphony of Spring

with Arbo Naturalist Chris Cloutier

Saturday **May 9** 9:00-12:00 & **May 16** 9:30-12:30

Home Gardening Seminar

with Arbo Forest Operations Manager John Watson

Sunday **May 10** 14:30-16:00

Mother's Day Tour: Spring Blossoms

with Arbo Naturalist Chris Cloutier

Tuesday **May 12** 19:00-20:00

Birding Orientation Session

with MAA Director Richard Gregson (also of BPQ)

Find additional details in the calendar section of our web page: www.morganarboretum.org

RSVP at 514 398-7811

Sunday **May 17** 7:00-12:00

Birding: Catching Spring Migration

with MAA Director Richard Gregson (also of BPQ)

Monday **May 18** (Victoria Day) 14:00-16:00

Saturday **May 23** 10:00-12:00

The Naturalist Walk

with Arbo Naturalist Chris Cloutier

Saturday **June 6** 14:00-15:30

Insect Tour: What's Buggin' You?

with Arbo Naturalist Chris Cloutier

A note from your Board

Several incidents that have been reported to the Gatehouse clearly indicate that many members of the Arboretum are not aware of the basic rules that apply to all who enter a conservation or wilderness area. As members we individually have a responsibility to preserve what Heather Munroe-Blum, Principal of McGill, referred to as 'the lungs of the city' in her recent note to the McGill community.

These rules apply to all persons entering this unique area unless otherwise authorized. So if you see someone who is not following these rules, ask them to respect the rules and not to endanger our privilege of access to this unique area.

1. Stay on the designated trails at all times.

People tend to underestimate the importance of cumulative impacts. If one person goes off a trail, the impact is minimal, but with each additional person going off trail, the understory vegetation is destroyed, the soil becomes compacted which then leads to an alteration in the forest drainage and the vegetation.

2. Preserve the habitat. Leave all vegetation - flowers, fruit, fungi, ferns, branches etc. where they are. Take only pictures.

Picking flowers not only destroys the possibility of flowers for the next year, but also removes a source of food for insects particularly butterflies. Fungi are important in the woodland lifecycle as they are part of the process of returning dead leaves, wood debris etc. back to the soil - without them the regenerative process is slowed, the soil is impoverished and consequently the vegetation is altered.

3. Respect the wildlife. Leave birds, nesting sites, animals, ponds, wetlands etc. undisturbed.

Once disturbed, birds and animals often do not return to their nesting or feeding areas for sometime and may as a result put their young at risk. If they are repeatedly disturbed over time, they will leave never to return.

4. Park bicycles and all motorized vehicles in the defined areas.

One off road bike damages the forest floor as much as 30 walkers.

5. Registered dogs only. Please pick up after your dog and dispose of the waste in the cans provided.

The US Environmental Protection Agency estimates that a single gram of dog waste can contain 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, which are known to cause cramps, diarrhea, intestinal illness, and serious kidney disorders in humans and other mammals.

6. Place all garbage in the appropriate trash or recycling containers provided.

On behalf of the MAA Board, thanks are extended to Marie-Anne Hudson, and Patrick Asch, for information provided.

Written on behalf of the MAA Board by **Jenny Anderson**

Find references on our web page

Spring Spruce Up Day

Saturday May 2

(Rain date: May 3)

from 9:00 to 15:00

Meet at the Conservation Centre

The MAA directors invite you to join them to help with spring clean-up and light maintenance jobs.

This is also an opportunity to meet and share ideas with directors and fellow members.

We welcome your suggestions of projects to be undertaken.

Lunch will be served.

RSVP 514 398-7811

The Royal Astronomical Society Lecture and Stargazing Events Seasonal Night Skies

Friday & Saturday May 1 & 2

Saturday May 16

Saturday June 13

Saturday July 18

Saturday August 29

Saturday September 12

Starting at 20:00 at the Conservation Centre

Free Entrance

Rustic Garden Furniture Building

Visit www.kimcreations.net for details

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Trees do more than "pretty up" the neighborhood

