



Willowwood Journal

A Publication of the Willowwood Foundation

P.O. Box 1295, Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295

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Spring 1996

1995 - 1996 GRANTS ANNOUNCED

Seven grants totaling \$25,500.00 were funded in the 1995 grant round of the Willowwood Foundation. These grants were selected from the 26 proposals received, with requests totaling \$106,681.00 and were selected since in most cases they either served as model demonstration projects or would serve as a resource to more than one institution.

Among the proposals funded were the following:

- * \$3,000.00 to The Brooklyn Botanical Garden of Brooklyn, NY for continued support of its New York Metropolitan Flora Project.
- * \$1,000.00 to The Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown, NJ for its rare botanical book conservation program which leverages additional funds through public programming and a fundraiser which will result in the evaluation of Conservation needs for the botanical library of the late Benjamin C. Blackburn.
- * \$4,000.00 to The Organization for Tropical Studies to re-establish its research library at the Las Cruces Biological Station in Costa Rica which was lost in a fire last year.

* \$4,500.00 to The Morris County Park Commission to initiate an innovative model program to recruit, train and supervise volunteer workers to augment the professional horticultural staff at the Commission's horticultural sites including Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center and Willowwood Arboretum.

(continued on page 4)

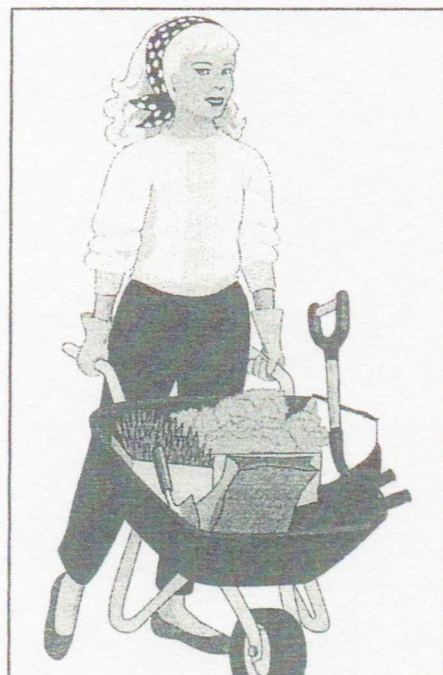
HORTICULTURAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The fragrance of lilacs wafts through the early morning air, as bluebirds keep vigil, butterflies dance on dew-sprinkled flowers and the music of Mozart punctuates the tranquil setting. A dream? No, the ambience enjoyed by the volunteer gardeners who are adding a wonderful note of enthusiasm and providing the attention which makes the gardens at Willowwood Arboretum very special!

Under a special program sponsored jointly by the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, the Henry Tubbs Trust and the Willowwood Foundation Kate Gutierrez, Volunteer Horticultural Coordinator has recruited 10 volunteers for Willowwood Arboretum, 22 volunteers for the Frelinghuysen Arboretum and 5 volunteers for Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center to cultivate, preen and to share their love and knowledge of gardening and the gardens they tend. The first volunteer orientation was held on Tuesday, April 16, 1996 with 32 volunteers participating.

The volunteers at Willowwood are being lead by Kelly Conroy, a second

County College of Morris who also has taken courses at Rutgers University. Volunteers seem to enjoy working among the rare plants comprising the collections, the informative mini-tours and classes from the professional staff, occasional plants to take home and especially the ambience and kindred spirit. If you would like to volunteer, call Kate at (201) 326-7623.



**The Willowwood Foundation
announces its Fourth Annual
Autumn Symposium
on
MAGNOLIAS
Co-sponsored with
THE MAGNOLIA SOCIETY
Sunday, September 8, 1996**

Magnolias at Willowwood by Benjamin Blackburn

In early spring of 1911, an embarrassingly large gift of plants from the Dorrance cousins in Kingston, Pennsylvania, gave the first impetus to plantings of Magnolias at Willowwood. The entire freight car of woody and herbaceous treasures, held at the Delaware and Lackawanna siding at Gladstone, was found to contain several strong plants of a Soulange hybrid, probably the Van Houtte form of 'Alexandrina.' Now fine mature specimens about 25 feet high and with several trunks, these dominate respective corners in Pan's Garden north of the house, another east of the house, and a third by the old spring near the bend in the drive.

The next Magnolias planted at Willowwood were Sweetbays, collected as small plants in the New Jersey Pine Barrens in 1912. Henry and Robert Tubbs had taken their parents and sister "down Jersey" for a day's outing in their redoubtable Reo motorcar, and after getting stuck in loose sand at an innocent appearing but thoroughly treacherous spot near Speedwell, the excursionists had more bad luck in having a flat tire.

