

# *‘It looks like it would take you by the hand’*

WILLOWWOOD ARBORETUM, NEW JERSEY

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Willowwood Arboretum is an enchanting public garden in Morris County, New Jersey. Shaped by two men and saved by two others, its intimate gardens, broad meadows, woodlands, twisting brooks and unique plants whisper stories to those who will listen.

Approaching it on the long drive that ushers visitors in from Longview Road, one has the impression that Willowwood rests comfortably in a large, shallow bowl. Geologically, it lies on the edge of the Piedmont. It leans into the neighbouring Highlands region, which starts next door along Bamboo Brook.

The original house on the property was built around 1790 for a farming family named Kenneday. It is still known as horse country, though the annual Far Hills Hunt is now a steeplechase – without the fox – benefitting local charities. As suburban railway lines pushed into the countryside in the late 1800s, wealthy New Yorkers began to settle in the area. They could follow their pursuits, equestrian, horticultural, and otherwise, but still access the city for business and the social season.

In 1908 two brothers, Robert and Henry Tubbs, went on a quest from their Manhattan apartment to find a country place. They boarded the train and travelled through the newly-opened Hudson Rail Tunnel to New Jersey. Disappointed in a grand estate they were shown in Gladstone, Hal Tubbs pointed to the farmstead surrounded by fields in a neighbouring valley. He said to the estate agent, ‘I want a place like that one. It looks like it would take you by the hand’.

That beckoning farm turned out to be on the market. Huge weeping willows lined the brook, swaying towards the frame house and its cluster of outbuildings. The brothers knew they had come home. They christened their new property Willowwood Farm.

Like so many relocated gardeners then and now, the Tubbs

brothers brought some of their plants with them. From their family home in Pennsylvania, they transplanted much-loved shrubs: roses, both ‘Harison’s Yellow’ and a moss rose, a *Kerria japonica* and a white lilac. Bob dug a division of metake bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*) and planted it along the kitchen window. From Grandfather Tubbs’s summer cabin came hemlock and white pine seedlings. They expanded the farmhouse to accommodate their parents and built a new greenhouse and potting shed.

So what do we know of these two horticulturally-inclined siblings?

Of Robert Tubbs, we have a sketchy outline. For his entire career, he worked at the Corn Exchange Bank, now part of J. P. Morgan Chase, in New York City. In September 1922, Robert Tubbs drafted a memorandum to the federal tax authorities. Of Willowood he explained, ‘Unable to give gross income as no record has been kept – expenses always exceeded returns. Farm never been operated on strict commercial basis. Was bought primarily [on account of] health of brother who lives there, together with Father & Mother the year round. Have ¼ interest in same and these items represent money spent and over which I have received no return. I do not live there and only go there occasionally.’ He crossed out ‘occasionally’ and substituted ‘on holidays and week-ends’.

On those holiday and weekend sojourns, Robert Tubbs often brought plants. One can picture him scouring the markets of New York City’s gritty flower district, just west of Sixth Avenue between 26th and 29th Streets. He was looking for something unusual to add to Willowood’s incipient collection. *Cedrus atlantica* and *Taxodium distichum* arrived that way, adding to the Japanese-inspired garden that was forming around the lower pool. Robert must have been a sight, struggling off the Friday afternoon train at Gladstone station with his latest acquisitions.

Woody plants, especially unusual trees and shrubs, were Robert Tubbs’s particular passion. He corresponded with Samuel Parsons, founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects, about grafting his bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). Through correspondence with Dr Frederick Coville – recognised for his work on

domesticating blueberries – Tubbs acquired a franklinia early in the 1930s.

Robert Tubbs had a long and productive exchange with the Arnold Arboretum near Boston, Massachusetts – with both its founding director, Charles Sprague Sargent, and his successor as Keeper of the Arnold, Ernest Henry Wilson, the famed British-born plant explorer. Surviving correspondence between Tubbs and Wilson starts in 1926. Two years later, Tubbs travelled to the Arnold to meet Wilson and stayed for two days collecting seeds. The following spring, Wilson sent a *Davidia*, the still-rare dove tree, to Willowood. Packages continued to arrive from Wilson through the remainder of the 1920s. The last letter is dated 1 October 1930, just two weeks before Wilson, aged fifty-four, and his wife Helen were killed in a car crash in Worcester, Mass.

