

EDITH J. CARRIER

ARBORETUM™

AT JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



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From The Director

The quiet of winter is upon our homes and the forest now. Recalling the fullness of fall and all that was so alive then, compared to the current retreat of green, I remember what a banner year it was for mushrooms. An amazing assortment popped up from under the earth last season! We had more diversity and variety than we've seen before, confirming the wonder of life living beneath our feet that so often goes unnoticed and that matures to its full glory only when conditions are perfect.

While the mushrooms were popping up everywhere, another abundance continued until frost. A plum-leaved azalea, Rhododendron prunifolium, generally blooming during early mid-summer, continued its beautiful rosy coral-red show of trumpets into August, and then kept right on beaming color until the end of summer and on through October, with new blooms appearing each week while the fall leaves were in full show!

Gone are fall colors and the ground is cold, but human creations continue on. I am happy to announce that the pond loop of our accessible trail construction is coming to completion in January, weather permitting. And the tree terrace construction outside the Frances Plecker Education Center has commenced, continuing through the winter and into spring.

Now the soft hush of winter bids us to settle and find stillness within. Like the bare bones of the forest and the landscape, pare down to your simple essential form with time for quiet inner reflection while adopting the rhythm of the oak trees. Peace be with you.

Winter Newsletter

JANUARY 2012

“This piece of land, this arboretum, is dedicated to stabilizing and balancing the lives of those who visit it. This space is also dedicated to the needs of ordinary people who seek renewal... who simply need an infusion of nature to better handle their days.”

—Dr. Ronald Carrier,
JMU President Emeritus



Jan Sievers Mahon



SINGING THE PRAISES OF THE

EJC Arboretum

The EJC Arboretum draws visitors of all ages and from places far and near. Here's a sampling of what some of our visitors have shared with us.



Photos by EJC Arboretum Staff

- * "Couldn't be more beautiful." — Jackie Grayson, Berne, N.Y.
- * "We are so happy we came! It is truly beautiful, inspiring and one of the nicest places we've been."
— Brendan and Nicole, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- * "Thank you for growing such a beautiful garden, and providing JMU students a place to enjoy nature's finest of spring."
— Sarah and Harold Munson, Churchville, Va.
- * "Beauty of such a place lives on in our hearts."
— Edith and Jack Hildebrand, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- * "Amazing!" — Thanh-Thuy Nguyen, Vietnam
- * "I really enjoyed the walk through the beautiful trails."
— Barnie MacFadden, Vancouver, Canada
- * "It was my first time! Splendid!" — Sam Pierce, Dallas, Texas
- * "My blood pressure went down when I entered the gate. Very peaceful and just what I needed today!"
— Jerry Hudder, Pennsylvania
- * "You have beautiful trails. Love the scenery... the best paths ever!" — Morgan, Eastern Shore
- * "Heaven on Earth ~ how beautiful this is! ~ keep up the good work." — Deb Booth, Waynesboro, Va.
- * "I got a little lost and the Universe sent me here, so I'm thinking I didn't really get lost at all. Today is my 63rd birthday and this beautiful, peaceful place is a most spectacular gift. Thank you." — Nadine Chase, Boston, Mass.
- * "I have come here countless times, but no matter the season the beauty stays the same. Summer, winter, spring or fall this place is peaceful, untouched, and ever beautiful! This place is the ONE place I love to come when I need to feel at peace or need a break from work, school or anything else."
— Jess Kropp, Harrisonburg, Va.



The Sleeping Forest: The Kiss of Dormancy

'Tis the season to witness the form and structural beauty of trees. As living water tubes, trees carry water up and down their trunks and, with freezing temperatures they are like icicles growing from the ground up. How is it that in wintertime the trees don't freeze and crack? The answer lies in what happens in the fall, when trees are in a state of active change and reorganization. This process, called dormancy, is a mechanism for trees to survive the cold that begins as soon as the average air temperatures fall to 45 degrees and the hours of daylight decrease. The tree, sensing the reduced amount of light and governed by genes and many enzymes, moves leaves into senescence and begins to shut down the active phase of growth.

