Fall 2026
Volume XLI No. 4

Friends of the Arboretum NewsLeaf

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Mark your calendar: 2027 Native Plant Sale



Two Sale events:

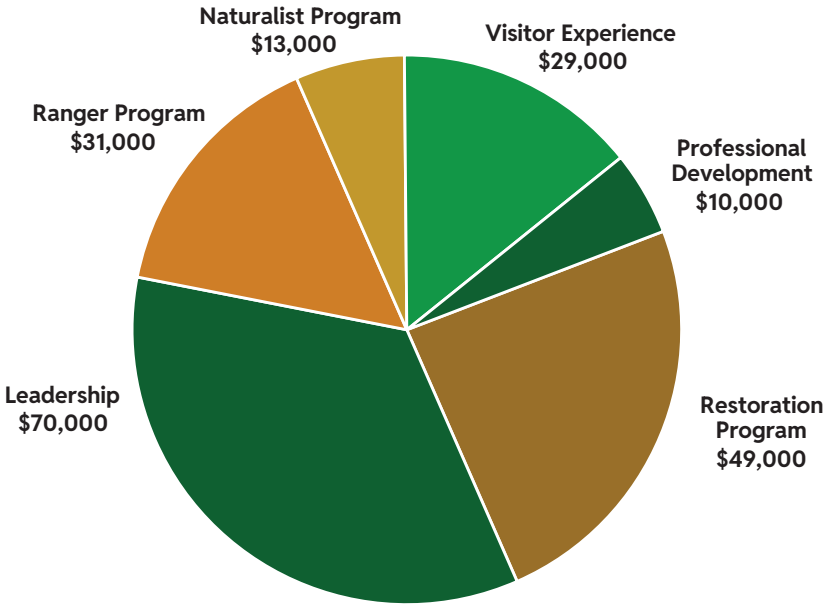
Online sale Jan. 1–March 31, for purchase of garden kits, trees, shrubs, and diverse favorite species for May pickup.

In-person tent sale at the Arboretum on May 15, 2027.

More information in the next NewsLeaf.

Friends of the Arboretum builds positive relationships between people and the land through support of the UW–Madison Arboretum

2025–26 Friends Support for the Arboretum Budget



Your Donations at Work

Your contributions provide essential support for the operations of the UW–Madison Arboretum. Friends' donations, totaling over $202,000 last year, supplement the Arboretum's resource base of state funding allocated through UW–Madison, external grant funding, and income generated by Arboretum programs. Along with other charitable funding, your contributions establish a margin of excellence that would be otherwise unattainable. As shown in the chart above, your donations help sustain a broad range of mission critical functions.

Visitor Experience. A total of $29,000 was allocated to the visitor center and the visitor experience, including maintenance and operational expenses for the BCycle station located near the visitor center. The BCycle installation, which Friends helped fund in a prior year, has increased accessibility to the Arboretum and supports ongoing sustainability goals.

Naturalists Program. A total of $13,000 helped Arboretum naturalists lead 61 free public walks and 39 field trips for nearly 2,400 attendees. Your gifts helped the naturalists reach hundreds more people through outreach events like UW Science Expeditions, UW Family Gardening Day, and the Lake Wingra Community Bike Ride, and supported the naturalists' participation in Earth Focus Day Camp, which welcomed 165 youth participants last summer.

Ranger Program. A total of $31,000 was dedicated to the Arboretum ranger unit. The lead ranger and three assistant rangers are responsible for maintenance of 17 miles of recreational trails. The unit patrols the trails, enforces rules, keeps visitors safe, and repairs trails and boardwalks when needed.

Restoration. A total of $49,000 was devoted to the restoration team leader program, restoration work parties, and other restoration outreach efforts. Last year, 24 new and

Continued on next page

President's Report

I'm delighted to share that the new program year is off to a great start thanks to the work of the board's committee leaders and participation by so many of you.

The season's first trip, a tour of the gardens of Epic Systems in Verona, featured Jeff Epping, garden designer and author, who led the tour. The trip was a sellout, as was the season's first Luncheon Lecture featuring Curt Meine, a senior fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Meine connected the founding of the UW–Madison Arboretum with the fate of the Sauk Prairie in neighboring Sauk County.

The Trips Committee is led by board members **Jeff Drengler** and **Mark Horan**, while **Nansi Colley** and **Jane Albert** lead the Luncheon Lectures Committee. **Judy Cardin** and **Kate VandenBosch** co-chair the Native Plant Sale, and we'll preview sale offerings for 2027 in the next NewsLeaf. Kudos to these leaders for their good work!

As you know, the mission of Friends of the Arboretum is to build positive relationships between people and the land through support of the UW–Madison Arboretum. This support takes the form of financial contributions to the FOA fund, which is managed by the University of Wisconsin Foundation, and direct contributions to the Arboretum made possible by FOA programs and events. Volunteers also play a critical role, both for Friends of the Arboretum and the Arboretum itself.