Along the upper brook, Robert Tubbs planted many specimen trees from the Arnold and elsewhere. Its soil conditions and protected swale made it among the best-growing areas on the property. The spiny China fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*), the white-flowering mountain halesia and the pink-flowering *Kobus magnolia* are a few of the dozens of specimens that he planted in what became known as the Treasure Trove.

Robert's interests complemented brother Henry's skill in design. While Robert focused on laying out a collection of trees and larger shrubs, Henry made garden rooms adjacent to the house, painting on these canvases with pleasing combinations of smaller plants, especially herbaceous perennials.

If you could pick a permanent dining companion from any time in history, Henry Tubbs would be an excellent choice. He had a talent for happiness. Affable and gregarious, his conversation sparkled, whether face-to-face or on the pages of his letters. He loved plants and he loved people, books and travel, art and antiques, nature and the land. Often photographed smoking a pipe or cigarette, the aroma of tobacco seems to waft in around him.

After graduating with a degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Henry Tubbs worked briefly in publishing. When he died, aged eighty, his obituary read, 'he

retired from Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, more than fifty years ago'. He was engrossed in gardening. A contemporary wrote:

His interest in horticulture is sensuous as well as intellectual . . . His taste and feeling for the fitness of things is apparent everywhere. There is that 'careful-carelessness' which makes his garden seem as though it had arranged itself – fallen into place, as it were. And that is of a high order, as any landscape architect will tell you.

When someone asked who designed the grounds at Willowood, Henry answered, 'Nature. I'm only the head gardener'.

His circle included many gardening enthusiasts. Mr Henry Tubbs is listed as an active member of the Garden Club of Somerset Hills. The ladies of the club evidently accepted Mr Tubbs, their sole male participant, with good grace. The club included Martha Brookes Hutcheson, who lived at Merchiston Farm, next door to Willowood. Hutcheson was among the first women landscape architects in the United States. Like Henry Tubbs, she trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, though their tenures did not overlap.

Tubbs and Hutcheson had shared interests in plants and design, and they became fast friends. In good weather, one or the other would cross the bridge over Bamboo Brook and walk across the fields for a visit. Of one instance Tubbs wrote:

We talked on many interesting topics, investigated the plants in the conservatory very thoroughly and when she started back at 4:30 I joined her. You can well imagine it was an interesting walk. Crossing the field of corn stubble we discovered wonderful designs made by the root formations of last year's stalks. Reaching the bridge we hung over its rail studying the ice patterns along the brook-bank.

The brothers added the conservatory mentioned in this letter around 1930. The twelve-by-twenty-five-foot Lord & Burnham structure was a welcome addition to the west side of the house. Orchids and potted lemon trees bloomed there, their fragrance



The fountain in the conservatory.

drifting in when the parlour door was open. An Arts & Crafts wall fountain with the head of a fish still adorns the conservatory wall. Water drips from the fish's mouth, adding a pleasant sound to the space. The fountain is one of the many exquisite pieces that Tubbs – Robert or Henry, or both – acquired from the Moravian Tileworks in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. (Henry Chapman Mercer, proprietor of the Tileworks, was a vigorous proponent of the American Arts & Crafts movement and is said to have been friends with the family.)

Around the time the conservatory was added, Hal and Bob met Ben Blackburn, a young landscape gardener hailing from upstate New York. In the 1930s, Rutgers University appointed Blackburn to the state’s Agricultural Extension Service and its faculty. He also lectured for garden clubs on subjects ranging from Botany for the Home Gardener to the whimsically-titled Scotch Heathers for Yankee Gardens. He hosted New York radio station WOR’s *Garden Radio Club* and published his first book, *Your Garden This Week*.

In December 1937, the postman delivered the following letter from Willowood to Blackburn’s residence in New Brunswick, New Jersey:

How about spending the week-end of December 11–13 with us? We will enjoy having you. We don’t dress for dinner – so no dinner clothes. I may have a couple of kindred souls in for lunch on Sunday but we will let you live our *family life*. The seeds are planted with a prayer to the garden gods. Hoping to see you rolling down our drive Saturday afternoon Dec 11th and with good wishes.

It was signed ‘Cordially, Hal.’

