



arnoldia

The Magazine of the Arnold Arboretum

VOLUME 78 • NUMBER 5-6

arnoldia

The Magazine of the Arnold Arboretum

VOLUME 78 • NUMBER 5-6 • 2021

Arnoldia (ISSN 0004-2633; USPS 866-100) is published quarterly by the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts.

Subscriptions are \$20.00 per calendar year domestic, \$25.00 foreign, payable in advance. Remittances may be made in U.S. dollars, by check drawn on a U.S. bank; by international money order; or by Visa, Mastercard, or American Express. Send orders, remittances, requests to purchase back issues, change-of-address notices, and all other subscription-related communications to Circulation Manager, *Arnoldia*, Arnold Arboretum, 125 Arborway, Boston, MA 02130-3500. Telephone 617.524.1718; fax 617.524.1418; e-mail arnoldia@arnarb.harvard.edu

Arnold Arboretum members receive a subscription to *Arnoldia* as a membership benefit. To become a member or receive more information, please call Wendy Krauss at 617.384.5766 or email wendy_krauss@harvard.edu

Postmaster: Send address changes to
Arnoldia Circulation Manager
The Arnold Arboretum
125 Arborway
Boston, MA 02130-3500

Jonathan Damery, *Editor*
Harper Preston, *Editorial Intern*
Andy Winther, *Designer*

Editorial Committee
Anthony S. Aiello
Peter Del Tredici
Michael S. Dosmann
William (Ned) Friedman
Jon Hetman
Julie Moir Messervy
Jonathan Shaw

Copyright © 2021. The President and
Fellows of Harvard College



The ARNOLD
ARBORETUM
of HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

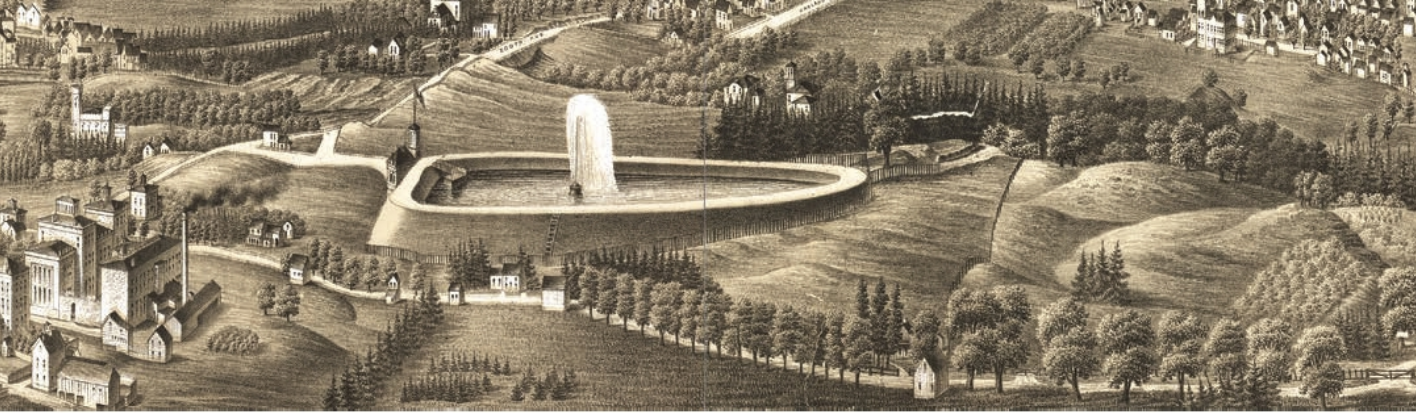
- 2 **Arnoldia Reimagined**
Jonathan Damery
- 6 **The Trees of the Silent Dell**
David Barnett
- 8 **The Nauvoo Rose on Temple Square**
Esther Truitt Henrichsen
- 10 **Five Generations of Russell's Garden Center**
Elizabeth Russell-Skehan
- 13 **The Resilient Trees of Flower City**
Mark Quinn
- 16 **The Prince Family: Pioneers of American Horticulture**
J. Stephen Casscles
- 24 **Such a Fine Assemblage: The Jesup Collection of North American Woods**
Kathryn Mauz
- 50 **Thomas Meehan: The Horticultural Popularizer**
Anthony S. Aiello
- 62 **The Intertwined Attractions of Plants, Moths, and People**
Kamaljit S. Bawa
- 68 **Otherworldly Wingnuts: *Pterocarya* × *rehderiana***
Jared Rubinstein

