



Mount Desert Land & Garden Preserve

June 2011 Newsletter

Asticou Azalea Garden
Thuya Garden and Lodge
Asticou Terraces

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Mary Roper, Garden
Manager, Azalea

News of the Gardens

The Asticou Azalea Garden is serene this year in comparison to the frenzied pace of the past seven years that involved purchasing property, dredging the pond and expanding the garden proper to embrace the acre lot on the west side of the pond. As we all know, gardens are never finished—they simply move through stages of rapid transition to leisurely evolution and back again. We are very grateful to the tenacious work of the garden staff for getting us to the current period of calm. Hardscape in the expanded area is largely complete, and new plantings will be gradually added to the landscape. A “mountain-scape” of azaleas is planned in the foreground of what will become a brilliant display of autumn color, and the extension of irrigation throughout the new area is finished.

An active propagation program for preserving the Azalea Garden’s

signature plants, many from Beatrix Farrand’s Reef Point collection, began several years ago and we are beginning to enjoy its fruits. After three years moving from greenhouse to lath house, the first “crop” of azaleas grown from cuttings will spend their first season in open nursery beds. Additional “crops” will follow and eventually all are destined to populate new beds or to replace aged plant stock in the older sections of the garden.

Last year, the Azalea crew developed expertise in transplanting pitch pines and have applied their talents again this year to the task of rescuing trees from an active quarry site in Hall Quarry, the same source for the garden’s original pitch pines collected by Charles Savage in 1956. Seven new pitch pines, in addition to other plantings in the expanded garden area, were made possible through grants from the Garden Club of Mount Desert and the Fore River Foundation.

The Garden Club also made possible a two-year project to restore native plantings at the Curtis Memorial on the Asticou Terrace Trail. Irrigation was added

to the area last year, along with new plantings of huckleberry. In the coming month hay scented fern, sweet fern and blueberry sod will be re-introduced on the eastern side of the plateau.

Inside the Thuya Garden fence, the woodland path along the east side of the garden has been renovated with stone steps. The garden staff proudly reports that all of the temporary wooden steps inside the fenced area have been replaced with granite stone, thus completing a goal set several years ago. The staff

also made significant progress toward the completion of another goal when they finished raising and edging the long section of path from the north end of the border to the Spring House. Eventually all of the pink stone dust paths that have sunk overtime will be restored to their original levels.

People driving to the top of Thuya Drive may notice that



Setting stone for new steps at Thuya, Fall, 2010

the cul-de-sac has a new look. Two of the large white cedars (*Thuja occidentalis*) succumbed to old age and have been replaced with younger trees of the same species. The remaining cedars are languishing as well and will need replacement. Adapting to change brought about by natural succession is both a challenge and an opportunity when conserving historic landscapes.

Thuya Lodge will open for the season on Saturday, June 18th and will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through mid-September. There will be two new photographic displays in the Herbs Room of the lodge this season. One will be a series of photos illustrating seasonal changes in the garden. The second will be a photographic illustration of color progression in Thuya’s borders from “cool” to “hot”, a design feature often used by Beatrix Farrand and introduced into the Thuya borders in the 1990’s by Patrick Chassé.

In conclusion, the garden staff anticipates the coming season will be brilliant with color and invites you to visit and enjoy the gardens often.



Conservation Easement to Protect Map House and Nearby Trails

The *Asticou Terraces Trustee Report* written by Charles K. Savage (CKS) and archived in the Northeast Harbor Library describes the “Map House” as a “small pavilion built in 1938 by CKS, at his own expense (\$544), on his own land, for the use of all walkers and passers-by. It was a favorite resting spot for Willa Cather, the eminent novelist, who spent a number of summers at Asticou.” The small pavilion marks the junction of the Asticou Trail, the Eliot Mountain Trail, and Asticou Way, trails that were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and predate the establishment of Acadia National Park.

These historic trails cross private and public lands and connect the village of Northeast Harbor with the network of trails in Acadia National Park. They also connect Thuya Garden with the Asticou Azalea Garden and allow one to walk from either to Jordan Pond. The Map House currently sits on private land owned by Jamie Clark and Susanna Porter who, over the past year, have been working with the Preserve’s Land and Trails Committee to develop a conservation easement on 4.5 acres of land surrounding the structure and bordering 900 feet of the Asticou Trail. Under the proposed

agreement, pedestrian public access and the natural, undeveloped and wooded character of the area will be maintained in perpetuity, and the Map House will be preserved as a unique structure that contributes to the area’s broader cultural heritage. We are grateful to the Clarks for their commitment to preserving this historic area and to the Thuya Garden staff who will assume responsibility for maintaining both the structure and the section of trail under easement. We hope to finalize the agreement this summer.



“Thank You” Garden Preserve Staff!

We are extremely pleased and grateful that, with the exception of one, all Garden Preserve staff have returned for the 2011 season. Mary Roper, Cindy Robbins, Gene Williamson, and Sam Hughes are back in the Asticou Azalea Garden. The Thuya gardeners include Priscilla Hutton, Carl Kelley, Jason Ashur, Rick Leduc and Cristal LaPrade, and our three wonderfully knowledgeable docents, Helen Townsend, Linda Thayer, and Ellen Gilmore, will return to greet and interpret for visitors in the Lodge. We continue to miss Betsy Hewlett who “retired” last fall causing us to put some of the archival and education projects on hold, but Kelsey George is very ably filling her role at the office, and Cristal LaPrade has expanded her commitment to the Preserve by working in the office with Kelsey and Carole Plenty when not needed at Thuya.