By 1941, Robert Tubbs, now terminally ill, had moved to Willowood full-time. Blackburn had formed a close friendship with both brothers. Perhaps the three of them were sitting in the parlour on 7 December 1941 when regular Sunday afternoon broadcasts were interrupted with the stunning news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In July 1942, two months after Robert Tubbs died, Blackburn took a leave of absence from Rutgers to join the army. When he enlisted, he wrote his home address ‘c/o H. Tubbs, Hacklebarney Road, Gladstone, New Jersey’.

After officer training, First Lieutenant Blackburn was assigned to 9th Coast Artillery as Camouflage Officer at Fort Banks in Massachusetts. The quartermaster issued Blackburn a crosscut handsaw and a crowbar as well as belt pistol, carbine, cot and typewriter. Through 1943, Blackburn and his men worked on concealment plans for the Boston harbour defences.

In the archives there is a cache of brilliant letters from Hal to Ben, a diary of sorts, capturing day-to-day life during the war.



Henry Tubbs and Ben Blackburn on the Veranda.

Tubbs writes of rationing and blackouts and, of course, the gardens. In one letter he recounted changes to the terrace:

I have cleared up the fallen cherry – that is, all save a bit of the imbedded stump. When we have decided what tree to place on the spot where the cherry stood, we can plant also a pine of the type which will drape this ‘bump’, featuring it – or perhaps a cotoneaster of spreading tendencies. I have already written you of the removal of the vitex arch and I have gone on removing. Pine branches, which were causing serious interference with the *Malus atrosanguinea*, have been removed, giving this poor one-sided tree a chance to develop along more balanced lines. The Spanish oil jar with its enfolding viburnum now stands out – a real picture. The yellow foxgloves at its base are happy. Along the edge of the terrace was much self-planted material and a great deal of this I have removed. Near the flight of steps down from the garden there is more removal necessary; but I will leave that till you are here and we can consult together.

It is the gardener's unending drive for improvement, leading in turn to future plans.

The newly promoted Captain Blackburn joined the occupying force in Japan in 1945 after the surrender. In addition to his military duties, Blackburn found the time to visit gardens and meet Japanese gardeners. He befriended several, including Yoshiharu Matsumura of the Nikko Botanical Garden, with whom he corresponded for the rest of his life.

In 1946 when Blackburn left the army, he moved back to Willowood. Henry Tubbs encouraged him to matriculate at Rutgers to pursue his doctorate. He was awarded his Ph.D. in Botany in June 1949, with his family from New York and Henry Tubbs in proud attendance. Dr Blackburn's dissertation, 'Keys to the Woody Plants of New Jersey Exclusive of Conifers', included many of the fine specimens that surrounded his new home.

To achieve that 'careful carelessness' that is still prized at Willowood, Blackburn spent much of his spare time and attention on the gardens. Dozens of photographs show him planting and pruning. Dr Arthur Tucker, a botanist, remembered, 'I was always impressed by the "Englishness" of the place. One thing that sticks in my mind is the cleaning of the shovels and rakes at the end of the day with an oiled piece of burlap, almost like a Japanese tea ceremony.'

In the 1940s and 50s, Henry Tubbs was handing over many of his garden duties to Blackburn and hired gardeners. Blackburn introduced a new friend, Russell Myers, to Willowood. He had met Russ at Rutgers. After the war Myers was accepted into the landscape architecture programme at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He had a strong letter of recommendation from Dr Blackburn who by then was professor of botany at nearby Drew University.

With advancing age, Henry Tubbs saw Blackburn as the rightful protector of Willowood's future. In late 1949, the law office of Mills, Jeffers and Mountain filed papers at the Morris County Surrogate's office in which Tubbs legally adopted Benjamin C. Blackburn as his son.

Tubbs still enjoyed life: strolling the gardens, taking rides



through the rolling countryside, listening to classical music. Mrs Hutcheson would stop in for conversation, sometimes perching on the thyme seat at the far end of the Cottage Garden. Other friends visited. Bernard Harkness, head of the Rochester [New York] Park System, might drop by on his way home from a regional meeting. Carol Mackie (of *Daphne × burkwoodii* ‘Carol Mackie’ fame) often came for luncheon or Sunday supper, dropping off a new plant she was trialling in her garden.