Front and back cover: The Jesup Collection of North American Woods was designed to capture the beauty and scientific diversity of forests across the United States—including the redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests of northern California, shown here. Gabriel Moulin, Archives of the Arnold Arboretum

Inside front cover: William Robert Prince published *Prince's Manual of Roses* in 1846, but its popularity was soon eclipsed when Samuel Parsons, Prince's neighbor, published *The Rose: Its History, Poetry, Culture, and Classification*. An illustration from Parsons is shown. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum

Inside back cover: Fruits of a Rehder wingnut (*Pterocarya* × *rehderiana*, accession 1191*E) droop above a quiet corner of the Arnold Arboretum. Photo by Jonathan Damery

PUBLICATION NOTE: Volume 79 will begin with the first issue published in 2022 and will include four issues.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, GEOGRAPHY AND MAP DIVISION

The Resilient Trees of Flower City

Mark Quinn

On March 4, 1991, I awoke to a knocking on my door. A coworker from the Monroe County Parks Department in Rochester, New York, planned to pick me up early to go to a trade show in Syracuse. When I glanced at the clock, however, I realized the power was out. The clockface was blank. I dressed quickly in the dark, and when I stepped out the front door, I found that the day's agenda was completely different than planned.

My coworker had indeed arrived to pick me up, but looking down the street, I saw that ice covered everything. My twenty-five-foot-tall white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) was bent over, with the tip touching the ground. (This tree later sprang back, showing the amazing resilience of trees to crises.) We headed for Highland Park, the historic arboretum on the south side of Rochester, where we both worked as horticulturists. After multiple turnarounds due to trees blocking the road, we finally arrived at the Highland Park production greenhouses. The scene that met us was shocking.

A huge limb from a one-hundred-year-old European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) had fallen on our turn-of-the-century glass greenhouse. Like most of the largest trees in the park, this beech dated to the early 1890s and was planted by horticulturist John Dunbar according to plans drafted by Frederick Law Olmsted. We immediately set to work removing the limb and closing the hole in the damaged greenhouse, stapling poly film to the cypress bars in an attempt to save the delicate orchids inside. As we worked to keep the plants from freezing, we could hear the occasional snap of limbs breaking elsewhere in the park, but we still had not fully comprehended the scale of devastation around us.

Rochester has a special affinity for trees. In the early 1800s, it was dubbed the Flour City,

as waterpower of the Genesee River was used to grind enormous amounts of flour that was then shipped via the Erie Canal. By the second half of the century, however, Rochester became the Flower City, home to many of the country's largest and most prosperous nurseries. Two nurserymen played an especially pivotal role: George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry, owners of the successful Mount Hope Nursery, which they established around 1840.

In 1888, Ellwanger and Barry donated land from their nursery grounds to the city to be used as a public park. Later named Highland Park, this land occupied a highpoint overlooking the city and the southern tier hills. Olmsted was enlisted to design a system of parks for Rochester, including North Park (now Seneca Park) and South Park (now Genesee Valley Park). Considering the interest that local nursery owners had invested in tree cultivation, Olmsted designed Highland Park as an arboretum. Many of the specimens to be planted were donated by Ellwanger and Barry. Park Superintendent Calvin Laney began acquiring additional plants for the park, but it soon became clear that more horticultural help was required.