Finally, with these upsets passed, all were cheered and revived by the contents of the picnic basket, and the horticulturally influenced members of the party dug several plant treasures they had discovered along the small stream with velvety black waters where they had been resting. Small seedling or sucker plants of the abundant Magnolias were carved out in blocks of the moist peaty soil, and packed in the car with a few Swamp Azaleas and Clethras for the brook edges at Willowwood. Despite some doubts about crowding and weight, a few cushions of Pyxie-moss, found later in Oak scrub, were added, and the long drive home was started. The outing ended happily, with everyone very tired, very glad to be home, and planning where to plant their

collections.

Three of the Sweetbays survive, in the woodland garden area along the brook, the tallest about 40 feet high and with a 7-inch trunk. Clethras and Azaleas have made 8-foot masses in the same area, but as invariably in later collections also, the Pyxie-moss subsisted only a few months and was gone after a year.

Ornamental plantings were very limited during the years of World War I, but by the 1920's Robert Tubbs had become keenly enthusiastic about new trees and made notable additions. He sought advice from Sargent and Wilson at the Arnold Arboretum, and was in touch with Dr. Frederick Coville, of the Department of Agriculture, working with Miss Elizabeth White at Whitesbog in making Highbush Blueberry selections.

In 1928 Wilson sent bud-wood of the Magnolia which came to be called Waterlily and seeds or small plants of the northern forest form of *Kobus*, Hokkaido Magnolia, in 1930. These last opened a fascinating horticultural chapter at Willowwood, and three of the original Hokkaido Magnolias remain - specimens 40-70 feet in height and with trunks to 18 inches in diameter. Both flowering and fruiting displays are impressive but even enthusiasts admit that individual flowers of Hokkaido Magnolias, mostly white but occasionally pinkish at the base of the stamens and admittedly skimpy with 6-9 petals, hardly compare with many others. Delicate lance-shaped sepals, about ½ inch long, are easily detectable.

While flowers of the *Kobus* type may seem meager, the fruits at least are not surpassed in their brocade coloring and design, and this display lasts several weeks. Seedlings volunteer at Willowwood in abundance, and after a restrained start for two years, they gain momentum and

almost spring into any open space above them. One volunteer has surprised us with dusty-pink petals; it does not promise to make superlative listings, but echoes the interesting color range appearing in other derivatives of the species. These self-sown seedlings have been given away in some quantity, but in later years their abundance actually makes this method of control impractical because of their numbers and the time required to supervise even the best intentioned friends and diggers.

As for the much-repeated complaint that *Magnolia Kobus* and its variety *borealis* are slow to flower, one comes to regard this with suspicion. Grafted plants more or less aside (and their troublesome problems with graft cankers often appearing in later years falling where they may), one is inclined to believe that seedlings of the *Kobus* group flower at about the same age as their congeners; most grow so much faster that we may forget a plant is actually only five or six years old and their scattering of flowers is spaced over a larger framework of branches.

The bud-wood branchlets of the new pink Star Magnolia from E. H. Wilson were hastened to a nurseryman friend in the northern part of the county, and in due time small plants were starting in Willowwood. Two of these Waterlily Magnolias survive, and their story is told in Neil Treseder's gratifying and comprehensive work, *Magnolias* (Faber, 1978). One specimen is 14½ feet high and the other about 25 feet; both have rounded habit of Star Magnolias, but are proportionately higher; it is natural to imagine that *M. liliflora* 'from the next block' may have had some parental influence, as chromosome counts seem to indicate in the case of *M. stellata rubra*.

Magnolia grandiflora, needless to say, has been a great favorite here,

and Robert Tubbs's plantings of the 1920's have been our best specimens, surpassing all later additions. The best and largest has been 'Exmouth,' from E. A. Wohlert's exciting nursery in 1926. A small, now decrepit greenhouse directly to the west has diverted drying winds for more than half a century, and the 30-foot tree has grown and flowered admirably, usually well into September. Heavy damage has occurred in recent winters, starting with a traitorous false spring in March 1977, and the old tree is failing disturbingly.

In later years the collection has increased slowly, sometimes by layers from admired specimens in our area and by seeds from abroad. Seeds from the Loebner hybrid, 'Willowwood,' which arose spontaneously here in a dense mass of *Pachysandra* early in the 1940's (*M. Kobus* x *M. Kobus* f. *stellata*) - and sendings from England and Italy - have produced valued additions, not without questions and surprises. A 15-foot specimen along the Wood Walk, from Thompson & Morgan of Ipswich, England in 1954, is supposed to be *M. x highdownensis*, but is clearly of close affinity to *Kobus*, and so does not conform to the assumed parentage of the tree at Highdown in Sussex.

