



# Friends of the Arboretum NewsLeaf

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## Our New Logo

We're excited to share a new logo and fresh colors to better reflect our mission and impact. The circular mark represents the canopy of a forest, with individual trees coming together to contribute in unique ways. The natural colors can be found throughout the woods, prairies, and gardens of the Arboretum. Thanks to David Kargol for developing the logo and palette and to Bridget Brown for helping our communications team in the application of the new design and color scheme in our newsletters, email, website, social media, and other communications.



## Shop the Online Native Plant Sale Start Planning Your Garden Today

Our ever-popular online  
Native Plant Sale is now  
open for your orders!

Order online at  
[foamadison.org](http://foamadison.org) between  
January 1 and March 31, 2026  
for convenient  
curbside pickup during  
the week of May 11  
at the Arboretum.

The online sale offers exclusive items that will not be available at our annual tent sale (see back page), including:

- **Nine garden kits with plant mixes selected to meet your native gardening needs.** Kits include the best-selling Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (including garden sign), Short and Sweet Borders, Fall Glory, Woodland Spring, Shade Pollinator, Sunny Pollinator, Green Mulch, and Sunny Street Terrace. The kits are available in full- and half-flat sizes. For those with limited yard space, we offer a Patio Prairie Container kit, which is available in one-half and one-fourth flat sizes.
- **Eleven species of shrubs for different growing conditions.** Pot sizes are available in two- or three-gallon sizes for ease of moving and planting.
- **Over 35 species of flowering perennials, grasses and sedges offered in discounted full- and half-flats sizes.**

For a list of available plants and information on each species, and to order, visit our online store at [foamadison.org](http://foamadison.org).

# 2025 President's Report

In the final days of the year, I've enjoyed watching the softly falling snow while planning additions to my garden next spring. The annual Native Plant Sale, which has just opened for online orders, will give me an opportunity to fill in where deer feasted on my shrubs over the recent holidays. As we look ahead to spring, it's also time to reflect on events over the past year. In doing so, I would like to share a few of the amazing successes of Friends during 2025.

- Contributions by Friends continue to be strong. In 2024–25, over \$177,000 was raised from over 1,050 individuals. These contributions helped foster land restoration and native habitat stewardship, engage children and families in environmental education, advance research and citizen science efforts, celebrate volunteers, and build community.
- We welcomed three new board members in July. They bring a broad range of experience—from legal to technological to ecological to artistic—to the board, along with fresh ideas and vigorous energy.
- Last spring, we recruited a new plant sale assistant to support all phases of the ever-popular annual event, such as receiving deliveries, scheduling and working with plant sale volunteers, and responding to customer inquiries.
- Our 2025 Native Plant Sale was a great success! Total plant sales included over 100 trees and shrubs, and more than 19,000 forbs, grasses and sedges (7,500 in the tent sale and over 11,600 in the online sale). As a result of the sale, an estimated 5,400 square feet of native plant pollinator gardens were planted, and 2,000 square feet of home gardens will be converted to rain gardens. The event raised over \$42,000 to support Arboretum initiatives.
- We led three popular trips last year: a tour of Morton Arboretum in Illinois and a tour of Holy Wisdom Prairie outside Madison in the spring, plus a Mississippi River riverboat excursion to see autumn foliage. We've already planned two trips for the coming year (see page three) and hope to offer more later in the year.
- Our Luncheon Lectures Committee did a fantastic job scheduling interesting speakers and providing delicious meals in a sustainable manner. Attendance has been strong. Note that there are still seats available for our spring luncheon lectures, so sign up soon!
- We spent significant time thinking about how we communicate with Friends and how we can reach more members of our community who would benefit from our programs and those offered by the Arboretum. Thanks to all of you who participated in our survey on this topic. As a result, we've reinvigorated our use of social media to reach our audiences. Now, Friends and others can readily find information on the Native Plant Sale and other programs on our colorful, updated Facebook page.
- Lastly, we concluded the year with the debut of our new logo. I especially like its fresh colors, reflective of the Arboretum in many seasons, and its nod to the diverse components of

the forest canopy. Just like the image depicted by the new logo, Friends play various and diverse roles—all essential—in achieving our mission to support the Arboretum.

