wandering through winter
The ancient link between nature and poetry is on display in *Letters & Leaves*, the holiday exhibit at the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum. Besides great poetry, this exhibit is also about collaborating with U-M faculty, interns, and other students. Summer intern Andrew Miller—himself a budding writer—worked with faculty and Arb and Gardens staff members to put together a compelling group of nature-inspired poems from around the world. The poems are on display in the conservatory at Matthaei and in the Arb. We also reached out to community members and to U-M students for nature photography and for poetry contributions, both of which are part of the exhibit. Visitors will also enjoy a poetry reading by Keith Taylor and Lorna Goodison on December 10, seasonal flower display, a community of faerie gardens and houses, a visit with Father Christmas on December 20, and holiday items in the Garden Store at Matthaei. Through January 4. Free.

**Peony Disaster Preparedness**

Deep inside a sandstone mountain on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen the Svalbard Global Seed Vault houses seeds from agricultural crops against loss in other seed banks around the world. A project with a similar goal—minus the mountain romance—is underway at the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden. A key objective for the multi-year renovation project at the Peony Garden is a plan for preservation of the historic plants. That involves sending a portion of our peonies off far and wide for safekeeping in other collections. In the fall of 2014 Matthaei-Nichols staff dug up hundreds of peony plants with the intent of distributing them to gardens and peony societies in North America in the event of an unforeseen calamity in our garden. Some of the peony varieties are no longer available in the trade or simply not offered by commercial growers, making a dispersed survival plan paramount. Another goal for the garden restoration: create a genetic family tree as a benchmark for identification. Working collaboratively on that project are Matthaei-Nichols curator David Michener, student intern Richard Bryant, and Belarusian visiting scholar Nastassia Vlasava and her colleagues.

Students in Osman Khan’s Contemporary Sculpture 260 class pose in front of the troll in the fairy and troll hollow in Nichols Arboretum. The troll is made of stacked Styrofoam slices coated with a thin cement skin. The hair is carved and painted Styrofoam. If the troll can be restored to its original condition after being vandalized (see story, right), plans include bringing it to Matthaei and other parts of campus.

**Editor’s note:** We’re sad to report that just before Thanksgiving the troll was vandalized. Staff members found her toppled over and missing a foot and an arm. We’re hopeful that whoever did this will return the pieces so the troll can be restored. In the meantime, a discussion is underway about what will happen next. Stay tuned as the story of the troll continues!
Roads, Buildings Upgraded
New gardens and display spaces naturally draw attention to themselves, but we’ve also been quietly undergoing some significant behind-the-scenes infrastructure improvements in recent years. In the Arb, the final installment of a multi-year road improvement project was underway in early November. This involved repairs to Nichols Drive and the area below the Heathdale. At the Gardens, workers toiled much of the summer to repair and repoint the cinder block walls of the greenhouses. By the time September rolled around the walls were done and it was on to the installation of new electrical service to the building at Matthaei (pictured at left). We also got a nice aluminum accessible ramp off the west entrance doorway and an accessible bathroom off the west lobby.

Shakespeare’s Garden
A born nature geek himself, Shakespeare took much inspiration metaphorically and literally from things that grow (“that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet” —*Romeo and Juliet*). In celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of Shakespeare in the Arb in 2015 we’re mounting a special conservatory exhibit called *Shakespeare’s Garden*, featuring plants and flowers that appear in works by the bard. Along with the plants and their relevant quotes we’ll have photographs from past Shakespeare in the Arb productions, artist David Zinn’s playful Shakespeare in the Arb posters, and a selection of costumes from Kate Mendeloff’s Residential College productions. March 27 through May 3. Free admission.

Grant Greenlights Boardwalk
A $4,000 Better World Grant from Ford Volunteer Corps paved the way for a 140-foot boardwalk on Fleming Creek Trail, the main path on the east side of the creek. The grant funds the cost of material for the new boardwalk, which will make the trail accessible year-round. If you’ve walked this picturesque 2-mile loop—which winds through diverse habitats such as conifer forest, woodlands, and open fields—you’ve also noticed that it can be nearly impassable after a heavy rain or spring thaw. And the trail’s proximity to the creek puts it at risk of collapse due to erosion. Volunteers from Ford together with Matthaei-Nichols staff and volunteers started work on the boardwalk in October, with work completed in November. The project is one of several to be conducted over the next few years along the trail.