Trees move the sugars, or carbohydrates, from the leaves into the stems and wood tissue and store it there, where it serves as an anti-freeze to protect the tree from a solid freeze. Leaves fall off so that water doesn't evaporate through them. Roots take up and store sugars to be used when the soil is too cold to carry on active processes. These sugars can also supply needed energy for the tree to break dormancy after winter concludes.

Concentrations of sugars inside the cells of the stems and trunk increase, thereby lowering the freezing point of the water in the cells. As temperatures drop, the water outside of these cells freezes first; this freezing causes some heat, which even further protects the cells with higher sugar concentrations. Twig temperatures can rise several degrees during this process. While still active at a slower rate, the tree is in a waiting or resting state; waiting for conditions to return that promote growth.

This mechanism of dormancy allows trees to adapt to cold temperatures and is also necessary for their survival. Most trees need at least 1000 hours of cold (equivalent to 1.5 months), before they can break dormancy and resume active growth again. If there isn't a dormant period, eventually the tree will die prematurely. For many trees, the end of dormancy is an ideal time for pruning. The tree, less likely to be shocked by sudden wounding, will heal faster upon its return to active growth.

Appreciate the necessity of winter while marveling at the dormant trees; enjoy the season!



Photo by EJC Arboretum Staff

UNDERSTORIES

Photo by EJC
Arboretum Staff

Redeeming Landscaping Planting Natives for Sustainable Ecologies

The 2012 Frances Litten Botanical Lecture brings nature home to the landscape around your house! Gardening times have certainly changed. Today's gardeners can shop from the Internet to national chain home improvement garden centers and bring beautiful, insect-resisting plants and trees from around the planet into their suburban gardens. While most gardeners want insect-free gardens, Dr. Doug Tallamy teaches how to attract them! Tallamy, who will speak at the 2012 sixth annual Frances Litten Botanical Lecture, will explain why a bug-free garden is bad for the environment.

Tallamy teaches how gardeners can help native wildlife through sustainable planting design using native plants that support native insect life, benefitting regional wildlife while beautifying home gardens. Native bugs need native plants. Gardeners will leave the Frances Litten Botanical lecture

with a heightened appreciation of their local insect-plant interactions. Gardeners learning to host native insect residents will aid beneficial habitats for native insect-eating birds and mammals! Come to learn, come to be entertained with Tallamy's humorous lecture style, and come to marvel at Tallamy's amazing photography of insects portraying their beauty and importance in a new light. Bring your copy of his book, [Bringing Nature Home](#), or purchase it there, and take home a signed copy with the author's signature.

"The annual Frances Litten Botanical lecture offers the public a front-line learning opportunity, equipping everyone from pro landscapers to hobbyist gardeners with the latest botanical scientific knowledge," says EJC Arboretum Director Jan Sievers Mahon.

The Frances Litten Botanical Lecture is free, held March 1, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the JMU Festival Conference Center. Parking in Festival lots is also free. Registration is not required. Be there! You'll never think, "Ugh bugs!"

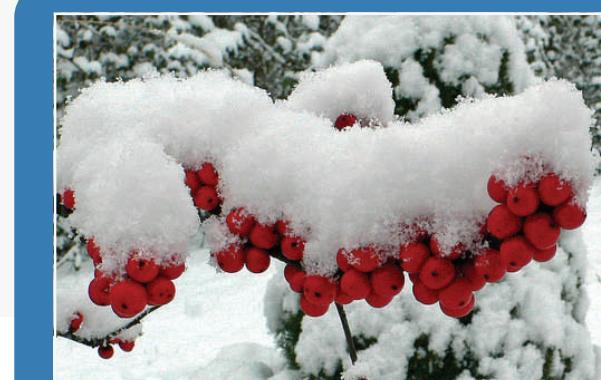


Photo by
[TheGardenLady.org](#)

2012 Calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information or to make reservations for events, go to the EJC Arboretum website (www.jmu.edu/arboretum) or contact us at 540-568-3194. Note that within selected calendar items there is a link to more information and to the registration page for the event. Also, a complete listing of all events scheduled for the next 12 months can be found at the website's [Calendar of Events](#).