In 1955 Russell Myers, now a landscape architect, returned to Willowwood, this time to stay. Two years later, the newly-formed Morris County Park Commission hired Myers as its first Secretary-Director – key to Willowwood’s future.

Henry Tubbs died of a heart attack at the age of eighty at his beloved home in 1958. The Tubbs brothers had tried for three decades – unsuccessfully and with a variety of organisations – to ensure Willowwood’s ongoing viability as a public garden. With the combined efforts of Blackburn and Myers, Willowwood finally found a permanent home as part of the Morris County Park system in 1980.

Ben continued to oversee the gardens at Willowwood. He ushered many garden clubs around the arboretum. Some groups were noteworthy such as HORTUS, a select group from New York that counted among its members Thomas Everett from the New York Botanical Garden. Other groups were more pedestrian, and on one of these a woman standing near Ben commented, ‘Isn’t it too bad trees are so messy?’ After a moment of frozen silence Blackburn, ever the gentleman, continued with the tour.

In 1986, The Garden Club of America presented Benjamin Blackburn with its Medal of Honor for distinguished service to botany and horticulture. In his usual, humble manner he told a reporter, ‘I never expected it. My career has not been spectacular. But it has been interesting. I am a behind-the-scenes person.’ And of Willowwood he mused, ‘There is so much to do. I work most every day. But the truth is, no matter how hard you work, an arboretum is never finished.’

Benjamin Blackburn died quietly the following year, still living

in what is called the Tubbs House. A fellow botanist remembered, 'Willowwood was his love. Everything he wanted to do was Willowwood. It was his life.'

The work of Robert and Henry Tubbs and Ben Blackburn give the gardens at Willowwood a patina, a sense of place that has built up over time. To the front and back of the house, the gardens are set on an axis connecting exterior to interior, setting up garden rooms that flow naturally from the centre hall. This visual corridor is also a timeline of sorts. Of the designed outdoor spaces at Willowwood, Pan's Garden was the first.

Pan's Garden is the quintessential outdoor room. The covered back terrace was the favourite spot for resting and entertaining in fine weather. Looking out from the terrace into the garden, one's eye is drawn along the central grass panel to the focal point, the statue of Pan. It is said that Henry Tubbs based his design for Pan's Garden on a Persian prayer rug.

Persian garden motifs interested Tubbs, with their fragrant flowers and mirrored planting schemes. The rectilinear, symmetrical layout of the paths and beds in Pan's Garden is like an intricate woven pattern with solid borders. In an undated notebook Tubbs wrote, 'In a good design the eye should be drawn from point to point within the boundaries of the frame and no line should be permitted to carry the eye toward the frame unless a way is provided to attract it back to the central motif of composition'. Tubbs designed Pan's Garden with this principle in mind, but narrowed the grass path as it approached the statue, a well-known trick of forced perspective.

The garden was planted out with an interwoven palette of pink, mauve and blue flowers. Lupins, *Papaver somniferum* and English daisies provided spring colour. Masses of carefully-chosen varieties of phlox anchored the border in summer. Purple, lavender and pink petunias wound among taller herbaceous perennials until frost. The picture changed every week. A railing once lined the roof of the terrace creating a second floor porch, a perfect vantage point for the garden. Lois Poinier, a noted horticulturist, remembered visiting as a child. 'The garden was enchanting,' she recalled, 'with



Pan's Garden (artist not known).

its statue of Pan. It was so silver.' The cool floral palette and border of *Stachys byzantina* glowed in the twilight. Near the terrace, the garden entrance is framed with *Viburnum prunifolium*, a favourite of the Tubbs brothers. The pair of Spanish urns stood on either side of the path, and a collection of Korean temple bells hung in the viburnum.

In 1954, Walter Ingwerson, by this time famous for his Birch Farm Nursery at William Robinson's old estate, Gravetye Manor in Sussex, visited Willowood. He later responded to a letter from 'My dear Hal and Ben':

I am glad to know that I continue to live in your memories as certainly as you live in mine. I often think of the day when I was sitting with you two . . . looking down the long, peaceful vista of your Dream Garden with old Pan in the background, the doves flitting to and fro and the tinkling of Temple Bells of the sweetest notes.