(to be continued in next issue)

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FOUNDATION SPONSORS LILAC PARTY

The Lilac Party for friends and neighbors has been a Willowwood tradition since the days of Henry Tubbs. Guests would enjoy the fragrance and beautiful flowers on the lilacs massed just west of the stone barn in an area of the Arboretum affectionately called "Highland Park," a reference to the superb plantings in the public parks in Rochester, New York.

The Willowwood Foundation decided to continue this gracious tradition to share its love of the plantings so carefully developed by the Tubbs family, Dr. Blackburn and Mr. Myers. The first Foundation sponsored party, of what is hoped will be an annual open house event, is being held on Sunday, May 19, 1996 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. It's the Foundation's way of conveying its appreciation to the many people who have supported the Arboretum and the Foundation through the years.

To remember the day, four different lilacs will be distributed to guests including a very early, floriferous and fragrant single pale lavender selection known as *Syringa* x *hyacinthiflora* 'Assessippi,' an early single white fragrant selection known as *Syringa* x *hyacinthiflora* 'Mt. Baker', a late single pink selection known as *syringa* x 'James Mcfarlane' and a late-blooming single pink hybrid selection known as *Syringa* x *prestoniae* 'Miss Canada' described as "a priceless treasure by Father John Fiala in his book, *Lilacs*.

Those who cannot attend the party are invited to enjoy this wonderful collection which generally is in bloom from early May to late July, with the height of bloom around Mother's Day.

The collection includes not only some of the finest French hybrids ever developed, but also later blooming hybrids and species. Notable among the late blooming species is *Syringa pekinensis*, with beautiful exfoliating red bark, like a cherry. The specimen west of the Orchard Path was obtained from the Rochester Department of Parks in 1952.



-----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 1205, Morrisstown, NJ 07062-1205

Grants

(Continued from page 1)

* \$4,000.00 to The Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA to continue and expand a model systematic propagation, distribution and evaluation program including the genera Alnus, Thuja, Calocedrus and Cephalotaxus due to the adaptability of these species to a broad range of growing conditions and general resistance to white tail deer browse.

* \$4,000.00 to The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA in support of the North American-China Plant Exploration Consortium plant exploration expedition with Xian Botanical Gardens and the Shaanxi Province Office of International Cooperation Shaanxi Province, China in 1996.

* \$5,000.00 toward the matching a Challenge Grant from the Morris Parks and Lands Conservancy and Mr. Daniel Will for the Helen R. Gardiner Propagation Unit at the Willowwood Arboretum, Chester

Township, NJ.

The Foundation is now receiving proposals for its 1996-1997 grant round. The deadline for applications is September 15, 1996. Applications will be mailed to past applicants and those who have requested forms. Others who would like additional information and/or an application form should telephone (201) 326-7610 or write to the Secretary, The Willowwood Foundation, P.O. Box 1295, Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295. Traditionally, grants range between \$500.00 and \$5,000.00. The Foundation encourages application challenge grants through non profit organizations.

Realizing the time required to prepare applications, and the intense competition for available grants, the Foundation has decided to give priority to those applications which either directly or indirectly benefit Willowwood Arboretum.

The Willowwood Foundation is a non-profit educational organization incorporated in the State of New Jersey which was established to nurture an appreciation for and a knowledge of botany, horticulture and the natural world through its support of public education, the publication of, and access to, literature relating to plant science and the development of facilities to promote use, access and information about native and exotic plants.

The Willowwood Foundation

P.O. Box 1295

Morristown, New Jersey 07962-1295

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IN MEMORIAM ROBERT K. ZUCK

Dr. Robert K. Zuck and his wife Florence were among the Foundations's earliest supporters and Trustees and contributed their time and expertise freely, not only to benefit the Foundation, but on the Committee to Save the Great Swamp, Steering Committees for various referenda to benefit the Morris County Park Commission and the Madison Borough Shade Tree and Parks Committees.

They both taught Botany at Drew University from 1946 until 1980, influencing a veritable legion of students who have perpetuated their love of plants.

It was with deep sadness that the Willowwood Foundation learned of Dr. Robert Zuck's death on February 12, 1996. The Foundation is establishing a memorial in his honor to be planted at the Zuck Arboretum at Drew University and expresses its sympathy to his family.