



# Willowwood Journal

Volume 15, Issue 3

Autumn, 2009

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  
KNOWLEDGE OF  
BOTANY,  
HORTICULTURE  
AND THE  
NATURAL WORLD  
THROUGH ITS  
SUPPORT OF THE  
PUBLIC  
EDUCATION, THE  
PUBLICATION OF,  
AND ACCESS TO,  
LITERATURE  
RELATING TO  
PLANT SCIENCE  
AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT  
OF FACILITIES TO  
PROMOTE, USE,  
AND ACCESS  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT NATIVE  
AND EXOTIC  
PLANTS.

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**PHOTO CREDITS:**  
THANKS TO:  
LESLIE ALLAIN  
D. PENNISTON

## *The Story of Willowwood...circa 1965,*

Dr. Ben Blackburn wrote an essay about Willowwood's history but we are learning much, much more due to the efforts of Marta McDowell, noted author, landscape gardener, lecturer and teacher, who has taken on a monumental task this summer to write a more comprehensive and visual history of WW, the Tubbs and Ben Blackburn via funding from the WW Foundation. She has reviewed archival and photographic material (over 1000+ photos) at the Morris County Park Commission with the help of Lynn Laffey and discovered a wonderful compilation of letters from Henry to Ben during the war years chronicling life and gardening at WW.

Marta contacted and interviewed many WW friends who knew Henry Tubbs, his adopted son, Dr. Ben Blackburn and the gardens of WW. Fern Blackburn, Ben's sister in law, has helped to identify old photos. And Marta has collected many fond anecdotes about WW's famous garden parties and learned that "Dr. Blackburn was a 'Johnny Appleseed' of ornamental plants" offering 'seeds' to many that are now 'trees' on Somerset Hill's properties.

At the Dillon Library, she delved into the Garden Club of the Somerset Hills archives and learned that Henry Tubbs was a devoted 20+ year club member, judged flower shows and organized plant sales and auctions. The Willowwood Foundation Library yielded additional correspondence and other treasures, as did the Rutgers and Drew University libraries, where Ben taught.

*This very important project is on going, and Marta and the WW Foundation would be delighted to hear from you. If you have any photos, memories you would like to share or suggestions, please contact us at 908 234 1815.*

A Sunday Walk in the Park...Meet with John Morse, Manager of Horticulture, at **2 pm, Sunday, September 27**, for a one hour tour. John will explore the highlights of the autumn gardens and plant collections and answer your fall gardening questions.

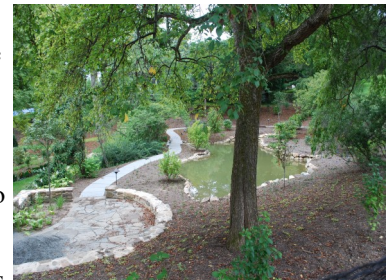
Wear comfortable shoes, dress for the weather, bring bug spray, your water bottle and don't forget your camera! The gardens' late summer and fall flowers will be in bloom and the meadows have colorful vistas.

Sponsored by the WW Foundation, the tour is offered free of charge.

However, **ADVANCE Registration is Required:** Call 908 234 1815 or email [wwfoundation@earthlink.net](mailto:wwfoundation@earthlink.net).

## **Bamboo Brook nears completion!**

While not quite ready for visitors due to the *unusual weather* since Spring, the reflecting pools and waterfalls are finished, grading is just about done and the horticulture staff are returning the gardens to an Italian classical style with a twist of native American plants and local materials that Martha Brookes Hutcheson, one of the first landscape architects in the country and former owner, loved to use. The farm adjoins neighboring Willowwood and Mrs. Hutcheson and Henry Tubbs were great friends and plant enthusiasts. Donated to the Morris County Park Commission, Bamboo Brook's restoration, weather willing, should be completed in September with a grand 'gardens in bloom' opening for the public next Spring. The WW Foundation, many private donors and the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust funded this extensive restoration.



## WW PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL BOXWOOD TRIALS.

In July, Plant Records Curator and Propagator, Pamela Wilson evaluated 12 different boxwood cultivars currently grown at Willowood as part of the National Boxwood Trials. Started in 1997 this program requires participants to evaluate boxwood cultivars on their ease of cultivation and aesthetic appeal. As of 2006, it involved 51 evaluators, including botanical gardens, nurseries, and private boxwood enthusiasts.

Boxwood was a favorite of Ben Blackburn's and he developed an extensive collection at WW which includes 29 cultivars today. It is a popular landscape plant because it is evergreen, easy to grow, and resistant to deer browse. Boxwood are featured at WW throughout the gardens and are tagged for easy identification.