It was a happy memory. Lost in time are the inspiration, artist and provenance of the statue of old Pan. It depicts Pan's head atop a herm, a tapering column. In place by 1939, the statue represents the Greek god of Arcadia's wooded groves and glens, Spring and Nature in the guise of a god. What better deity to guard the garden path.

Following the axis from Pan's Garden back through the house and front door, one looks out onto the central path of the Cottage Garden. A decorative iron gate in a low stone wall beckons. Originally a kitchen garden, more and more ornamental plants crept in as Henry Tubbs redesigned and replanted over the years. The garden beds closest to the house overflowed with old-fashioned annuals and perennials in a Jekyll-esque style. There were tall candelabras of yellow mullein, first the Olympic species, later replaced with the improved cultivar 'Harkness Hybrid'.

But a bit of ground was always reserved for vegetables in the Cottage Garden. Henry Tubbs was proud of his tomato plants, pruning them daily to increase the size of the fruits and to keep them manageable. Regardless of his age, he never delegated this task. Today, you will still find a tomato threading its way among the flowers or a cucumber clambering up a trellis.

Leaving the Cottage Garden and walking downhill from the house, the visitor steps away from structure and formality. Water dominates. The brook next to the house was once dammed as a

millrace, the miller residing in the nearby stone cottage. The Tubbs brothers, always interested in water gardening, re-engineered its course to choreograph a sequence of quiet pools and murmuring waterfalls.

The Cypress Pool is the entry point of the Woodwalk. Its collection includes hinoki and moss cypresses from Asia as well as bald



The Cypress Pool.

cypress from the swamps of the American South. The garden is punctuated by a Japanese stone lantern. A male ginkgo raised from seed collected at the New York Botanical Garden in 1910 makes a pool of gold when the leaves fall in autumn.

The Japanese theme complemented the Treasure Trove plantings that took shape along the winding brook. Asian magnolias and maples prospered along Woodwalk. Rhododendrons, from the early blooming Korean species to Conewago hybrids created by Joseph Gable in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, added spring colour. American natives including *Styrax americanus* and *Aesculus parviflora* joined sapphireberry (*Symplocos paniculata*) from China and other exotic species.

The Tubbs brothers were fond of petasites, which they called Japanese rhubarb, for its large round leaves. They followed Gertrude Jekyll's advice, planting sweeps of daffodils with late-emerging ferns to cover the dying foliage.

Blackburn was enchanted with gardens during his stint in Japan, and he brought them home to Willowood in many ways. Driving through the old capital of Nikko on weekend leave, he had braked and jumped out of the jeep to dig roots from a stand of rogersia. He planted them at Willowood where they still grow, sturdy and fine.

He extended the Japanese garden with features such as the bow bridge, in the so-called Do-Bashi style, constructed with stone from the property in the early 1950s. It wasn't easy getting the wheelbarrows full of masonry supplies along those winding paths into the dell, but the result was worth the effort. Friends contributed ornaments to the Japanese garden, including a Tokugawa stone lantern originally imported to America in the mid-nineteenth century.

Walking the Woodwalk in the spring, the visitor is arrested by great swathes of *Primula japonica* and the pink haze of cherries. Magnolias bloom into the summer, and in the autumn the foliage of the 'Waterfall' and 'Ornatum' Japanese maples are cause for contemplation. Winter, Blackburn's favourite season, exposes the structure of the trees.



The Woodwalk.

Exploring other paths yields more discoveries. The Lotus Pool, first installed by Robert Tubbs for the cultivation of lotus and waterlilies, is beautifully restored. A massive fern-leaf beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia') to the east has silvery-grey bark like an elephant's skin. Mr. Tubbs's dovecote is tucked into a wooded corner, wistful for the white doves that were once its tenants. To

the west, and further north, a cedar arbour leads to Elephant Walk, a path flanked with two small stone pachyderms with energetic trunks.

While the designed gardens at Willowood get much of the attention from visitors, a principal commitment of the arboretum is to grow trees and smaller woody plants in a systematic way, inviting comparison, research and a broader planting palette for home gardeners. From the early plantings of Robert and Henry Tubbs, Willowood's plant wealth grew, often through the contribution of Blackburn's and Myers's horticultural friends. For example, American hollies were the first of the genus at Willowood, contributed by Elizabeth White of Holly Haven in Whitesbog, New Jersey.