Reader Center Hot Spots
Along with lightning-fast internet via fiber optic cables at the Arboretum Reader Center, the public can now enjoy access throughout the building and patio by connecting to the MGuest wireless network. Thanks to funding from the provost’s office and a collaboration with the Ronald McDonald House next door the fiber optic connection was finished last August. Outdated infrastructure meant slower speeds and glacial download times. Now, according to Arb & Gardens IT manager Adam Ferris-Smith, “the fiber connection is very fast—just as fast as the connections at Matthaei or anywhere else on campus.” Next up: Full wireless at the Gardens, scheduled for installation no later than June.

Spring Burn Season Begins
Fire in a populous area is a bad thing. But fires in forests and grasslands occur naturally and help in their rejuvenation. Prescribed, or controlled, burns in one sense mimic the natural fire cycle. While controlled burning might sound like a modern invention, indigenous peoples in pre-settlement North America used fire as a land-management tool. Today the prescribed burn is a key component of our ongoing land-management and stewardship efforts to encourage native ecosystems and minimize the impact of invasive species. If you’d like to participate as a volunteer, contact our volunteer coordinator at 734.647.8528. For general information, contact our natural areas manager at 734.274.1809. Or simply visit on a prescribed burn day to watch and see how it works. Prescribed burn season begins March 23.

Matthaei Open 1/1/2015
Call it a New Year’s resolution or simply a nice tropical getaway on a day a lot of other places are closed. However you look at it, a visit to the conservatory at Matthaei Botanical Gardens is a great way to start the new year. Open Thursday, January 1, 10 am-4:30 pm.

Transitions
This fall membership manager Andy Sell entered the master’s program in landscape architecture at the U-M School of Natural Resources and Environment. As a result, Andy will be leaving Matthaei-Nichols in early January 2015. We already miss him!

Also, please welcome Gaffield Children’s Garden project coordinator Lee Bravender. Lee, who joined us September 2014, will focus on the children’s garden in a hybrid team position between the education and horticulture departments. Lee most recently worked at the Chadwick Arboretum on the Ohio State campus and has operated her own garden design and maintenance company.

Laura Mueller joined our team as the Great Lakes Gardens field tech. Laura has been working since 2002 in ecological restoration throughout the Midwest with groups such as AmeriCorps, The Nature Conservancy, and Ann Arbor’s Natural Area Preservation.

PICTURED, TOP TO BOTTOM:
Workers prepare piping for the new electrical service at Matthaei. The electrical upgrades are part of a cluster of much-needed infrastructure and grounds improvements at the botanical gardens and arboretum, including roads, building envelope repairs, and an accessible ramp at the Matthaei west entrance.

A recent production of Shakespeare in the Arb ends in the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden. Shakespeare employed thousands of nature references in his plays and sonnets. Our spring exhibit, *Shakespeare’s Garden*, celebrates the plants and flowers that appear in the bard’s works.

A boardwalk funded in part by a grant from Ford Volunteer Corps went up quickly on the Fleming Creek Trail at Matthaei. The boardwalk will allow use of the trail—which often floods in heavy rain or a spring thaw—year-round.
**Camp Winter-Break, Feb. 16–20**
Looking for a tropical oasis in town during the school break? Matthaei Botanical Gardens is your HQ for beating the winter blues. Visit the Botanical Gardens during the school winter break for guided activities and do-it-yourself fun. All guided programs 10 am–noon.

