CALENDAR OF EVENTS:
FRIENDS EVENTS

April 22, 2019, 1:00pm, Snyder Auditorium
Friends regular meeting. **Speaker: Dr. George Weiblen, Distinguished McKnight University Professor; Science Director & Herbarium Curator, Bell Museum, “Global Forest Observatories: An International Network Monitoring Biotic Responses to our Changing Climate.”**

May 18, 2019, 3:00-6:30pm, Reedy Gallery & MacMillan Auditorium
Opening Reception for Out of the Woods: Celebrating Trees in Public Gardens. More on p. 6

July 22, 2019, 1:00pm, Snyder Auditorium
Friends annual meeting. **Speaker: TBD.**

August 9, 2019, 11:30 am-1:00 pm, Snyder Auditorium
Friends of AHL Special Luncheon. **Speaker: Lucie Amundsen, author of “Locally Laid: How We Built a Plucky, Industry-changing Egg Farm—From Scratch.”** Books will be available for purchase and signing. Invitation to follow.

October 3, 2019, 3:30pm - 6:00pm, MacMillan Auditorium
Friends of the AHL Annual Book Sale - Friends’ preview.

October 4-6, 2019, 10:00am - 4:00pm, MacMillan Auditorium
Friends of the AHL Annual Book Sale

October 28, 2019, 1:00pm, Snyder Auditorium
Friends regular meeting. **Speaker TBD.**

LIBRARY EVENTS & EXHIBITS

April 13, 2019, 4-6pm, Snyder Lobby & Auditorium
**Event: Roots to Healing Reception**
Free to members

Extended through May 4, 2019, AHL & Skyway Gallery
**Exhibit: Roots to Healing.** More on exhibit & reception, p. 5

May 9 - September 3, 2019, Skyway Gallery
**Exhibit: Celebrating Arboretum Trees: the 3rd Annual Flora & Fauna Illustrata (FFI) Exhibition**

May 9 - September 3, 2019, AHL
**Exhibit: Branching Out.** A celebration and exploration of the Arboretum’s outstanding trees through inspiring literature, photography and art.

**Cover:** Castor bean plant, from Phytographie médicale, 1821-23. Story, p. 4.
Happy Spring! At least, I hope Spring is here to stay but I remember that little blizzardy surprise that Spring sprung on us last April, and it wasn’t even April Fool’s Day. Thankfully this year we missed out on “bomb cyclones” and the flooding that devastated large areas to our southwest.

As harmful as extreme weather events can be to humans, they can be disastrous to non-humans as well. 2019 marks the 115th anniversary of perhaps the most devastating natural disaster to strike any single bird species in recorded history, and it occurred mostly in Minnesota.

March 13, 1904, dawned calm and crisp across the upper Midwest. Sparrow-sized Lapland Longspurs, answering the ancient call of migration, rose from their prairie wintering grounds and formed into immense flocks. By day’s end, millions were winging northward across Iowa and Nebraska toward western Minnesota and the Dakotas … and doom.

A hundred miles ahead, a huge storm had drifted south from Canada, spreading in a darkening gloom across the longspurs’ path. Its snow was wet, heavy and unrelenting. The leading wave of birds met the advancing snow curtain in northwest Iowa. The birds, infused with the fierce instinctual drive to migrate, knew only to continue. Fighting to stay aloft through worsening conditions, they struggled northward until, soaked and exhausted, the huge flight finally ground to a swirling halt over southwest Minnesota. The carnage began.

Birds literally rained from a pitch-black sky. Apparently confused by the swirling snow, many flew down instead of level until they crashed. An electric-light repairman out late in Worthington reported hearing “confused, twittering cries from the dark, snow-filled skies overhead, and soft thuds against the sides and roofs of buildings” and watched as a steady shower of small dark bodies struck the ground until the snow looked like it was covered with leaves. The next day, heads and tails were seen sticking out of the snow for miles around with highest densities found near street lamps. Lumps of snow dotting village roofs turned out to be snow-covered longspurs, the lumps “exploding” when the birds moved in the warming sun. Many birds recovered on their own and flew away but huge numbers did not. Some residents collected from a few to dozens of birds and tried to care for them until they could fly.