* Monthly Art Exhibits *FPEC during weekday business hours. January, photography by Evan McGrew. February/March watercolor and pencil botanical paintings and drawings by Christine Andreae FREE.

* Feb. 12: [Valentine's Day Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides](#). 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. \$10 per adult, \$7 per child, \$58 for private carriage. (Carriages seat 6 adults.) Romantic horse-drawn carriage rides the Sunday before Valentine's Day. Advance reservations required: email turnbugl@jmu.edu or call 540-568-3914.

- * Feb. 12-14: [Valentine's Day Walk-in Indoor Blooming Plant Sale](#). 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the *FPEC. Choose from a selection of blooming potted plants that your Valentine will enjoy throughout growing season.
- * Feb. 14: [Valentine's Day Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides](#). 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. \$10 per adult, \$7 per child, \$58 for private carriage. (Carriages seat 6 adults.) Romantic horse-drawn carriage rides by moonlight. Advance reservations required: email turnbugl@jmu.edu or call 540-568-3914.
- * Feb. 15: [Winter Ferns Terrarium Workshop](#). Noon – 1:30 p.m. in the *FPEC. Participants will create a fern terrarium using a covered two-gallon apothecary jar. Jan Sievers Mahon, EJC Arboretum Director, will lead the workshop, along with a lecture about ferns and their environment and how to best take care of your fern terrarium. Call to reserve at 540-568-3194 or on-line at jmu.edu/arboretum.

* March 1: **Frances Litten Invitational Memorial Dinner**. JMU Festival Ballroom, by invitation only. A gathering of EJC Arboretum friends, donors, volunteers, JMU and Arboretum staff and faculty, and Litten family members to honor colleague and friend Frances Litten, educator, flower show judge, and early Arboretum Board Member and volunteer.



Photos by EJC Arboretum Staff

CONTINUED EVENTS

* March 1: [Frances Litten](#)

Lecture: Bringing Nature Home. JMU Festival Ballroom, 7 p.m. FREE. Doug Tallamy, a 30+ year professor and author of over 70 research articles, is the Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology and director of the Center for Managed Ecosystems at the University of Delaware. Dr. Tallamy will discuss how both professional landscapers and hobbyist gardeners can better understand the many ways insects interact with landscape plants and how those interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. His book *Bringing Nature Home; How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, published by Timber Press in 2007, was awarded the 2008 silver medal by the Garden Writer's Association.

* March 17: [St. Patrick's Live](#)

Highland Pipes. 5:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. from the lawn area of the EJC Arboretum. Live performance by piper Fred Holbrook of Massanetta Springs Conference Center, with a JMU student violinist performing Celtic fiddle 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 pm. FREE.

* March 17: [St. Patrick's Day](#)

Dinner Lecture. 6:15 p.m. cash

bar opens, 6:30 p.m. dinner served, 7:30 p.m. lecture. In the *FPEC. Offered annually, this event allows guests to enjoy Irish cuisine and brew and a virtual botanical tour of a new region of the globe with a guest lecturer each year. Per person cost covers three-course dinner, tax, tip, beverages, and a libation of choice. Advanced reservations required seven days in advance. To reserve, call 540-568-3194.

* March 28: [Birding Workshop.](#)

Noon – 1:30 p.m. in the *FPEC. Diane Lepkowski, avifauna notable and photographer of Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley avian species, songbirds to raptors, gives an annual spring lecture. In partnership with the Rockingham Bird Club. This workshop partners with guided birding trail walks in April.

* April 3, 4, 5, Tues - Thur:

Children's Art Workshop. Two sessions offered morning session 10-noon and afternoon session 1-3 p.m. in *FPEC. The workshop offers children's education on plant identification as well as basic botanical drawing. \$35 cover charge includes all materials.

Registration required: email turnbugl@jmu.edu or call 540-568-3914.

***FPEC is the Frances Plecker Education Center, found on the grounds of the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at 780 University Boulevard, Harrisonburg, VA 22807**

The EJC Arboretum was voted the "Best Place to Relax" and "Best Place to Propose" in the annual reader survey by the Harrisonburg *Daily News-Record*.



Photos by EJC Arboretum Staff