**Mon., Feb. 16**  **Self-Guided Adventure Day**
Pick up one of our backpacks full of activity sheets, magnifying lenses, paper, and crayons and head out to create your own adventure. **FREE; self-guided.**

**Tues., Feb. 17**  **Windowsill Wonders**
Get a jump on spring with a windowsill garden plot. Learn the basics of seed starting, decorate a clay pot and then plant a few seeds that can be transplanted outdoors later or kept inside. **$5.00/child 15-YE-02**

**Wed., Feb. 18**  **Tree Tales**
What would we do without trees? They provide lumber, food, shade on a hot day, and beauty. Each type of tree is unique and there are special clues to discovering the identity of each. Explore trees from Michigan and around the world and make a tree cookie from a slice of a tree branch. **$5.00/child 15-YE-03**

**Thurs., Feb. 19**  **Biomes of the World - Self-Guided Adventure**
Explore the conservatory and challenge family and friends to make it around the world with our self-guided scavenger hunt! **FREE.**

**Fri., Feb. 20**  **Flavor-Filled Friday!**
Delicious fruits and flavorings flourish in the tropics. Take a guided walk through the conservatory and learn about fascinating food plants of these warm climates and then sample the flavors of the tropics. **$5.00/child 15-YE-04**

*Note: Backpacks also available for check out at the Matthaei front desk throughout spring break (Feb. 14–22).*

---

**Make Way for Spring! School Break Getaway April 6–10**
Join us for week of fun during school spring break. All programs 10 am–noon at Matthaei. Fees include materials and activities.

**Mon., April 6**  **Is It Spring Yet?**
Grab an activity backpack and go on a self-guided hunt for signs of spring. Scavenger hunt sheets, magnifying lenses, and twig and bud detective guides will help children investigate signs of spring. **FREE; self-guided.**

**Tues., April 7**  **Windowsill Wonders**
Explore the conservatory and challenge family and friends to make it around the world with our self-guided scavenger hunt! **FREE.**

**Wed., April 8**  **Eco-Kids**
Helping reduce energy use at home and learning more about recycling and composting is a great way for kids to have a positive impact on the environment. Learn how to turn table scraps into soil through composting and make paper from recycled newsprint. **$5.00/child 15-YE-07**

**Thurs., April 9**  **Native Beauty**
Native plants are a natural for the garden. They’re beautiful and provide food and shelter for many animals, including butterflies. Learn what makes a plant native and how you can use native plants in your garden **$5.00/child 15-YE-08**

**Fri., April 10**  **Fabulous Friday**
Grab your coat, hat, and boots and let’s head outside. Explore the trails and wetlands with a guide to discover how we can be the best land stewards ever. (Rainy day alternative: Michigan ecosystems games.) **$8.00/child 14-YE-11**

---

**Little Green Thumbs**
Kids’ gardening classes at Matthaei with an emphasis on growing green things. Fees cover materials and activities.

**Sat., April 25, 10 am-noon**  **Super Seedlings**
What comes with its own coat, sleeps for months at a time and sprouts to life in the spring? Seeds, of course! Explore the amazing world of seeds and what they need to grow into healthy, beautiful flowers, fruits, and veggies. **$8.00 15-YE-10**

---

**March 7**  **Faerie Gardens and Doors Workshop**
Join us for two faerie and troll garden workshops this year. Faeries love visiting Matthaei in the winter and we love making gardens just for them. Faeries represent the beauty of the natural world and are the guardians of flower beds, woodlands, and streams. Create magical faerie gardens from natural materials to invite faeries into your yard. Who knows when they might visit! Class fills quickly, pre-registration suggested. **$10.00/child 15-YE-06**

**March 14**  **Faerie Gardens and Doors Workshop**
Back by popular demand! Join us for the second of our annual faerie and troll garden workshops. Class fills quickly, pre-registration suggested. **$10.00/child 15-YE-06**
Winter 2015 Community/Adult Programs and Classes

All programs and classes unless noted are free and take place at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. * denotes offsite program.

For complete program information visit our online calendar at mbgna.umich.edu or the “Come Learn” section of our website.