Yet it's the participation at Friends events that truly nurtures the relationships needed to sustain our mission. For that, we thank all of you and look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming Luncheon Lectures or Trips. Sign up at https://bit.ly/4yRRAyw or use the QR code.

Calls for volunteers

Friends of the Arboretum is looking for some additional volunteer assistance. Have an interest in trips planning, event organization, or project management? We'd love to hear from you at nativeplantsale@FOAMadison.org.

The Arboretum is also looking for additional volunteers to support its ecological restoration work parties, which will take place on most Saturday mornings through mid-December. Individuals and, with advance arrangements, groups are welcome. Learn more at https://arboretum.wisc.edu/get-involved/volunteer/work-parties/ .

We're listening

In the meantime, the Friends board is taking to heart the feedback many of you provided in the recent communications survey. In the months ahead, expect to see an updated website, continued growth in social media use, and some targeted events outreach.

As always, Friends of the Arboretum welcomes your ideas and comments. Reach out to me directly via president@FOAMadison.org. Many thanks!

—Jennifer Sereno, FOA President

Your Donations at Work continued from page 1

returning restoration team leaders conducted over 70 work parties throughout the Arboretum, involving over 1,200 volunteers. Their efforts resulted in the removal of nearly 200 bags of invasive species. Volunteers also collected seeds from 20 different prairie plant species in aid of the land care team's impressive restoration work.

Leadership. A total of $70,000 served as a contribution to compensation support (salaries and fringe benefits) for permanent leadership positions at the Arboretum.

Professional Development. A total of $10,000 supported professional development for Arboretum staff across the units, including their attendance at the Wisconsin Volunteer Managers Conference and the American Public Gardens Association Annual Conference.

In addition to the individual contributions to the operating budget described above, proceeds from Friends events help defray the costs of one-time projects and priorities. Last year, the board provided $1,200 for an event celebrating the efforts and achievements of Arboretum volunteers and earmarked $37,000 for equipment. Watch for updates on these purchases in coming issues of the NewsLeaf.

Your continued support will help sustain a healthy and vibrant Arboretum now and into the future. Thank you for your support!

—Erica Lee, Advancement Manager, UW–Madison Arboretum

Staff Transitions



Sue Chapman

Friends of the Arboretum is pleased to welcome Sue Chapman as the new Native Plant Sale and Events Coordinator. Sue brings more than 35 years of association management experience with organizations in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison and she retired earlier this year from the Alliance of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Science Societies.

With a degree in marketing and management from UW–Madison, Sue is also a certified association executive with experience leading member services, market research, K–12 outreach program development, and more. An avid fan of Badger women's volleyball and hockey, she enjoys golf, trail running, and competitive adult figure skating.

Sue succeeds Allison Eyring-Green, who has moved on to a full-time position with a local company and has provided exceptional service to Friends of the Arboretum over the past two years. Looking back, Allison is grateful for the opportunity to work with Friends and support the activities of the Arboretum. "Thank you to the wonderful volunteers who brightened my days and got the work done," she says. Allison also thanks all those who attended events and purchased plants, the FOA Board with its vision, and the Arboretum staff for their partnership.

Welcome Sue and thank you Allison!

2026–27 Luncheon Lectures

Luncheon Lectures 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 or send a check to: Friends of the Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Hwy., Madison, WI 53711. The cost of each event is $50. Registration closes 10 days before each event.

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, Nov. 17, 2026: **Southern Wisconsin's Glacial Landscapes** by Dave Mickelson, Ph.D., professor emeritus, Geoscience and Badger Talks, UW–Madison.

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2027: **On Fourth Lake: A Social History of Lake Mendota** by Don Sanford, author and former captain for Betty Lou Cruises in Madison.

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2027: **Wisconsin's Trumpeter Swan Recovery: The Role of Field Research** by Mike Mossman and Lisa Hartman, retired Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources ecologists and educators.

Wednesday, March 17, 2027: **Damsels and Dragons of Wisconsin** by Dan Jackson, Master Naturalist, educator, and record reviewer for the Wisconsin Odonata Survey.

Thursday, April 15, 2027: **Wisconsin's Changing Climate** by Steve Vavrus, Ph.D., director of the Wisconsin State Climatology Office and senior scientist at UW–Madison's Division of Extension and the Nelson Institute.

Wednesday, May 19, 2027: **The UW Urban Canid Project: Living with Red Foxes and Coyotes in Madison** by David Drake, Ph.D., professor, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, UW–Madison and principal investigator of the UW Urban Canid Project.

Thursday, June 10, 2027: **Wild Neighbors: Photographing Urban Conservation Stories** by Anne Readel, Ph.D., J.D., conservation storyteller.