Dr. Thomas Roberts of the Minnesota Natural History Survey sent colleague Dr. L.O. Dart to gather details. Dart arrived March 22 and spent many days gathering reports from 23 towns in Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota. Only longspurs were involved. While Worthington appeared to be the center of destruction, the overall death zone encompassed 1,500 square miles and 40 towns. On two frozen lakes where he could make reliable counts, Dart estimated 750,000 birds lay dead on two square miles of ice. The total loss was impossible to determine but Roberts wrote that close to 1.5 million birds likely died around Worthington alone. He later autopsied a hundred carcasses and found all to have good fat content but empty stomachs. All had died from trauma and internal bleeding.

A sad and gruesome tale, yes, but also testament to the fascination of natural history and the resilience of nature itself. In succeeding years, Roberts and others wrote that observers in Minnesota and Iowa reported no apparent decrease in longspurs either wintering in those states or passing through in migration. Yet another miracle of nature!
It’s All in the Dosage!

Curiously, nature’s medicine cabinet also serves as a lethal arsenal, often involving the same plants.

A very generous donor recently made it possible to add a beautifully illustrated two-volume set to the library’s rare book collection. *Phytographie médicale*, published in 1821-1823, is the work of French botanist and physician, Joseph Roques.

One-hundred-eighth illustrations (one of which is our cover image) present a fine example of *à la poupée* (literally, “with a doll” or wad of balled-up cloth). The doll was used to apply different colors of paint to a copper-plate, which could then be printed in one run. (Find fascinating videos of the technique on youtube.com.) The images in these volumes were then carefully finished by hand.

*Phytographie médicale* highlights dozens of plants that can harm as well as heal. One of these, featured on our cover, may look familiar. It has been on display in the past in the Arboretum’s annual garden. Known as the castor bean plant, or castor oil plant, its seeds have been used to produce both castor oil and ricin. Castor oil has many industrial uses in addition to being used as a powerful laxative. Ricin is a poison notorious for its occasional murderous use by spies and spouses. Allergic reactions can occur from contact with the plant, especially after touching the leaves or seeds. Vomiting can be caused simply by handling a leaf (even a dry one) and then snacking on something.

Digital Designs

Many of you know Arboretum gardener Duane Otto, who for the past thirty-one years has designed the annual gardens. (Late-breaking news! Duane’s 2019 color scheme will be a “Bright, Sunshiny Day,” featuring red, yellow, and orange flowers with pops of blue to represent the sky.)

Late last year we proposed to the University Libraries that all of Duane’s garden designs and accompanying slides and photographs be transferred to the Andersen Horticultural Library and digitized. Our proposal was accepted and many crates of materials were transported to campus for scanning. They are now available online at the University Libraries’ UMedia site, <umedia.lib.umn.edu>.

Lapland Bunting

Paul’s Ponderings (p. 3) describes a tragic event for the Lapland Longspur. You can read Dr. Thomas Sadler Roberts’ full account in the October 1907 *The Auk* magazine: <https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v024n04/p0369-p0377.pdf>. Or, go to scholar.google.com and search for “longspur tragedy” for this and other accounts.

In search of an image of this handsome bird from the library’s collections, it became apparent that it has had a few different scientific names, as well as several common names, including Lapland Bunting. What I thought was a typo for Bunting turned out to be commonly used in 19th century bird books, including Audubon’s *Birds of America* (1856). How the word evolved from *buntling* to *bunting* is a mystery for another day!

A heartfelt “Thank You!” to an anonymous donor who has pledged a large contribution to the Library Endowment fund. It is so encouraging to know that the future of the library is being supported. If you would like to make a gift, visit AHL’s website <lib.umn.edu/ahl/make-gift>. Questions about planned giving can be addressed to Arboretum Development Director Susan Taylor (612-301-1266, susant@umn.edu) or University Libraries Gift Officer Heather Beaton (612-624-8207, hbeaton@umn.edu).