JANUARY

Thurs., Jan. 1, 10 am-4:30 pm
Open New Year’s Day:
Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Sun., Jan. 11, 2-5 pm
Mini Vanda Orchids
Presented by Ann Arbor Orchid Society
A presentation on the orchids in the Vanda, Aerangis, and Angraecoid alliances. Plus, show and tell, raffle, and orchids and orchid-related items for sale. Info: AnnArborOrchids@aol.com.

Mon., Jan. 12, 10–11:30 am
Catching Your Breath
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center
A free monthly program for caregivers of adults with memory loss. Designed for learning skills for continued health and well-being. Info and to register: 734.936.8803. Also Feb. 11, March 16, and April 15.

Tues., Jan. 13, 6:30 pm
All about Beekeeping
Presented by Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers
All invited to learn about beekeeping and pollinators. Meetings start with informal Q&A at 6:30, followed by a formal presentation of a bee-related topic at 7. Includes discussion about honeybee management, care and production, and more.

Wed., Jan. 14, 6:45-8:30 pm
Annual Seed Cleaning and Exchange
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor
Matthaei-Nichols will assist participants with cleaning the 2014 Arb and Gardens and Wild Ones seed harvests and learning about cleaning and propagation methods. Bring extra seeds to share.

Mon., Jan. 19, 7:30 pm
Rocky Mountain Botany
Presented by Michigan Botanical Club
Featuring speaker Rob Massetti.

Tues., Jan. 20, 7:30 pm
Straits Talk: Water Flow and Contaminant Hazards at Mackinac
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley
David Schwab of the U-M Graham Sustainability Institute discusses a simulation of contaminant spills from the underwater pipeline located in the Straits of Mackinac, an important link between lakes, islands, and peninsulas.

Wed., Jan. 21, 7:30 pm
Madagascar: Birds, Mammals, and Other Oddities
Presented by Washtenaw Audubon Society
Professional photographer and former Oakland Audubon president Sue Wright gives a presentation on the unique fauna of this island nation, 90% of which exists nowhere else.

Sat., Jan. 24, 1:30-3 pm
Witches’ Brooms: From the Woods to the Garden
Presented by N. American Rock Garden Society, Great Lakes chapter
Well-known gardener Jacques Thompson discusses witches’ brooms, naturally occurring mutations on tree branches that show congested or otherwise dwarfed growth and form one of the foundations of the dwarf conifer industry. Info: reznicek@umich.edu.

FEBRUARY

Sun., Feb. 8, 2-5 pm
Orchid Growing Workshops
Presented by Ann Arbor Orchid Society
All invited to learn about beekeeping and pollinators. Meetings start with informal Q&A at 6:30, followed by a formal presentation of a bee-related topic at 7. Includes discussion about honeybee management, care and production, and more.

Tues., Feb 10, 6:30 pm
All about Beekeeping
Presented by Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers
All invited to learn about beekeeping and pollinators. Meetings start with informal Q&A at 6:30, followed by a formal presentation of a bee-related topic at 7. Includes discussion about honeybee management, care and production, and more.

Wed., Feb. 11, 6–7:30 pm
Catching Your Breath
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center
See listing for January 12. Info and to register: 734.936.8803. Also March 16 and April 15.

Mon., Feb. 16, 7:30 pm
Huron/Wyandot Ethnobotany
Presented by Michigan Botanical Club & Wild Ones Ann Arbor
Featuring speaker Gerry Wykes.

Tues., Feb. 17, 7:30 pm
Native Pollinators: Creatures of Purpose, with a Sense of Place
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley
Landscape Architecture student Pete Widin explores the importance of our forgotten native pollinators as low maintenance, regionally adapted pollination resources.

Wed., Feb. 18, 7:30 pm
Birding the Great Migration in Kenya
Presented by Washtenaw Audubon Society
Birder and photographer Jerry Jourdan presents a photographic tour through the Masai Mara National Park following the zebra and wildebeest migration.

Wed., Feb. 25, 7 pm
Seasonal Bonsai Topics
Presented by Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
All invited to this monthly program on the art and practice of bonsai. Arrive by 6:30 pm to speak with members. Info: AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com.

