



Liquid Sunshine

Newsletter of the Marsh Botanical Garden

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New Faces in the Garden

Our Horticultural Interns have begun their summer employment, both starting on Monday, May 17. Michelle Brickner and Betsey Enenbach are both graduate students who matriculated on May 24 (Marsh Gardens graciously allowed them to take that day off), Betsey in Latin American Literature, and Michelle from Fine Arts. Their hard work and enthusiasm have already paid dividends here, and we look forward to a great summer. Though they have some hefty shoes to fill—Leslie Kuo and Ginger Stevens having moved on to greener pastures—it looks like Michelle and Betsey are very much up to the challenge. We have included their families in our mailing list so that they can keep up with the doings of their daughters and the Marsh Botanical Garden.



Michelle Brickner on left and Betsey Enenbach with tools during the planting of the first annual bed.

Trouble in Paradise

As if we didn't need a stark reminder of the harsher side of the wide world, we have had two separate thefts from the Gardens in the last three weeks. First, we lost two lawn mowers as a result of a daring mid-day event during the week. The thieves apparently were looking for lawn mowers, because they passed over our roto-tiller, the pressure washer and several other power tools at the time. Then last Sunday, in the early afternoon, we lost the mower that we bought to replace the stolen ones, the roto-tiller and the pressure washer. We are scrambling to make do until the end of the fiscal year, but the loss of these tools impacts us adversely, as well as the folks at the Sustainable Food Project, who were hoping to borrow the tiller. New security measures are in the works.

The Tea Season Is Upon Us...

Our liaison with the Sustainable Food Initiative, in the capable hands of Josh Viertel and Melina Shannon-DiPietro with enthusiastic help from a great bunch of students, has paid dividends in the loan of tools, labor and expertise. On Friday, May 28, we had this hardy bunch show up for tea on a rainy morning, which gave us a chance to meet the few students who had braved the weather, give our usual well-choreographed tour, compliments of Dave Garinger, and have a wee bite of something to eat and a bit of hot tea. We look forward to another season of Friday tea events. If you would like your group to come down for a visit, please don't hesitate to write or call the contacts below, and we would be glad to have you.

Liquid Sunshine is a publication of the Marsh Botanical Garden at Yale University. The title comes from a common nickname for rain, because we only have time to write on rainy days.

Marsh Garden extends from Prospect Street to our office on the corner of Hillside Place and Mansfield Street. The Garden is open to the public and we welcome you to visit anytime.

Director	<i>Timothy Nelson</i>
Manager	<i>Eric Larson</i>
Horticulturist	<i>David Garinger</i>
Steering Committee	<i>Mark Ashton, Mary Helen Goldsmith, Michael Donoghue, Timothy Nelson</i>

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Doings in the Garden...

As is our custom, it being the second year we have engaged in this exercise, we asked the summer help to design and plant an annual border near the greenhouse complex. The installation went swimmingly, and Michelle's art background was put to good use. Of course, Betsey had opinions and contributions throughout, and this garden displays a cohesion, depth of thought and planning that is surprising in novice garden designers. I encourage everyone to visit and view this garden, as well as the other annual and mixed borders in the growing area. We have planted a few perennials in some of the beds as well, along with our usual mix of tropicals, summer bulbs, vegetables and other surprises.

We planted a very young White Oak (*Quercus alba*) near the front of Marsh Hall in memory of Robin Winks, Professor of History, who passed away in April of 2003. Although I didn't have the honor of meeting this luminary, I was impressed by the reflected light from the family, friends and colleagues who showed up on a drizzly day in May to plant the tree and remember him in words. There is no greater or longer-lasting gift than that of a White Oak, a long-lived tree native to the eastern half of North America. We have several memorial and commemorative trees planted at Marsh, tokens of the love and respect for colleagues and friends. Our gift tree program includes money left in trust for the care of the tree in the future, and funds for plaques and other signage to identify the tree, the donors and the memory.

As well, this spring we planted a young Purple-Leaf Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Riversii') and one apple tree (*Malus* x 'Summer Rambo') as gifts from the graduating class of the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Abby Weinberg conceived of and arranged for this wonderful gift, one we hope will be repeated every year, as we strive to re-forest Marsh Gardens. It is my intention to under-plant many of the larger trees on our grounds, to ensure that in the far future, a large canopy tree will be in place to replace any senescent or dangerous trees. If this had been done with the Beeches that were taken down this winter, we would not have such a gaping hole in the landscape now.

Alumni weekend for the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies found us planting an additional tree as a gift for the occasion. *Nyssa sylvatica*, or Sour Gum, is a native tree with crisp shiny green leaves during the summer that emerge from the bud stage as a nice red, and then in the fall, the autumn

coloration is one of the most spectacular. It grows to a medium height of around fifty feet (although the national champion in Urania, Louisiana, tops out at over a hundred).

Featured Plant

Yellow-wood, or *Cladrastus kentuckea*, is another tree native to the eastern half of North America, more specifically from the mountain regions of North Carolina, west and north through Tennessee, Kentucky and the Midwest. Various sources put its range in a wider band through the upper Midwest, and indeed it is hardy into Minnesota. It is nowhere a common tree, but can be found in rich well-drained soils in river valleys, and along ridges and slopes where limestone predominates.

The landscape value of this fine small flowering tree (to fifty feet: national champion is over seventy feet high, in Cincinnati, Ohio) is in its summer flowering stage, when the pea-shaped flowers are borne in white terminal panicles. These flowers are wonderfully fragrant. If they are short-lived, they at least make up for it with a heady fragrance that entices honey bees to work heavily during late May and early June when the trees are in blossom.

The family is Fabaceae, although it used to be listed as Leguminosae.

Our specimen has interesting calluses on the bark, which I have seen on a few other older Yellow-Wood trees, but I'm not sure of the reason for this. On many of the other older trees that I have seen, the bark is smooth, grey and almost Beech-like. If there is any information out there on this, I'd appreciate hearing back. It could be calluses from wounds, or branch removal, or perhaps cankers from some disease, although no serious diseases have been associated with this species that I can find.

The shape of the tree is low branching, with a broadly rounded crown. The leaves are a fine green, with minimal fall color change, although some light yellow coloration may occur. The stems and smaller branches are thin and somewhat delicate. This gives us the descriptive genus name, from the Greek, *klados*, a branch, and *thraustos*, fragile. The species name comes from the center of its native range, while the former species name, *lutea*, is a Latin adjective for 'yellow,' referring to the heart wood, which is a clear yellow. This also is the source for the common name, Yellow-Wood.

These lovely trees are excellent for the smaller home property, as a specimen or in groupings. They are somewhat rare in the nursery trade, but can be found at those nurseries that specialize in native plants.



Cladrastus in bloom. Photo shows the size and nature of the tree, along with a hint of the long white panicles. The fragrance is intoxicating.



The trunk of our Cladrastus is a callus on a callus. This distinctive feature is not common in the species.