Dunbar was hired in 1891 to oversee the plant collections in the park. He quickly forged relationships with other prominent horticulturists, including Charles Sprague Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum. The similarities between Highland and the Arnold are not just superficial. Both arboreta were designed by Olmsted and were envisioned as features within larger park systems. Both have the distinct feel of an Olmsted design, with curving paths following the contours of the landscape.

Dunbar and the horticulturists who followed him maintained an active relationship with Sargent and others at the Arnold. For many decades,



the institutions exchanged plant material, supporting research at both sites. As time passed, the products of these efforts matured into beautiful collections. In Rochester, the public has come to expect these large, well-maintained trees throughout our arboretum and park system. Still, as a community of tree lovers, we often take for granted the tremendous asset left by our predecessors—until crisis strikes.

The ice storm of 1991 was one of these events. Having saved the orchids, staff turned their attention to assessing the damage to the arboretum. It seemed that almost everything in the collection was either damaged or destroyed. At first, opening roads and paths so people could get around was the priority. This effort to restore access took days. As the work progressed, we started to look at individual specimens and, to our dismay, found many of our most celebrated trees were no more.

One public favorite, a katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), looked like the last few feet of every branch was broken and hanging. The tree had been received in 1919 from the nursery of Leon Chenault, in Orleans, France. Once the forestry team addressed safety issues elsewhere in the landscape, they turned to the katsura, spending days expertly trimming off every broken limb. Today, three decades later, no evidence of the trauma remains. The katsura has returned bigger and better than ever.

The saddest loss for me was a Persian ironwood (*Parrotia persica*), which had been received from Veitch Nursery, in England, in 1892. The specimen—perhaps my favorite tree in the park—was fascinating, forming an impenetrable maze of eight- to sixteen-inch trunks with gray-green mottled bark. It had been completely uprooted and was lying on the ground. I remember cutting up the branches and wondering if another specimen as impressive as this one existed anywhere. Yet, sometimes having too much to do can play in our favor: with thousands of trees down and in need of work, our team deferred grinding stumps until later. That spring, dozens of new shoots sprouted from the overturned *Parrotia* stump. Over time, our team thinned the shoots, allowing space for some to grow. Now thirty years have passed,

and the plant is once again a tangle of trunks—again one of my favorites.

While so many trees were damaged and lost, others weathered the storm with remarkable ease. Walking through the park, you come to an impressive pair of zelkovas (*Zelkova serrata*), found in the valley behind the historic Lamber-ton Conservatory. One of the trees was received in 1899 from Thomas Meehan & Sons, in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and the other arrived in 1919 from the Arnold Arboretum. These trees stood strong against the ice. Likewise, at the corner of Highland Avenue and Goodman Street, a dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) did the same. The tree was grown from seed distributed by the Arnold Arboretum in 1948, when this newly identified species was first introduced to North America. The dawn redwood flexed under the weight of the ice but bounced back with little damage.

Despite the losses to the ice storm, Highland Park recovered. Every morning, I drive through the pinetum, which includes hundreds of varieties of mature evergreens—an uncommon and, I think, underappreciated asset for a city park. The pinetum is particularly impressive in the winter with snow on the trees, giving the impression of being in an evergreen forest far north of Rochester.

As I pull into my parking spot, I glance to a nearby hill where I see two magnificent fern-leaf beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia') standing amongst a grouping of beech trees of other varieties. These two were donated from Ellwanger and Barry's Mount Hope Nursery in 1892. Looking to the left, I can see an American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), about thirty feet tall and starting to succumb to blight, a remnant of a former crisis. Each of the trees stands as a living history—a testament not only to their own resilience but to the commitment of the generations of horticulturists who have built and stewarded the plant collections in Flower City.

Mark Quinn is the superintendent of horticulture for Monroe County Parks, in Rochester, New York. He oversees the cultivation and care of the botanical collection at Highland Park and all the parks throughout the County Parks System.

Facing page: The author stands with one of the celebrated trees at Highland Park—a katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) received in 1919.