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Saturday, May 18...

...promises to be a busy day at the arboretum! Birding Day from 7 am-2:30 pm is followed by a celebration of the Worldwide Day of Botanical Art. Please join us from 3-6:30 pm in the Reedy Gallery & MacMillan Auditorium.

- 3-4 pm Art demos & tours
- 4-5 pm Presentation by Carol Woodin, Director of Exhibitions for the American Society of Botanical Artists: “Botanical Art Worldwide”
- 5-6:30 pm Opening Reception for Out of the Woods: Celebrating Trees in Public Gardens.

More than forty artworks have been selected for inclusion in this exhibition celebrating one of the planet’s most important and beautiful resources. These tree subjects have been found in botanical gardens and arboreta throughout the U.S. and around the world, including one from the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum! (pictured below)

This project has been in the making for three years, with artists invited to capture images of trees in public gardens. A central goal of the exhibition is to highlight the role botanical gardens and arboretum play in educating the public about trees and their ecological and utilitarian roles, as well as the research/scholarship public gardens perform in these areas. However, artists also respond aesthetically to these inspiring subjects, and have depicted anything from seedpods to branches and bark to an entire forest floor.

The exhibition catalog will be available for purchase in the gift shop.

As you know, this exhibition is brought to you with very generous support from Friends of the Andersen Horticultural Library.

While Out of the Woods is in the Reedy Gallery, The Third Annual Flora & Fauna Illustrata (FFI) Exhibition: Celebrating Arboretum Trees will be on display in the rampway between the cafe and the Snyder Lobby. Branching Out, a celebration and exploration of the Arboretum’s outstanding trees through inspiring literature, photography, and art will be displayed in the library.

Dr. Weiblen will be speaking on Global Forest Observatories, a topic of which I know nothing and am looking forward to learning about! --Kathy Allen

Next Meeting

We hope to see you at the next Friends Meeting! Join us on April 22, Earth Day, at 1 pm in the Snyder Auditorium.

I think you’ll greatly enjoy our April speaker, Professor George Weiblen. His numerous titles (e.g., Distinguished McKnight Professor) speak to his outstanding academic credentials. He is also an approachable and very interesting speaker. His many (mis-) adventures while studying the relationship between figs and wasps in Papua New Guinea could (and may one day) fill a book. No pressure, George!

Dr. Weiblen will be speaking on Global Forest Observatories, a topic of which I know nothing and am looking forward to learning about! --Kathy Allen

This book was on my birthday wish list and I’m so happy to have it now as part of my home library. Alan is not only the author, but as you know, the Arboretum’s Operations Director. His genuine passion for plants and deep knowledge, based on many years of interesting experiences, shines through in this valuable guide.

The preface and introduction captured my attention right away with a gorgeous close-up of Dutchman’s breeches, a personal favorite of mine in the Wildflower Garden. He describes being interested in native plants even when he was a young child after his mother showed him this delicate spring flower. Any collector will smile at the story of him being a young gatherer of all things out in nature, from butterflies and bird’s nests to leaves of every kind. It was incredibly refreshing that he pays tribute to the teachers and mentors of his past throughout these introductory pages. Many guides can be a bit dry, but Alan’s is intriguing and easy to follow from the start, making it a must for any gardener and native plant enthusiast, no matter what level of expertise.

The 500 native plants are categorized in twelve helpful sections:

- Shade Trees
- Evergreen Trees
- Small Trees and Large Shrubs
- Evergreen Shrubs, Small Shrubs
- Vines, Prairie Perennials, Woodland Perennials, Wetland Perennials, Groundcovers, Bulbs, and Annuals and Biennials

What I find especially helpful is that within these sections, each species listed has three essential categories: How to Grow, Landscape Use, and Ornamental Attributes. For example, I recently added a low serviceberry shrub (Amelanchier stolonifera) to my yard after learning more about it in these sections. Alan explained where it would thrive and how it would work as an informal low hedge. He described the beauty of the showy white, upright clusters of flowers in early spring, along with the valuable benefit of bearing fruit that wildlife LOVE!