Many other plants arrived by post. Hybridiser Frances Williams sent a note along with new hosta varieties. ('Frances Williams', named in her honour, is still a popular plant.) Seeds came, one sent in an envelope with the return address of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, another with a British postmark from the Royal Horticultural Society. The postman delivered boxed orders of plants from countless nurseries, including their friend Henry Hohman's Kingsville Nursery – known for 'Kingsville' holly and boxwood. Hohman, by the way, introduced *Acer palmatum* 'Waterfall' from cuttings sent to him by Robert Tubbs. The Waterfall maple that is so splendid next to the Cypress Pool in all seasons is the type plant, parent to all others of this named cultivar.

Another cherished plant that arrived at Willowood from the Arnold Arboretum, though via a circuitous route, is the *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, or dawn redwood. In 1943, a Chinese forester returned from a trip up the Yangtze River with a live branch of a plant that was known to science only through the fossil record. Financed by the Arnold Arboretum, C. J. Hseuh of the Central University in Nanking returned over the next few years to this far corner of north-east Szechwan to collect herbarium specimens and seeds. The Arnold Arboretum sent a batch of seed to James Clark, long-time supervising horticulturist for Princeton University in 1948. The precious seeds germinated readily, sprouting, in Clark's



words, ‘like hair on a dog’s back’. Clark planted them in a variety of locations around campus and gave the rest away to horticulturists along the East Coast, including Dr Benjamin Blackburn. One of those seedlings, planted along the brook near Willowwood’s stone cottage, is now the New Jersey champion, the largest specimen in the state calculated by height and girth.

There are collections of *Acer* and *Quercus*, *Cornus* and *Salix*, *Prunus*, *Magnolia*, and more. A massive display of *Syringa* inspired a Tubbs-era lilac party tradition that continues today, though sadly skipped this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finally, viburnum merits a mention. The genus was a special favourite of both Tubbs brothers. If you type ‘Viburnum Willowwood’ into your search engine of choice, you will find many listings for a hybrid bred by Henry. Of this project, Blackburn wrote:

A single seedling was raised from a cross made by Henry Tubbs early in the 1930s by brushing pollen from flowers of *Viburnum rhytidophyllum* over blooms of *Viburnum lantata*. The three plants involved are still in the plantings around Pan’s Garden, though crowding has made it necessary to cut all to the ground to enforce renewal and more shapely specimens. The hybrid seedling was given a horticultural name when it was pointed out that it differed favorably from the earlier hybrid of this same parentage, probably made in Holland in the 1920s.

He described cultivar’s flowers as ‘not showy’, but blooming steadily with an abundance of fruit.

Today’s entrance to Willowwood Arboretum is unobtrusive. Beyond the gate, one gasps at Willowwood’s sweeping meadows. Bluebirds and flycatchers cruise over grasses and wildflowers in their season. Butterflies congregate on their chosen plants in summer and autumn. At dawn, the dew clings to the plants, replaced by the frost in winter. Once pasture for neighbours’ cows, today the meadows are cherished for their beauty and wildlife habitat. Mowing is carefully managed. Moving slowly along the gravel drive, vistas open up. Vignettes are revealed – willows in winter with their

bright bark, the fall colour of larch and sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) set off against dark junipers.

The gardens have changed over time, but the horticultural intent at Willowwood is to honour the spirit of the place and its founders with every change made. If you sit on the veranda and look down the allée in Pan's Garden, you might expect Mr Tubbs to ask if you'd like a glass of iced tea.

An active propagation programme continues the tradition of the Tubbs brothers and Dr Blackburn. A peek into the hoop house reveals rooted cuttings and germinating seed trays. For almost thirty years, it was the province of Wisley, the yellow tabby cat. Wisley slept on the propagation benches, earning his keep as the master of Willowwood's rodent population.

There is no vast car park or large visitors' centre, nor are there plans to add them. Willowwood is best approached quietly, unfolding its secrets one by one. In the 1940s, early in the process of turning his home into a public garden, Henry Tubbs painted this quote from novelist George W. Cable on a display sign:

A garden should be owned, not to be monopolized, but to be shared, as a song is owned, not to be hushed, but to be sung; and the wide giving of its flowers and plants are two ways in which a garden may sing or be sung.

Photographs by Molly Adams courtesy of  
Morris County (New Jersey) Park Commission.