- People are more inclined to get outdoors and exercise when their surroundings are greener. Research has shown a correlation between the existence of green space within a community and the average level of physical activity of the local residents. Greater physical activity leads to fewer cases of obesity, which in turn may help reduce other health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes.
- Both physical activity and exposure to nature are known separately to have a positive effect on physical and mental health. In a recent British study, participants were asked to exercise while viewing different types of landscapes. The researchers have found that beneficial effect of exercise on blood pressure - an important measure of cardiovascular health - was significantly increased when participants were exposed to pleasant rural landscapes, more so than when exposed to pleasant urban landscapes. These results show a synergistic benefit to exercising in pleasant natural surroundings.
- Another study by the same team of researchers measured the effect of "green exercise" on two psychological indicators: self-esteem and mood. Over 250 participants engaged in various types of outdoors activities in natural settings across England. The activities included walking, cycling, horse-riding, fishing, canal-boating and conservation activities such as digging and scrub-clearing. All of these activities generated significant mental health benefits, regardless of the type, intensity or duration of the green exercise.
- In a study on the effects of various environments on children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), scientists from the University of Illinois found that the participants' symptoms were noticeably reduced after taking part in "green" activities such as fishing or soccer playing. They also observed that the "greener" a child's play area was, the less severe his/her attention deficit symptoms. In their publication, they concluded that "all children's attentional functioning may benefit from something as inexpensive and direct as incorporating vegetation into places where children live, learn, and play".

Good Quality Hardwood

available to members only @ \$125/cord, delivery included
Cord dimensions are 4' x 8' x 15"-18"

To participate in the lottery, please use the form below and mail, deliver or e-mail the complete information before **Friday July 31.**

We will phone the winners of the draw before Friday Aug. 7 to let them know that they can count on Arboretum wood.

FIREWOOD LOTTERY

Send this coupon along with your membership renewal form

NAME

MEMBERSHIP # (6 digits)

OF CORDS WANTED (maximum 3)

PHONE # DAYTIME

PHONE # EVENING

DELIVERY ADDRESS & MUNICIPALITY

- Scottish researchers have compared mortality data from hundreds of thousands of records and found that people exposed to the "greener" environments in England were less likely to die prematurely from stroke or heart disease, or indeed from any cause, regardless of their social class or income. They concluded that natural environments, which are known to promote psychological well-being and physical activity, actually reduce income-related health inequalities. Although the effect was greatest for those living surrounded by the most greenery, with the "health gap" roughly halved compared with those with the fewer green spaces around them, even tiny green spaces in the areas in which they lived made a significant difference to the risk of fatal diseases.

Find references on our web page A.G.



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Mammals and birds are the easiest groups for us to associate with and to be interested in, maybe because their babies are cute and not in the form of either oddly shaped worms (insects) or finless fish (frogs). Or maybe it's because they are easier to find. In fact, in some areas of the Arboretum, they find you! One of the most enjoyable experiences for a visitor is to come face to face - or hand to foot - with wildlife. The chickadees are often quite sociable and, if you go to the right spot with the appropriate food, they will flock to you in search of a quick meal. Go to Chalet Pruche armed with black oil sunflower seeds, and you'll have chickadees literally eating out the palm of your hand! (Seeds can be purchased for a nominal fee at the Gatehouse.) Visit our web page for indications on the best route to take to observe a great variety of other birds or take one of our organised tour with an experienced birder.

Morgan Arboretum Association

Established in 1952



*Dedicated to forest conservation
and environmental education*

The MAA is a registered charity
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The birds
overwintering
at the Arboretum
are fed by:

Bird Protection
Protection des oiseaux
Quebec du Québec



www.birdprotectionquebec.org

Deer are always a pleasant sight. They have a majestic quality that makes people stop and admire them. Deer are rarely encountered in the woods; they are more often seen along the forest edges where they nib-

ble on the succulent shoots of poplar and young maples. Because of their large size, deer often have trouble keeping cool during the summer and usually are only active at dawn and dusk. However, during the spring their periods of activity often extend to the early afternoon and evening so as to take advantage of the sun's warmth. The edges of the fields adjacent to Chemin des Pins provide good opportunities for observation and photography. Look for them in open spaces surrounded by forest when things are quiet and dogs are few.

Spring is a time of rebirth and new beginnings, a time for nature to continue where it left off in the fall. The Arboretum is filled with wonderful flora and fauna to observe and study, whether your particular interest is in insects, birds, wildflowers or frogs. Whatever you're looking for, whether it's wildlife or simply a rejuvenating stroll through the blossoms, why not come and enjoy all that the Arboretum has to offer?



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