MARCH

Mon., March 2, 7 pm
Herb Seed Giveaway
Presented by Herb Study Group
Program also includes starting herbs from seed.

Tues., March 10, 6:30 pm
All about Beekeeping
Presented by Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers
All invited to learn about beekeeping and pollinators. Meetings start with informal Q&A at 6:30, followed by a formal presentation of a bee-related topic at 7. Includes discussion about honeybee management, care and production, and more.

Wed., March 11, 6:45-8:30 pm
Pollinators and Native Plants: An Essential Connection
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor

Mon., March 16, 10–11:30 am
Catching Your Breath
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center
See listing for January 12. Info and to register: 734.936.8803. Also April 15.

Mon., March 16, 7:30 pm
It’s Just a Grass, Isn’t It?
Presented by Michigan Botanical Club
Featuring speaker Tim Walters, PhD.

Tues., March 17, 7 pm
Landscaping with Rhododendrons
Presented by Ann Arbor Rhododendron Soc.

Tues., March 17, 2015, 7:30 pm
Travelers of the Upper Peninsula Flyway
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley
A slide show by wildlife photographer Paul Rossi of his views from almost a decade of time spent in the eastern Upper Peninsula, well-known for its bird-migration pathways.
Wed., March 18, 7:30 pm
Birding, Bonding, and Big Days: Notes from Camp Colorado 2014
Presented by Washtenaw Audubon Society
Michigan Young Birders’ Club co-founders Matty and Benjamin Hack recount their experiences from their week at the American Birding Association’s Camp Colorado.

Sat., March 21, 10 am-4 pm
Display and Sale: African Violets, Streptocarpus and other Gesneriads
Presented by Mich. State African Violet Society
Also includes a large selection of rare European and Russian African Violets and Streptocarpus and a free seminar at 11:30 a.m. on successful growing techniques.

Sun., March 22, 2-5 pm
Orchid Topics
Presented by Ann Arbor Orchid Society
Also included: a show and tell of members’ orchids in bloom, orchid raffle, and orchid plants and supplies for sale.
Info: AnnArborOrchids@aol.com.

Mondays, March 23–May 18
Mindfulness-Based Dementia Care
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center
A new, free, 7-week program specifically designed for family caregivers of persons with dementia. Learn how the practice of mindfulness can help you cope with the challenges and stresses of dementia care, and also greatly improve the experience of the person in your care. For class times or to register call U-M Memory Connection at 734.936.8803.

Wed., March 25, 7 pm
Julian Adams Discusses Black Pine
Presented by Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
All invited to this monthly program on the art and practice of bonsai. Arrive by 6:30 to speak with members.
Info: AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com.

Fri., March 27–Mon., May 4
Exhibit: Shakespeare’s Garden
A Shakespeare in the Arb 15th anniversary exhibit featuring plants and flowers that appear in the works of Shakespeare. Also includes artist David Zinn’s playful Shakespeare in the Arb posters, photographs of performances throughout the years, and costumes from director Kate Mendeloff’s productions. Free admission.

Sat., March 28, 9 am-noon
MiSo Ambassador Training
Volunteers are trained to greet and guide visitors to points of interest, weekends May–October, in the Michigan Solar House (MiSo) at Matthaei, a solar-powered home designed and built by a team of students and faculty.
Info: yorabhi@umich.edu.

Sat., March 28, 1:30-4 pm
2015 New Dahlia Introductions
Presented by Michigan Dahlia Association
Program includes a video at 1:30; member auction of 2015 dahlia tubers (2:30).
Handouts included. Info: 734.429.5796.

APRIL

Mon., April 6, 7 pm
How to Start an Herb Garden
Presented by Herb Study Group
A discussion on creating an herb garden that includes annuals, perennials, biennials, and culinary herbs.

Wed., April 8, 6:45-8:30 pm
Garden Design with Native Plants
Presented by Wild Ones Ann Arbor
A presentation by Drew Lathin of Creating Sustainable Landscapes and Rick Meeder of Ecological Edge.