I would like to thank generous board members who contributed their time and talents to making all of our activities a success. I'm also very grateful for the opportunity to learn from staff of the Arboretum about their hopes and priorities for this cherished resource. It has been a special pleasure to work with Patrick Bohlen during his first full year as director.

I hope that each of you has had the opportunity during this past year to experience the Arboretum, and I hope to see each of you there—on the trails, in the gardens, at the plant sale, or in a class or tour—over the coming year.

*Kate VandenBosch*  
FOA Board President

## Luncheon Lectures February–June 2026

Events are held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Arboretum Visitor Center. A buffet lunch is followed by an educational presentation. Register online at [foamadison.org](http://foamadison.org) or send a check payable to FOA to Friends of the Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Hwy., Madison, WI 53711. The cost of each luncheon lecture is \$48.

**Blue Plate Catering of Madison will continue to provide culinary services for the series this year. Enjoy the tasty cuisine!**

**Meet an Arboretum staff member. An Arboretum staff member will be seated at each table during the meal and presentation**

Tuesday February 10, 2026: **The New Wisconsin History Center: Exploring Human Landscapes** by Joe Kapler, Lead Curator and Curator of Cultural History, Wisconsin History Center, Division of Museums and Historic Sites, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Tuesday March 17, 2026: **Nurturing Nature by Protecting our Animal Neighbors** by Dr. Rebecca Christoffel, Co-Director of Turtles for Tomorrow, Sole Proprietor of Christoffel Conservation.

Thursday April 16, 2026: **Wisconsin Waters: Exploring their Geology and Ancient Stories** by Scott Spoolman, Science Writer and Author.

Wednesday May 20, 2026: **Bird-friendly Coffee and Chocolate Tasting and the Songbirds You'll Save** by Lisa Gaumnitz, Coordinator of Save Our Songbirds and Amy Haban, Owner and CEO of Barnwood Coffee Company.

Tuesday June 2, 2026: **Eyes on the Skies** by Dr. James Lattis, Director, UW–Madison Space Place and Faculty Associate, UW–Madison Department of Astronomy.

### The Bare Tree

My mother once said to me, "When one sees the tree in leaf one thinks the beauty of the tree is in its leaves, and then one sees the bare tree."

–Samuel Menashe

# Grass-to-Gardens Initiative

We are proud to sponsor our fifth annual Grass-to-Gardens initiative. This initiative promotes the conversion of non-native turf lawns to native habitats that support more biodiversity. Last year, awards were given to two local schools and three individuals. We were thrilled that students at the schools, La Follette High School and Hamilton Middle School, participated in planting the kits. At La Follette High School, the student Arboretum Club expanded pollinator plantings in the school's arboretum. Teacher Brad Harrison, who mentors the school's Arboretum Club, said, "We were super excited to have this plant diversity added to our pollinator project!" He added, "We've been striving the last couple of years to establish a home to a diverse array of pollinators (including) the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee. Thank you so much!"

At Hamilton Middle School, the Student Voice collective created a gardening committee to collaborate with Van Hise Elementary School to expand native gardens. Teacher Rachel Kittel said, "We look forward to the opportunity to create a garden that will benefit nature and also educate students on the importance of native plants and the wildlife they support."

We're delighted to see the far-reaching impact of the awards given to local schools. Accordingly, we have expanded the program this year to provide ten awards to Madison area



Students at La Follette High School replace turf grass with native plants.

community organizations and/or schools that aim to convert turf grass to native habitat. Each award will include two garden kits (64 plants). Recipients will have their choice of two kits from eight different native plant collections. The awards will be given to qualified organizations in order of application submission. Beginning February 2, the first ten qualified applicants will receive awards. Recipients will be notified by March 1.