### *Thank you to our Donors: Spring ~ Summer, 2009*

Chester Garden Cub  
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Lea Allen Gebauer *IHO* Jay Jordan & The Lotus Pool

We value your support so highly! Through your contributions we funded garden restoration and new planting projects and continue both our Oral History Project and restoration of the Tubbs' and Dr. Blackburn personal photos and archived materials.

We are also very grateful to company employees who use a Corporate Match Program to double their gifts.

And as the 2009 Centennial year comes to an end, remember December 31, if Tax Planning plays a pivotal role for you.

The Willowood Foundation is recognized by the I.R.S. as a non profit 501 © (3).

### *Party'ers Wanted!*

Trees with twinkling lights surround the Stone Barn & your very own private tent with room for 200 + dancing, creating a magical setting for any "very special" event.

The Seasonal Gardens are glorious and perfect for photo ops. Willowood is the setting for *your perfect party*—wedding, birthday, anniversary, etc.

Call Chris Knox at the MCPC 973-326-7619 or email [cknox@morriskparks.net](mailto:cknox@morriskparks.net)

The "*Lilac Party*" gratefully recognizes our supporters:

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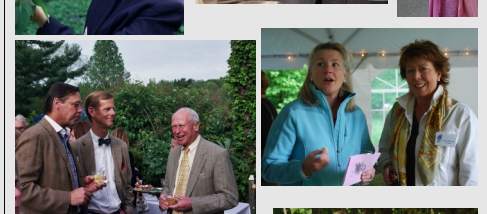
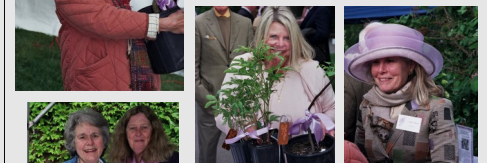
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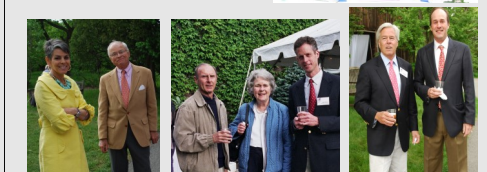
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### *The 2009 Lilac Party*





## Garden Labels Available:

Just gotten a compliment on your garden and can't remember what variety that gorgeous plant is? Well, The Willowwood Foundation has the answer. Place your Order for permanent aluminum arboretum plant tags customized for your garden. Blending into the landscape, unobtrusive yet an enduring record of gifts of love, hard work and beauty, these labels can be shipped within 10-15 days.

Label size: 1 3/4 x 3 1/2 inches with 4 lines of personalized information.

Cost: \$20.00 for a minimum order of 10 labels includes shipping.

Email: [wwfoundation@earthlink.net](mailto:wwfoundation@earthlink.net)

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## INTERNS EXCEL AT WW

This summer, WW had the good fortune of employing three fine individuals as part of the Horticulture Intern Program. 2008 Intern **Tim Dunham** returned to Willowwood for another summer and plans to complete a horticulture degree at the County College of Morris this fall. **Jeanne Lardino** began her horticulture work in 2008 at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum and transferred to Willowwood this season. Completing the team was **Dave Dempsey**, a horticultural newcomer, who is also a student at the County College.

Tim, Jeanne, and Dave participated in all aspects of arboretum maintenance and in August, took a field trip to Fernbrook Nursery in Bordentown to learn more about propagation.

***The Gardens look great!  
Thanks for your help this summer!***

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## Interested in Seed Collecting?!

Would you like to learn how to save the seeds from this year's wonderful plants for next year's garden? Learn the secrets of seed collecting plus proper fall garden maintenance. Get your gloves and help! Learn the top gardening tips from the professionals!

The Willowwood planting beds must be readied and spring bulbs planted now for the glorious color you will see next Spring. And seeds collected for our annual Index Seminum project.

Join the Willowwood Volunteers Wednesdays from 9 AM to Noon. Wear Gardening clothes, bring gloves and a snack.

Call Kate Gutierrez, Horticultural Volunteer Program Specialist, at 973-326-7266.