Sat., April 11 & Wed., April 15, 9 am-4 pm
Garden Ambassador Training
Provides an introduction to the Matthaei-Nichols Visitor Services Dept., best practices for working with the public, and an overview of the most popular points of interest in the display gardens and beyond.
Info: yorabhi@umich.edu.

Sun., April 12, 1:30-4 pm
Annual Dahlia Tuber Sale
Presented by Michigan Dahlia Association
Program includes a video presentation on growing and caring for dahlias. Handouts included. Info: 734.429.5796.

Tues., April 14, 6:30 pm
All about Beekeeping
Presented by Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers
All invited to learn about beekeeping and pollinators. Meetings start with informal Q&A at 6:30, followed by a formal presentation of a bee-related topic at 7. Includes discussion about honeybee management, care, and production, and more.

Wed., April 15, 6–7:30 pm
Catching Your Breath
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center

Wed., April 15, 7:30 pm
My Really Big Year
Presented by Washtenaw Audubon Society
Washtenaw Audubon speaker Michael Kielb recounts his Big Year, in which he cataloged every living thing he could find during 2014, including butterflies, moths, plants, fungi, and more. Includes photographs.

Fri.–Sun., April 17–19, 10 am-4:30 pm
Ann Arbor Orchid Festival
Presented by Ann Arbor Orchid Society
A three-day orchid extravaganza with orchid displays, orchids in bloom from orchid societies, and ten regional commercial vendors participating. Tropical and hardy orchids and orchid-growing supplies and related items for sale. Free informational talks and demos.
Info: aaosonline.org or call the Matthaei front desk (734.647.7600) for more information.

Mon., April 20, 7:30 pm
Birding, Bonding, and Big Days: Notes from Camp Colorado
Presented by Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
Matty and Benjamin Hack recount their experiences from their week at the American Birding Association’s Camp Colorado.

Tues., April 21, 7:30 pm
Alternate Energy: The Data & the How
Presented by Sierra Club Huron Valley
Bill Kidd and Alan Richardson, who have owned and operated hybrid cars, solar panels, and geothermal heating systems for several years, describe the experience and financial consequences of owning these devices.

Wed., April 22, 7 pm
Seasonal Bonsai Topics
Presented by Ann Arbor Bonsai Society
All invited to this monthly program on the art and practice of bonsai. Arrive by 6:30 pm to speak with members.
Info: AABonsaiSociety@gmail.com.

Tues., April 28, 6-7:30 pm
Peony Ambassador Training
Ambassadors greet and guide visitors to points of interest in the peony garden during peak bloom.
Info: yorabhi@umich.edu.

MAY

Sun., May 17 (afternoon)
Caregiver Wellness Day
Presented by Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center
This free program for learning skills essential for continued health and well-being is designed for caregivers of adults living with memory loss. Registration required. Program schedule TBA; call Mich. Alzheimer’s Disease Center for times. To register: 734.936.8803.
Get Involved! Volunteer at Matthaei-Nichols
Our volunteer program offers diverse opportunities to learn, connect, and give back. As a volunteer, you’ll develop new skills while supporting our mission of education and stewardship through hands-on service. We welcome new volunteers to join us in every season at the Arb & Gardens. Preregistration required for all trainings. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information: 734.647.8528; yorabhi@umich.edu.

Visitor Services – Ambassador Trainings (preregistration required)

Michigan Solar House Ambassador Training
Sat., March 28, 9 am–noon, Matthaei
The Michigan Solar House (MiSo) is a solar-powered home collaboratively designed and built by a team of students and faculty from U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning for the 2005 Solar Decathlon in Washington DC. Now located at the Botanical Gardens, MiSo fosters public awareness in solar technology and serves as a laboratory for ongoing research. Volunteers are trained to greet and guide visitors to points of interest in the house on weekends, May–October.

