

# Willowwood Journal

A Publication of the Willowwood Foundation  
P.O. Box 1295, Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295

Volume 1, No. 2

Summer 1993

## FALL FERN FESTIVAL AT WILLOWWOOD

### Public Invited to Participate on September 26th!

Ferns will be the feature of the September 26, 1993 event at Willowwood Arboretum and the public is invited to attend.

At 3:00 p.m. there will be a program on Using Ferns in the Landscape by David E. Benner, noted authority on native plants and past Director of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Sanctuary at Washington Crossing State Park. Benner will use slides to discuss the culture and design effects of ferns.

Following the lecture, a plant sale will be held in the red barn where visitors may purchase ferns. There also will be a planting ceremony to initiate the renovation of the woodwalk at Willowwood which features handsome stands of native ferns.

Dr. James D. Montgomery and Dr. David Fairbrothers, authors of New Jersey Ferns and Fern Allies, will be the featured guests of honor.

Copies of this important comprehensive and fully illustrated guide on the Garden State's exceptionally rich fern history will be available for purchase and Dr. Montgomery and Dr. Fairbrothers will be available to autograph the book.

### **\*\* Reminder \*\***

### **Proposals for 1993 Foundation Grants Due September 15**

For application forms and other information telephone 201-326-7610 or write to The Willowwood Foundation, P.O. Box 1295, Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295.

A special door prize, a collection of unusual ferns, will be awarded and refreshments will be served. Reservations are limited for what promises to be a popular event. To register for this free event,

telephone 201-326-7610.

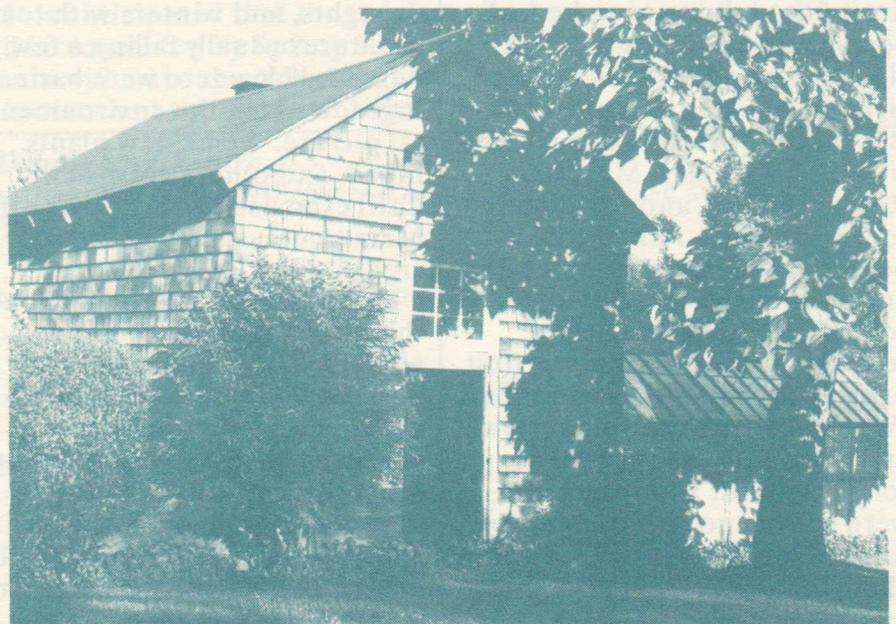
This special program is being sponsored jointly by the Willowwood Foundation, the New Jersey Field Office of the Nature Conservancy and the Morris County Park Commission.

### Foundation to Raise Funds for New Propagation Unit

Willowwood Arboretum is a treasure house of choice plants collected over nearly a century. However, to unlock its potential and to share these plants, propagation and growing facilities are necessary. These facilities also will help rejuvenate the collection as many choice specimens are approaching the end of their life expectancies. The unit also will

serve to promote the introduction of new plants; one only has to look at the paltry palette of street trees used in towns today to realize the priority of this initiative.

A dramatic step was taken earlier this year with the improvement of the nursery, made possible in part with a \$10,000.00 challenge grant from  
*(continued on page 4)*



*The potting shed and greenhouse, now abandoned, as it appeared around 1950.*

## Willowwood's Past Revealed in Blackburn Papers - Paradise Found! Part II - continued from previous issue

Friendship with Dr. F. V. Coville of the United States Department of Agriculture resulted in *Franklinia* being planted at Willowwood early in the 1930's. Dr. William W. Wilson of Montclair succeeded spectacularly in getting Pink Lady-slippers established on the Pine Hillside, where they are now naturalized in hundreds. In the first attempts, transplanting clumps of this Orchid to the spots selected as favorable seemed to be giving uncertain results, as the plants languished and finally diminished. Then Dr. Wilson brought mature fruit capsules, and the minute powdery seeds were scattered in the hollows under some of the Red Pines. At first, nothing appeared to be happening, but a few years later, on a visit to see the display of Flowering Dogwoods, Dr. and Mrs. Wilson realized that ahead of them a rosy haze under the pines was from colonies of Lady-slippers in full bloom - in the very spots where the seeds had been scattered years before.