2011 Summer Meetings

Annual Meeting of the Mount Desert Land & Garden Board of Directors: August 12th, 10:30 to noon, followed by lunch. The meeting will be held in the Mellon Room of the Northeast Harbor Library and lunch will be in Thuya Garden.

Audit Committee Meeting: July, 2011

Azalea Garden Committee: July 12th, 10:30 am to noon, Asticou Inn; August 16th, 9 to 10:30 am, location tbd

Development Committee: June 6th, 12:00 lunch, Asticou Inn

Education Committee: August, 2011

Executive Committee: July 6th, 10:00 am to noon, Seal Harbor

Investment Committee: June 2nd, 8:00 am to 12:30 pm, New York City; August 12th, 9:00 am, Northeast Harbor Library

Land & Trails Committee: June 16th, 3 to 5:00 pm, MCHT, Somesville; July 28th, 3 to 5:00 pm, location tbd

Thuya Garden Committee: July 8th, 8:30 to 10 am, Thuya Lodge; August 17th, 8:30 to 10 am, Thuya Lodge



Public Restrooms on the Agenda

Recognizing that public restrooms are greatly appreciated by visitors and that the gardens are in locations ill-suited for traditional septic systems, the Preserve applied for and received a grant from the Hattie A. and Fred C. Lynam Foundation to research and evaluate alternative "green" systems for both gardens. The systems research and topographic surveys for potential sites were completed last fall, and preliminary building schematics were developed by Roc Caivano Architects. The project workers also benefitted from closely observing the successful

installation of a Clivus Multrum composting toilet facility at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden in Seal Harbor.

The outcome of this work and additional research this summer will be on the agendas of several committee meetings. If a system and location is agreed upon for each garden, the Preserve will begin to raise funds for construction. While this project isn't as appealing as the design of a new garden area or the restoration of an historic feature, its implementation will serve our visitors and further our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Board of Directors Update

The Preserve currently raises approximately 1/3 of its annual operating budget from donations received at the gate or in response to an annual letter of appeal. We have also been very successful raising funds for large projects such as the purchase of the corner lot on Peabody Drive and repaving Thuya Drive, but until now, we have not had a comprehensive development plan to ensure the organization's financial health in the future. This will change in the coming months as Katie Baxter, Board Vice President, takes the helm of a new Development Committee charged with analyzing existing fundraising practices and creating and implementing new strategies and programs compatible with our focus, mission and needs. The first organizational meeting for the committee will be held in June, and we encourage anybody interested in joining the group to contact the office for more information.



Stephen Milliken with Carl Kelley following the 2010 Annual Meeting

We welcome **Stephen Milliken**, newly elected to the Board of Directors at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

Sadly, **Beth Straus** who was elected Life Director at the same meeting passed away on December 6, 2010. Her energy, spirit and intellect is sorely missed.

Call for Volunteers

In the past, volunteers have been recruited to work in the gardens on special projects and during times when many hands are needed. They have been called upon to candle the mugos, prune trees, paint the garden house, and provide late afternoon security on days with heavy visitation. While volunteering can be arranged individually with the garden managers, this year both gardens have scheduled a "volunteer morning" each week for anyone interested in helping out and possibly learning a few gardening tips. The garden tasks organized for any particular day will vary depending upon the time of year and the gardens' needs, and volunteers should arrive in their gardening garb. Tools will be provided, but please bring your own work gloves.

The scheduled volunteer mornings are: **Asticou Azalea Garden, Tuesdays from 9:30 to noon beginning in June**, and **Thuya Garden & Lodge, Wednesdays from 9:30 to noon beginning in July**.

Volunteers need not commit to coming regularly, but we hope people will enjoy the experience and want to return. We plan to continue the volunteer mornings through August.





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PO Box 208, Seal Harbor, ME 04675

207-276-3727

info@gardenpreserve.org

www.gardenpreserve.org

If you would like to receive future newsletters via internet, please send your email address to
info@gardenpreserve.org

Friday, June 10, 2011 at 6:00 pm

The Northeast Harbor Library
in collaboration with
Mount Desert Land & Garden Preserve
Presents

A lecture by Arthur Haines,

“How Your Understanding of Nutrition Affects Land Conservation”

This lecture takes a provocative look at agriculture and its effects on the environment and human health. Appreciating the critical need humans have for wild food provides another powerful argument for the protection of land from uses that drastically alter its ecological function.

Arthur Haines is a botanist and writer from the New England Wildflower Society. His newly published book entitled *Ancestral Plants – A Primitive Skills Guide to Important Edible, Medicinal, and Useful Plants of the Northeast* will be available for purchase.

The talk is free and open to the public.

August 1 - September 6, 2011
Treasures from Asia II Exhibition
Asticou Inn, Northeast Harbor

Schneible Fine Arts, a Shelburne, Vermont USA based Asian fine art gallery, will present this special exhibition of antique and contemporary treasures from China, Japan, and the orient. A special preview reception is planned for
Sunday, July 31st .

A special fund raising luncheon to benefit Japan-American Red Cross earthquake and tsunami survivors is scheduled for
Wednesday, August 10, 10:30am- 1:15pm at the Asticou Inn.

Schneible Fine Arts will donate a percentage of each exhibition sale to *Mount Desert Land & Garden Preserve*. For more information about the scheduled events, contact Schneible Fine Arts—acgdoug@aol.com—or visit them on line,
www.artscraftsgal.com