Garden Ambassador Training
Two options: Sat., April 11 or Wed., April 15 (both at Matthaei), 9 am–4 pm
Our garden ambassadors enjoy the beauty of Matthaei’s display gardens while inviting visitors to take a closer look. Training provides an introduction to the Visitor Services Dept., best practices for working with the public, and an overview of the most popular points of interest in the display gardens, Gaffield Children’s Garden and beyond. We seek volunteers with a love of learning and interest in working with a diverse population of visitors, including children and families. Monthly garden tours/talks are led by our horticulturists throughout the season. Shifts are available daily, May–October.

Peony Ambassador Training
Tues., April 28, 6–7:30 pm, Arb/Reader Center
Join Arb & Gardens Curator David Michener to learn more about the largest public collection of heirloom herbaceous peony cultivars in North America. Ambassadors greet and guide visitors to points of interest in the peony garden during peak bloom time. The training session includes an overview of the peony collection history, horticultural basics and tips for working with the public. Ideal volunteers will have a genuine interest in the collection and an ability to work independently with a diverse array of visitors. Evening and weekend shifts available late May/early June.

Fall 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Gathering
A huge thank you to our volunteers and staff in celebration of another abundant year of volunteer contributions at the Arb and Gardens! On a mild October day volunteers got into the harvest spirit with donuts, cider, cookies, and chili.

Wow! Our volunteers work an impressive number of hours each year. Take a look:

- 388 regular volunteers logged 10,565 hours of service.
- 817 volunteers helped with one-time only group workdays (a total of 3,117 hours!)
- 342 volunteers logged 1,237 hours with our student programs Cultivating Community and Campus Farm

Grand Total: 1,547 Volunteers, 14,918 Hours!

Counterclockwise from top left:
Volunteer coordinator Yousef Rabhi warms up the crowd; volunteer Tom Gaffield gave a spirited pep talk; staff members showed off their creative flair with artfully arranged displays of fall flowers; quite a crowd!
Why Kids Need Nature
With her sights on the big picture, a dedicated docent aims to keep kids connected to nature.

Volunteer Ann Abdoo has always appreciated the value of a walk in the woods. Especially if children are part of the journey—and learning about the deep connections among all living things. The long-time Arb and Gardens docent feels so strongly about the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum role in children’s education that she made a place in her estate plan to help us continue that work.

Foremost are the links kids make. “It’s such a benefit for children to see how an actual forest fits in with their current school curriculum,” she says. “And it helps them understand the importance of and need for forests throughout the world.” For some of the families, a class trip to Matthaei-Nichols might be the first time they’ve ever visited a forest or had a guided tour of the woods, says Abdoo.

Children are fearless about soaking up new information and telling the world about it. “They’re always excited, ask lots of questions, and tell you how they feel,” says Abdoo. One time, she recalls, “a child came up to me toward the end of the tour and said, ‘This is the third time I’ve been here, but I always learn something new!’ Another time a child amazed me when she said, ‘This has been the best day of my life!’”

Abdoo says that as part of the U-M system, the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum provide unique places of learning for its students. “But as more and more natural areas are developed, the Arb and Gardens may also come to play a much larger role as ‘places of preservation and experiential learning centers for the general public.’”

A Study in Success
As departing membership manager Andy Sell pursues a master’s degree in landscape architecture he recalls his intern experiences at Matthaei-Nichols and their life-shaping role in his efforts to connect people with nature.

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum: What brought you here and what appealed to you about the Arb and Gardens?

Andy Sell: I started as an education intern in May 2007 in my third year at Michigan after having interned at Glacier National Park in Montana as an interpretive ranger. I was eventually hired in 2009 as manager of the membership program. I didn’t know a lot about the Arb and Gardens as a student but I was attracted by its mission—caring for nature and enriching life.

MN: If the mission spoke to you, how did that and your work here shape your worldview or philosophies today?

AS: One of the most important aspects of any interns’ experience here is that they get to create a project and direct it through the entire process, start to finish. The tree tunnel in the Gaffield Children’s Garden? Modeled, designed, and constructed by a Gaffield Children’s Garden Intern. Hundreds of trees planted in the Sam Graham Trees and Trail? Accomplished by our Trees and Trails Interns. No coffee errands for interns here! As for the meaning of its mission in my life, Matthaei-Nichols has shaped my understanding of the crucial roles public gardens and green spaces play within a community.