Robert Hamilton Tubbs died in 1942, and the meadow and open woodland along the upper section of the brook where he had been planting choice small plants since the middle 1920s received virtually no attention until 1946. By this time thickets of bush and vine Honeysuckles, Multiflora Roses, Sumacs, and veritable copses of White Ash and Slippery Elm seedlings occupied the areas formerly enriched and controlled. Regaining these sections was the work given first priority at the end of the Second War, and it was continued slowly and cautiously, as specimens completely lost and forgotten were being uncovered every few yards. This Treasure Trove area along the upper section of the brook combines some of the best growing conditions at Willowwood, as it is protected from

extremes both in summer and winter. *Cunninghamia*, Mountain Silverbell, Cucumber-tree and Hokkaido Magnolias have made fine growth in plantings made about 30 years ago, and Medake, one of the Japanese bamboos, has done entirely too well and has to be curtailed vigorously. A *Davidia* planted in 1930 now exceeds 40 feet, and a *Metasequoia* put out in 1950 has made the most of a gravelly bank moistened by drainage from the grove of Red Pines above. This Chinese relic is more than 30 feet high, though very slender, and another of the same lot, given by James Clark of Princeton, planted in a more sunny location by the Stone Cottage is an impressive 55 feet high. These were in 8-inch pots in 1950 - all from the fortuitous 1947 seed collection along the Hupeh-Szechuan border for which western tree-lovers owe perpetual continual gratitude to Dr. E. D. Merrill of the Arnold Arboretum.

As the years went by, new trees and shrubs and herbaceous plants were added constantly, usually as a few specimens or even a single plant. Storms, droughts, and winters with temperatures usually falling a few degrees below zero were basic ingredients in the environmental picture. Some new plants failed, and others grew slowly until established. Some, like the *Metasequoias*, have grown incredibly well from the first.

Except for the formal areas near the house, most plantings are along informal paths and in woodland areas where they require only moderate maintenance, in keeping with the naturalist surroundings. This pattern makes it possible to grow and test many different kinds of plants, and these have come from many sources - from botanical institutions, nurseries, and many friends. The sources of these

woody plants grown at Willowwood over more than half a century are given in the following pages as completely as the records now furnish. Even with limited notes, the listing of the kinds of trees, shrubs, and woody vines occupies many more pages than was first thought possible, and there have been many changes in plan. Items which have been planted and lost are included, as these may furnish information of value to others who garden in similar situations. Some plants habitually carried over the winters indoors are included, for special horticultural or botanical interest, and because large specimens which cannot be managed inside with reasonable means have finally been planted outdoors - occasionally with surprising results.

Henry and Robert Tubbs both felt that many plants of our own country have never been tried in sufficient areas with their individual variations in growing conditions, where the introductions might have good chances of success. Seeds and small plants obtained on vacation trips around the United States have been important accessions; as gardeners know, such plants have particular value for the collectors, at least, in recalling special people and places. Seeds have been the best and easiest means of introduction, and cuttings of small branchlets have been particularly satisfactory in some cases. When it has been possible to collect living plants, the record is consistent in showing that small seedlings, only one to three or four inches high, travel best, recover quickest, and have the best chances of establishing themselves.

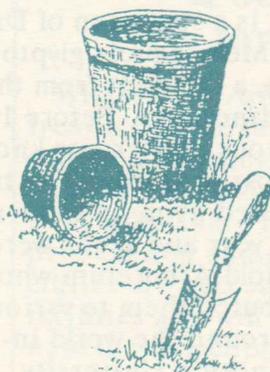
The listing of woody plants arranged alphabetically by their scientific names comprises three general groups in the fol-

lowing pages: (1) Native plants growing at Willowwood quite naturally - the spontaneous trees and shrubs. (2) Introduced or planted kinds - the exotics. (3) Woody plants which have grown here outdoors since 1908, but which have eventually failed and died. Groups 2 and 3 represent the trees, shrubs, and vines introduced during the half-century that the Tubbs family lived at Willowwood. These are plantings made especially by Henry and Robert Tubbs, with extensive ones also by their father, Benjamin Tubbs, and others by friends who helped them. The first plantings of a kind are noted with their source and date. Those which have died are listed similarly, with the date of their demise also given, as under the gymnosperm genus *Torreya*, the species *nucifera*, Japanese *Torreya*, obtained from the Scott Foundation at Swarthmore in 1956, died in the nursery in 1960; this is represented in the notes as "Swarthmore, 1956-60".