If you're interested, beginning February 2 you can apply at [foamadison.org/grass-to-garden](http://foamadison.org/grass-to-garden). A description of the garden kits can be found on the website. If you have questions, email our Native Plant Sale Coordinator at [npscoordinator@foamadison.org](mailto:npscoordinator@foamadison.org).

## Upcoming Trips

Register online at [foamadison.org](http://foamadison.org) or send check payable to FOA: Friends of the Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Hwy., Madison, WI 53711.

### Behind the Scenes: Wisconsin State Herbarium and Greenhouse— March 21

Join us on a guided behind-the-scenes tour of one of the world's largest collections of preserved plants, algae, lichens, and fungi. Located on the UW–Madison campus, the State Herbarium houses 1.3 million botanical specimens. We will learn about the collection and enjoy hands-on activities with museum experts. In addition, we will greet the spring season with a special guided tour of the living collections in the Botany Greenhouses at historic Birge Hall. Participants will arrange their own transportation to Birge Hall. Cost: \$40 per person.



### Horicon Marsh: Riverboat Tour and Education Center— May 27

Grab your binoculars and join us for a breathtaking spring adventure in the world-renowned Horicon Marsh, which is the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the nation and a critical rest stop for thousands of migrating waterfowl. Our one-hour boat tour will be a special experience you will always remember. We will observe wildlife and plants not accessible by foot. In addition, we will tour the Visitor Center and Explorium to learn about the history of the refuge. After lunch, we will take a walk led by the resident naturalist to explore more of the flora and fauna that make Horicon so special. The tour includes transportation by comfortable coach, boat tour, and lunch. Cost: \$135 per person.



Tim Norris, NewsLeaf editor  
B.C. Brown, NewsLeaf designer

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**Friends of the Arboretum**  
1207 Seminole Highway  
Madison, WI 53711-3726  
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Lily Butler

## Mark Your Calendar: Native Plant Tent Sale May 16, 2026

Our ever-popular Native Plant Tent Sale returns to the Arboretum in 2026! The tent sale has been a success for many years due to the excellent array of high-quality plants and the energy and devotion of our dedicated volunteers. We will offer over 130 species of flowering perennials, ground covers, sedges, and grasses. While you shop the tent sale, ecologists and naturalists will be available to discuss your plants and answer related questions.

Like last year, we will offer citizen science kits which allow you to report your sightings of the pollinators that visit your native plants. Other than the citizen science kits, tent sale plants will be available individually or in small quantities. Shrubs and other woody plants will not be available.

If you're interested in shrubs or large-quantity purchases (half- or full-flat sizes of individual species or premixed selections), see the information on page one regarding our online sale.

For a list of available plants and information on each species, and more information on the citizen science kits, visit our store at [foamadison.org](http://foamadison.org). We will provide regular updates on the website. If you're interested in volunteering at the tent sale, email [npscoordinator@foamadison.org](mailto:npscoordinator@foamadison.org). We look forward to seeing you at the tent sale!

## Your Donations at Work

Thanks to the generous support from Friends like you, the Arboretum continues to thrive as a hub for research, ecological restoration, education, and community engagement.

In the past year, your contributions went directly to vital programs. They supported the Earth Focus Day Camp, giving 180 children hands-on nature experiences; they supported the Ranger Program, which maintains 17 miles of trails and ensures visitor safety; they supported land stewardship efforts and helped preserve native habitats by funding restoration team leaders and volunteer work parties that removed invasive species across 17 sites. Even more, your donations helped:

- Sustain trail upkeep and visitor safety.
- Foster land restoration and native habitat stewardship.
- Engage children and families in environmental education.
- Advance research and citizen science efforts.
- Celebrate volunteers and build community.

We greatly appreciate your continued partnership. As we approach the halfway point to our fiscal year, we are happy to report that over \$100,000 has been raised so far! Thank you!

—Erica Lee,  
Advancement Manager,  
UW-Madison Arboretum