

THE HOLMDEL ARBORETUM:
SERVING THE CITIES OF
NEW JERSEY ^{1, 2.}

by David C. Shaw, Superintendent, Shade Tree Commission of
Monmouth County, New Jersey

1. The Holmdel Arboretum story begins in the spring of 1963, when the members of the Monmouth County Shade Tree Commission conceived the idea that an arboretum of ornamental trees and shrubs and a display of conifers and broad-leaved evergreens would be of great interest and value to homeowners in our country.

2. The County had just acquired park land in Holmdel that would be well suited for such a project. Permission was requested by the County Shade Tree Commission from the County Department of Parks and Recreation Commission to have an area set aside in this park for an arboretum--and it was granted.

3. Twenty-two acres of partially wooded rolling countryside which bends into a 4-acre lake was selected for the project.

4. Mr. Robert B. Clark, then of Rutgers University, was asked by the Shade Tree Commission for assistance in planning the Arboretum. Mr. Clark inspected the proposed site and outlined the basic plan which is still being followed today with only slight alterations.

5. Now that the Shade Tree Commission had a plan to work from, the nurserymen of Monmouth County were invited to a dinner meeting to discuss our proposal for the development of an Arboretum. We asked them for recommendations for the initial planting. The nurserymen were enthusiastic about our proposed project and eager and willing to supply, by donation, plant material for the Arboretum and to give helpful advice when needed.

1. Metro. Tree Impr. Alliance (METRIA) Proc. 1:18-21,1978.

2. Editor's note: This presentation consisted of a series of slides depicting the growth and development of the Holmdel Arboretum.

6. By the end of the fall, **1963** planting season, many flowering cherries and crabapples were donated. Our crews in most cases dug and planted the trees in the Arboretum.

* American hollies were highly recommended. 'Old Heavy Berry' and 'St. Mary' were the first cultivars to be planted.

8. The next few years were spent planting cultivars of crabapples, plums, almonds, and cherries. Along the lake, a 600-foot expanse of weeping cherries (Prunus subhirtella pendula (Maxim.), Tanaka and Prunus 'Beni-higan were planted to take advantage of reflections from the lake. This planting was dedicated to the memory of Mr. William Duryee, the Commission's first chairman.

9. Groupings of pines were planted as a background for the Prunus collection. These pines included Japanese black, Japanese red, Austrian, Himalayan white, Scots, and eastern white pines.

10. We now have a collection of more than **30** varieties and cultivars of Prunus.

11. To travel to the crabapple collection, we proceed over a small rustic bridge. During the spring, thousands of daffodils provide a carpet of yellow throughout the ravine that divides the Arboretum into two distinct sections.

12. Beyond the bridge and to the rear of the ravine, a rhododendron and azalea garden has been started. Mr. Wells, from Wells Nurseries is assisting us with this project and has already donated hundreds of plants for the gardens.

13. About **30** varieties and cultivars are now included in the crabapple collection, and we expect to have 50 extra when it is completely planted.

14. A collection of flowering shrubs with attractive berries has been planted for autumn interest--and to attract birds.

15. The holly collection today includes numerous cultivars of American and Japanese hollies.

16. Franklinia is also displayed in the holly collection. This tree blooms from August until the first frost. It is a native American tree that has been extinct in the wild for more than 100 years.

17. To the left of the holly collection, we see the area where specimen landscape trees are planted; among which are the Amur cork tree, 'Bradford'pear, Zelkova, and many others. More trees will be added to this section next spring.

18. We have a fine collection of hawthorns, and many are recommended for street planting.

19. We now see the River's beech (Fagus sylvatica 'Riversii') that was planted in memory of Laura Prout, the Commission's second chairperson.

20. The next area is the site for the Jane Kluis Memorial Dwarf Conifer Garden. This garden has been donated by nurseryman Rudy Kluis, in memory of his wife.

21. This collection consists mainly of dwarf conifers, with some larger evergreens and deciduous plants for contrast. The garden has just been started and will take several years to complete.

22. A rare dwarf golden oak from Holland is one of the many rare trees in this garden.

23. A collection of true cedars, donated in memory of David Rossheim of Holmdel by his friends and neighbors, is well established. This collection includes Atlas blue cedar, cedar of Lebanon, and deodar cedar. We have recently added a Kashmir cedar, a Cedrus brevifolia, and an upright Atlas cedar-- all donated by Mr. Kluis.

24. Another part of the Arboretum is the Handleman Garden. This garden has about 60 species, varieties, and cultivars. Mr. Handleman had previously donated plants to the Arboretum and was pleased with our efforts.

25. Mrs. Minna R. Handleman knew how much her husband loved his plant material around his home, so she donated it to the Arboretum. This collection simulates the exact planting design around their home in Colt's Neck. A large sourwood in this garden was planted in memory of William Porter by his sons Bill and Tom.

26. Below the Handleman Garden is a collection of witch hazels, cotoneasters, fringe-trees, sourwoods, and a large collection of junipers.

27. A magnolia and dogwood collection is also established on one side of the Handleman Garden. Several cultivars of these genera are being used for street tree planting by Shade Tree Commissions.

28. An English holly collection is planned for the rear of the Handleman Garden. Early plantings have been more successful than we expected. Osmanthus is also included in this collection.

29. Ground covers of juniper cultivars have already been established. These are used in island plantings along roads and highways. They seem to tolerate winter salting for snow removal better than other ground covers we have used.

30. We also have a nursery where we raise young plants and grow them until they are large enough for the Arboretum and our own street tree planting operation. This saves us considerable money and we are also able to raise materials not available in the commercial nurseries.

31. The Arboretum was dedicated in **1965** to the nurserymen of Monmouth County, who so willingly donated more than 500 species, varieties, and cultivars, and to Mr. William Duryee, the first chairman of the Monmouth County Shade Tree Commission.

32. The nurserymen's plaque includes the names of Wells Nursery, Princeton Nursery, Monmouth Gardens, Alvarez Nursery, Bobbink Nursery, Manalapan Nursery, Kluis Nursery, Laurel Hill Nursery, F & F Nursery, Moreau Plant #1, Holly Acres, Lovetts, Bucklin Farm Nursery, Turner Bros. Halka Nursery, Moreau Landscape Service, George Ehrle Nursery, and Bulk's Nursery.

33. The latest large specimen tree we transplanted to the Arboretum was a dwarf weeping Japanese red cutleaf maple. The tree was over 100 years old and had been in its previous location for 80 years.

34. The tree and ball weighed over **6** tons, and we used three layers of burlap and a mile of twine. Chet Halka of Halka Bros. donated his services to insure that the tree lived during transplanting.

35. The Holmdel Arboretum is open all year from 8:00 a.m. to dusk and is free to the public. It is located in Holmdel Park, Longstreet Road, Holmdel, New Jersey. Information can be obtained from the Offices of the Monmouth County Shade Tree Commission. The Arboretum is just one of the many services rendered by this Commission.