MN: For a student, then, why is contact with nature important?

AS: From learning about complex ecological processes, to appreciating the profound health benefits of parks or the creativity that begins with playing in the woods, it’s imperative that students of any background have at least a basic understanding of the importance of nature in our lives. Almost anyone can tell you their memories of camping, going to their city park, or playing in their family garden. Our internships reconnect students to these places and give them greater context to why nature affects us so deeply.

MN: Can you share some of your future plans?

AS: Our director Bob Grese and our curator David Michener have both inspired me to continue my education in landscape architecture and pursue my fascination with the roles public gardens play in our society. Ultimately, I plan to pursue a doctorate degree, teach, and mentor students in the field of landscape architecture, and, one day, help shape the discussion about the future of public gardens and parks as a director or curator.

Membership at a Glance
As our 40th anniversary membership campaign wraps up, the numbers are in and they are impressive! Thanks to everyone for your support.

Member numbers & levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>November 2013</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Tree</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefactor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director’s Circle</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A nearly 20% increase in membership dollars

Membership at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013 revenue</th>
<th>2014 revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Tree</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefactor</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director’s Circle</td>
<td>$130,600</td>
<td>$159,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A nearly 20% increase in membership dollars

And Families Benefit, Too

More and more families are discovering the benefits of getting into nature, especially at the Arb and Gardens. That’s certainly reflected in the growing numbers of members who choose the Family Tree-level of support or upgrade from an individual or couple level.

As of November 2014 the number of Family Tree-level members was 342. That’s a nearly 90% increase from the 2013 level of 187. Of those 342 members, 205 are new Family Tree members and 137 are Family Tree-level renewals, while 42 upgraded from the individual and couple levels. Thanks for your support!

Family Tree members enjoy 6 free youth and family program passes, $65 off birthday party programs, plus all the core membership benefits such as free parking and privileges at participating gardens around the country.

Above: Ann Abdoo; right: Andy Sell.

A Study in Success
As departing membership manager Andy Sell pursues a master’s degree in landscape architecture he recalls his intern experiences at Matthaei-Nichols and their life-shaping role in his efforts to connect people with nature.

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum: What brought you here and what appealed to you about the Arb and Gardens?

Andy Sell: I started as an education intern in May 2007 in my third year at Michigan after having interned at Glacier National Park in Montana as an interpretive ranger. I was eventually hired in 2009 as manager of the membership program. I didn’t know a lot about the Arb and Gardens as a student but I was attracted by its mission—caring for nature and enriching life.

MN: If the mission spoke to you, how did that and your work here shape your worldview or philosophies today?

AS: One of the most important aspects of any interns’ experience here is that they get to create a project and direct it through the entire process, start to finish. The tree tunnel in the Gaffield Children’s Garden? Modeled, designed, and constructed by a Gaffield Children’s Garden Intern. Hundreds of trees planted in the Sam Graham Trees and Trail? Accomplished by our Trees and Trails Interns. No coffee errands for interns here! As for the meaning of its mission in my life, Matthaei-Nichols has shaped my understanding of the crucial roles public gardens and green spaces play within a community.

MN: For a student, then, why is contact with nature important?

AS: From learning about complex ecological processes, to appreciating the profound health benefits of parks or the creativity that begins with playing in the woods, it’s imperative that students of any background have at least a basic understanding of the importance of nature in our lives. Almost anyone can tell you their memories of camping, going to their city park, or playing in their family garden. Our internships reconnect students to these places and give them greater context to why nature affects us so deeply.

MN: Can you share some of your future plans?

AS: Our director Bob Grese and our curator David Michener have both inspired me to continue my education in landscape architecture and pursue my fascination with the roles public gardens play in our society. Ultimately, I plan to pursue a doctorate degree, teach, and mentor students in the field of landscape architecture, and, one day, help shape the discussion about the future of public gardens and parks as a director or curator.