The photography is not only helpful for identification, but eye-catching and plentiful. The photographs capture the intricate, often overlooked beauty of seedpods, leaf shapes, buds and bark.


For any gardener, plant lover, traveler, or those interested in a variety of garden designs, this gorgeous coffee-table book is a must. Large, vibrant photos of some of the best 21st-century modern gardens are complemented by writing that is warm and engaging. The author’s passion for plants is contagious and his open mind for all styles is so refreshing. Readers feel as if they are getting a personal garden tour with each chapter.

Woods spent several years traveling for this book and has an interesting background connected with many well-known gardens.

*All book reviews on p 6-7 are by Lee Anne Laskey, Library Assistant*
in England, Canada, and the United States. He uses wit and humor to share his knowledge and passion for gardening. Woods even weaves in personal reflections of each creator of these fifty gardens on six different continents.

The author confesses that he is a romantic and continues to “fall in love with this extraordinary world.” He gently reminds us that a space might not look and feel like a garden to one person, but to another it may be a sanctuary that feels “as comfortable as a favorite sweater.” Carrie Preston, whose garden in the Netherlands is highlighted, describes her space this way. Each reader will be drawn to their own personal favorite garden in this book and Preston’s happens to be one of mine.

Woods has organized his book by culture and continent and includes botanical species, history of each garden, and the author’s philosophy of gardening. It is easily a book the reader will want to fill up on slowly, so as not to miss anything. If I owned it, I’d savor two gardens at a time. It’s written that well. The captivating passage from his dedication seems to capture the very spirit of his book, so I will end by sharing that.

“And for the gardeners of the world. You with the crazy eyes and rough hands. You who are so much in love with growing things. You artists and scientists, poets and painters, protectors and advocates. You who fall in love again and again.”

**Children's Books**

New to our library, these will be valuable additions to Thursday StoryTimes!


This is a perfect read-aloud book for toddlers and preschoolers, celebrating the exciting process of growing plants, from seed packet to harvest. The illustrations are so bright and cheery! The text is simple but very informative. An added bonus at the back of the book promotes further learning through detailed facts on plant cycles and creative activity ideas. It’s a perfect book for the little gardeners in our lives.


Here is another captivating picture book from one of my favorite authors. Here, a mother and child talk about all the miracles happening under and over their pond. The illustrations are gentle with soft vintage color. The text is perfect for reading aloud to our little scientists and encourages a healthy curiosity for the natural world around us. The author is a former teacher who thought to include helpful pond and animal facts in the back.

*When Spring Comes to the DMZ, by Uk-Bae Lee. Plough Publishing, 2018.*

This beautifully illustrated book, written by an award-winning author/artist, is full of hope. It describes the 154 miles of pristine land where flora and fauna actually thrive in between fences built decades ago by North and South Korea. It was originally written as part of the Peace Picture Book Project in 2010. The story is told through a grandfather’s eyes as he gazes upon the northern lands where members of his family live, but he still cannot visit. In this story, Uk-Bae Lee reveals his hope for a miracle and a united country, especially in the lovely last fold-out page.
Andersen Horticultural Library recently bid successfully on eBay for this 1917 St. Louis Seed Company catalog. Where gardens are lovely, children are strong, and watering cans are enormous...

In March 1917, three weeks before the US entered WWI, St. Louis hosted their Spring Flower Show, one of the nation’s largest, attracting nurseries and visitors from the Midwest and East Coast. According to this catalog, the St. Louis Seed Company had been in business since 1904, the same year as the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also known as the St. Louis World’s Fair. At the Exposition they won seven awards which, according to them, was more than any other seed house in the US.

In addition to flower and vegetable seeds this seed company sold incubators, brooders, fancy poultry, bee supplies, aquarium fish—and books!

This catalog lists A.H. Hummert as the company’s vice president in 1917. In 1932, at 53 years old, he started the A.H. Hummert Seed Co. which is still in business today as Hummert International (and also represented in AHL’s collection).--Renee Jensen.