## Arboretum News:

Paul W. Meyer, *Director of the Morris Arboretum*, recently toured WW "behind the scenes" with his 2009 Interns and John Morse. These interns do a year long course of study focusing on practical training and tour private and public gardens. *And they brought gifts from Tony Aiello, The Gayle E. Maloney Director of Horticulture and Curator, Morris Arboretum:* A willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) raised from seed collected in Bucks County, PA and a heartleaf hornbeam

(*Carpinus cordata*). Tony noted that the oak is from a northern population and looks forward to seeing how well it performs at WW. The hornbeam, one of Tony's favorite plants with spectacular golden yellow fall color, was grown from seed he collected in 2005 in the Ganzu province of China. (a trip which was supported by a WW Foundation grant).

**Daffodils:** John Morse and his staff will start planting bulbs in late October and he plans to expand last year's very popular Royal Purple Crocus collection with 3000 additional bulbs. This past Spring while the narcissus were in bloom, Ray Rogers, WW Trustee and unelected President of the NJ Daffodil Society reviewed 12 different cultivars in that collection. WW's narcissus are grown in large flowing shaped areas with timed blooming so visitors can enjoy almost a month of bloom. By the way, if you would like more info on daffodils or coleus, Ray will be signing his book *Coleus: Rainbow Foliage for Containers and Gardens* on Coleus Day, Saturday, September 12th at Atlock Farm.



**Magnolias:** In mid April, John Beirne, Magnolia Expert, funded by a WW Foundation grant, started verifying one of WW's key collections—the Magnolias. Despite unfriendly weather, he was able to photograph and catalog over 25 specimens with many of the blossoms at their peak. As a member of the Magnolia Society, it is critical that all of the plantings be verified as well as evaluated for health and vigor. While the WW collection is diverse and varied, John will present a plan to rejuvenate or replace some specimens and has offered suggestions for new acquisitions to add different blossom color, fragrance and blooming habit adding further diversity and interest to the collection. As a result, five new interesting varieties, also suggested by Magnolia expert Rich Hesselein, Pleasant Run Nursery, were planted. They won't bloom until 2011 but we will keep you posted on their progress. John Beirne is also targeting unplanted areas in the Arboretum with John Morse for future plantings to broaden the spread of the Magnolia collection.

**Rhododendron schlippenbachii (Royal Azaleas):** The gentle slope north of the private drive has been planted with fragrant pink, Spring blooming Royal Azaleas which were grown by staff at WW from seed from the Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford Ct., which is well known for its extensive rhododendron and azalea collection.

**Plant gifts:** While WW does not generally accept plants as gifts, two new and interesting specimens were recently accepted. Ms. Francine Gradone donated a unusual green leaf form *Fagus sylvatica* (European Beech) which was planted in the eastern Hacklebarney Field. While WW has several specimens of this beech in the Collection, this unusual variety adds diversity and we are delighted! Also, a lovely lavender flowering *Lagerstroemia 'Muskogee'* (crepe myrtle) was planted alongside the back fence bordering the *Rosarie* Garden. This donation by the Albrook Parents Association in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Rupert, will provide a colorful backdrop to the Mediterranean inspired garden through late Fall as it grows (eventually to almost 30' high!).

**High-Speed Fiber Optic:** In July, underground cable connections to the Tubbs House were installed improving staff PC's with high-speed internet, e-mail, automatic backups of the plant records database, plus enhanced telephone service. Three telephone poles closest to the Stone Cottage were removed as well.

**The Willowood Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 218**  
**Gladstone, NJ 07934**  
**908-234-1815**  
**www.willowoodfoundation.org**

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## *Save the Dates...*

Willowood *Autumn* "Walking Tour" - September 27, 2 PM

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*Lilac Party Gala* — May 16, 2010

## Wish List for the Willowood Arboretum

Help us to maintain the horticultural legacy of Henry and Robert Tubbs by funding one of the Willowood Foundation's initiatives at the Willowood Arboretum. Our ongoing projects include the Rosarie Garden Restoration, funding the horticultural interns who bring interested new eyes and very helpful hands to our gardens, enhancing the meadows with Spring daffodils and review and restoration of our primary collections.

We are currently working on plans for some very special projects to celebrate this beginning of our next 100 years. But we need your help! As a fellow gardener or as one who simply treasures our living museum, please contact the Willowood Foundation at 908-234-1815 or via email [wwfoundation@earthlink.net](mailto:wwfoundation@earthlink.net) if you would like to support the arboretum through one of these opportunities.

**Go Green!** If you would prefer to read this newsletter via email in a pdf version or if you have changed your mailing address, *Please let us know:* [wwfoundation@earthlink.net](mailto:wwfoundation@earthlink.net). Thank you for your help!

**YES! I want to help the Willowood Foundation continue the work of Dr. Ben Blackburn and Russ Meyers.**

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Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to The Willowood Foundation.

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