Thank You Tim Norris

After shepherding the NewsLeaf for three years as editor, Tim Norris has shifted his service to the role of FOA treasurer. Tim reports that he thoroughly enjoyed bringing news of the accomplishments of the board, staff, and volunteers to the Friends community. "I'll dearly miss engaging with longtime Friends in the 'Meet a Friend' feature," he says. "Hearing their inspiring stories is a much-cherished memory." Looking ahead, Tim adds, "I look forward to helping coordinate financial planning for Friends, so that we can continue to provide a margin of excellence for the Arboretum's treasured mission."

In his role as Treasurer, Tim succeeds Kim Kindschi, who is now the vice president of the Friends board. Kate VandenBosch follows Tim as NewsLeaf editor and she looks forward to continuing to feature all the interesting Friends news.

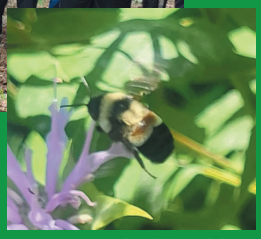
Grass to Gardens Initiative Supports Native Plantings in the Community

The Friends of the Arboretum Grass to Gardens initiative, now beginning its sixth year, helps community members foster biodiversity in public and nonprofit landscapes. In 2026, pollinator garden kits composed of two flats of native plants were provided to 10 teams to convert turf grass to native habitat. The recipients were a diverse group of land stewards: Madison area schools, neighborhood groups, and other nonprofits that planted churchyards, traffic circles, school grounds, railroad right of ways, neighborhood pollinator plantings, an equine therapeutic center, and a UW–Madison veterinary clinic.

Recipients have shared heartwarming stories of the human and pollinator rewards of their efforts. The La Follette High School Arboretum Club, a 2025 recipient of Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Garden Kits, hoped to support the endangered bee with their plantings. This year the students found two rusty patched bumble bees on their flowers!



The La Follette High School Arboretum club in 2025.



A rusty patched bumble bee visiting the La Follette garden.

Amy Yokum applied to Grass to Gardens to transform the bleak Heritage Prairie sign surrounded by turf grass in her neighborhood to a native pollinator patch. She also planned to engage young neighbors in her stewardship. Clementine Gebhart and her mom Becca were proud and happy to help Amy transform the sign's home into a lovely pollinator haven.



Clementine (left) and Becca Gebhart admire their handiwork.

The FOA will will begin accepting applications on Feb 1. for 2027 awards. See the website for details: https://foamadison.org/grass-to-garden/.

Kate VandenBosch, NewsLeaf editor
B.C. Brown, NewsLeaf designer

Friends of the Arboretum Board of Directors
Jennifer Sereno, President
Kim Kindschi, Vice President
Tim Norris, Treasurer
Dave Kelly, Secretary

Jane Albert, Judy Cardin, Nansi Colley, Jeff Drengler, Taylor Drogemuller, Tiffany Highstrom, Mark Horan, Jade Kochanski, Meredith McGlone, Kate VandenBosch

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Your 2026–27 Friends Board



Front row, left to right: Meredith McGlone, Jade Kochanski. Back row, left to right: Mark Horan, Tiffany Highstrom, Nansi Colley, Jeff Drengler, Kate VandenBosch, Jennifer Sereno, Kim Kindschi.

Not pictured: Jane Albert, Judy Cardin, Taylor Drogemuller, Dave Kelly, Tim Norris.

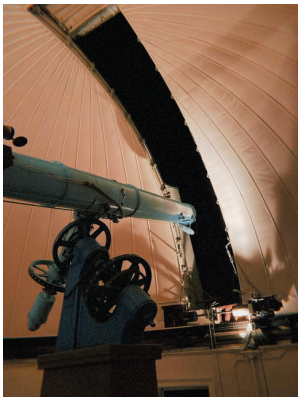
October

Bending above the spicy woods which blaze,
Arch skies so blue they flash, and hold the sun
Immeasurably far; the waters run
Too slow, so freighted are the river-ways
With gold of elms and birches from the maze
Of forests. Chestnuts, clicking one by one,
Escape from satin burs; her fringes done,
The gentian spreads them out in sunny days,
And, like late revelers at dawn, the chance
Of one sweet, mad, last hour, all things assail,
And conquering, flush and spin; while, to enhance
The spell, by sunset door, wrapped in a veil
Of red and purple mists, the summer, pale,
Steals back alone for one more song and dance.

—Helen Hunt Jackson

Upcoming Trip

Mark Your Calendar for a Winter Evening with the Stars



A return to the Washburn Observatory on the UW–Madison campus is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 13, 2027. Jim Lattis, retired director of UW Space Place and presenter of a popular recent Luncheon Lecture, will lead a tour of the night sky in winter.

For details, keep an eye on the Friends website, https://foamadison.org.