Plantings of the same kind or variety at later times are listed only if these are of particular significance, and in general only the first planting is noted. For general interest, origin of the plants is given, and also the accepted number of species in each genus is given in parentheses after the latter name.



*Henry Tubbs and his sister Claire replacing the roof on the stone smokehouse near the driveway early this century.*



### Plant Record Project Progresses

As reported in the previous article, Ben Blackburn maintained careful records of the Willowwood plantings. These were maintained on 3"x5" index cards.

In a cooperative venture with Rutgers University, these records have been converted to computer files.

The most recent phase of preserving this valuable data includes digitalized computer mapping of the Arboretum. Funding was provided by a NJDEPE 1993 Community Forestry Challenge Grant, the Morris County Private Industry Council and the Morris Parks and Land Conservancy through the Helen Gardiner Fund.

It is anticipated that the computerized mapping of the collection will be concluded by Spring 1994. Computerizing data on the plants will make the collection more accessible to botanists, horticulturists and the public at large.

#### *Detach and Return*

- YES**, I am interested in information about The Willowwood Foundation. Please send an application form and information.
- YES**, I would like to support the work of The Willowwood Foundation. Enclosed is my tax exempt donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
- YES**, I would like information about volunteer opportunities at Willowwood Arboretum.
- YES**, I would like to receive future issues of this newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Office \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete the information above and return this request to:**

**The Secretary, The Willowwood Foundation, P.O. Box 1295, Morristown, NJ 07962-1295**

## Propagation Unit

(continued from page 1)

the Willowwood Foundation plus additional support from the New Jersey Nurserymen and Landscape Association, the Elisha Bolton Foundation, Betsy Shafer, The Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum and the Henry Tubbs Trust. This project has been very successful and many new plants are being grown on for addition to the living collection.

The second and more ambitious phase, is the reconstruction of the potting shed and former greenhouse. The state of the art two bay facility will fulfill the need for propagation facilities. To date almost \$10,000.00 of the \$100,000.00 cost of the project has been raised through generous donations from Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Will, the Garden Club of Morristown and two Spring plant sales and an auction of rare plants sponsored by the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum.

Quentin Schlieder, Secretary-Director of the Morris County Park Commission, noted that the new facility will give life to the Arboretum and will benefit the community. He stated that this project is the fulfillment of a dream of the late Russell W. Myers.

## Projects Funded by Foundation

The Willowwood Foundation provided a challenge grant to Dr. John Kuser of Rutgers University to research, compile and publish a list of the largest exotic trees growing in the state of New Jersey. Over a quarter of these are growing at Willowwood Arboretum, testimony to the importance of the living collection. A copy of the list published by Dr. Kuser is enclosed with this issue of Willowwood Journal.

The Foundation also provided a

grant to the Organization for Tropical Studies, a non-profit consortium of more than fifty universities and research institutions in the United States and Latin America, for the labelling of the Robert and Catherine Wilson Botanical Garden at the Las Cruces Biological Station in Costa Rica. The Garden is known for its extensive collection of endangered tropical and subtropical plants.

## Dawn Redwood Relic of the Past

Dominating the landscape near the Stone Cottage at Willowwood Arboretum is a specimen of Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), a remnant from the age of the dinosaurs. Before 1948 this deciduous conifer was known only from fossil records. The tree was discovered living in Central China that year and seeds were sent to Arnold Arboretum who in turn distributed them to various collectors around the world including Princeton University. Willowwood Arboretum received three, three-foot high seedlings from Princeton University. While

the other two specimens are growing, the specimen near the Cottage is the largest and vies with a specimen at Winterthur and a specimen at the President's Garden at Princeton University, for the largest specimen in cultivation. A blessed event occurred about six years ago when a seedling was discovered growing in a bed of ferns adjacent to the front porch of the Stone Cottage. The seedling was transplanted in the vicinity of the well house.

We are pleased to report that parent and child are doing well.

**The Willowwood Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 1295**  
**Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295**

*Edmund W. Stiles, President*  
*David Fairbrothers, Vice President*  
*Quentin Schlieder, Secretary*  
*Daniel Will, Treasure*

### Trustees:

<i>Julie C. Baron</i>	<i>Kathryn Porter</i>
<i>Mary Bartow</i>	<i>Cynthia Robinson</i>
<i>Stuart Brunet</i>	<i>Nancy Strathearn</i>
<i>Marguerite Buck</i>	<i>Nancy Strong</i>
<i>Steven Greenberger</i>	<i>Sylvia Talmage</i>
<i>James Johnson</i>	<i>R. Patterson Warlick</i>
<i>Paul Meyer</i>	<i>Florence Zuck</i>
<i>Preston Moore</i>	<i>Robert Zuck</i>
<i>Madeleine Pitney</i>	

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**  
**Dated Material, Please Expedite**



Printed on recycled paper