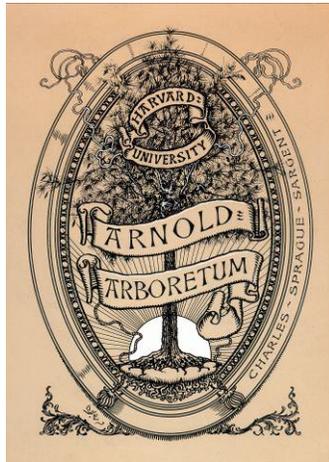


Archives I G-9.1 SPG

**Science in the Pleasure Ground, exhibit, 1990- : Guide**



**The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University**

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## **I G-9.1 SPG**

**"Science in the Pleasure Ground Exhibit," exhibit 1990- : Guide  
Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University  
125 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts**

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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**Call No.:** I G-9.1 SPG

**Location:** Archives

**Title:** Science in the Pleasure Ground, exhibit, 1990-

**Date(s):** 1990-

**Creator:** Arnold Arboretum

**Quantity:** 3 linear feet

**Language of material:** English

**Abstract:** The Science in the Pleasure Ground exhibit opened on October 18, 1996, in the Arboretum's Hunnewell Building in celebration of the Arnold Arboretum's 125th Anniversary. A product of 6 years of planning, the exhibit highlighted the cultural history of the Arboretum, the design of the landscape, plant collecting expeditions, forest conservation, American horticulture, and the many uses of wood.

**Note:** Access to Finding Aid record in [HOLLIS](#).

**Preferred Citation:** Science in the Pleasure Ground, exhibit, 1990-. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

**Additional Material:** In preparation for building the scale model of the Arboretum, Sergio Marino took approximately 70 relatively close-up photographs of the Arboretum from a helicopter in 1996 see Archives X A-2 Aerial Photographs

### **Processing Information**

1997 Stacy Senflug, revised 2012, Sheila Connor. Updated and rehoused material in 2014, Stephanie Turnbull. Revised 2023, 2024, Larissa Glasser.

### **Acquisition Information**

**Provenance:** The collection was compiled by the staff who worked on the exhibit and transferred to the Archives when the project was completed in 2007.

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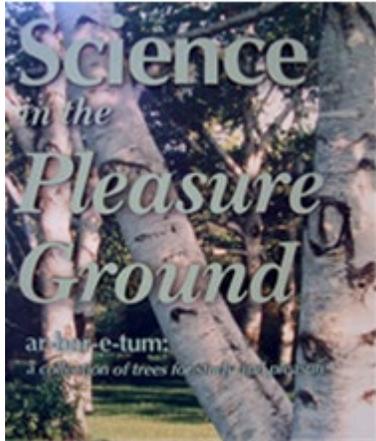
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### Historical Note



Exhibit's introductory panel

The exhibit "Science in the Pleasure Ground" opened on October 18, 1996, in the Arboretum's Hunnewell Building in celebration of the Arnold Arboretum's 125th Anniversary. A product of 6 years of planning, it highlighted the cultural history of the Arboretum, the design of the landscape, plant collecting expeditions, forest conservation, American horticulture, and the many uses of wood.

The exhibit was based on a series of three books about the Arboretum: *A Reunion of Trees* (1990), by Stephen A. Spongberg and *New England Natives* (1994), by Sheila Connor and *Science in the Pleasure Ground* by Ida Hay. This series evolved from a guidebook project initially supported by the director of the Arboretum, Peter Ashton which grew out of a number of discussions held by staff members to explore how the nature, content and arrangement of the Arboretum's living collections of trees and shrubs might be best interpreted for our visitors. The book series was funded for planning in 1981 and for completion in 1984 and 1987 with grants from The National Endowment for the Humanities, which recognized the value of the Arnold Arboretum's landscape as a resource for exploring both cultural and natural history.

The exhibit was planned and constructed with the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, and a major gift for the construction of the model from Harvard Alumni Louis & Jody Appell of York, Pennsylvania.

Planning for the exhibit began 1990 when a committee of Arnold Arboretum staff: Richard Schulhof, Project Director, Sheila Connor, Horticultural Research Archivist, and Stephen Spongberg, Horticultural Taxonomist, began meeting with Richard Rabinowitz, Interpretive Planner and Allen Moore, Project Designer of the American History Workshop, and humanities scholars Blanche Linden-Ward, Emerson College and Sam Bass Warner, Brandeis University to create an exhibit that would demonstrate how cultural and natural events converge to shape the landscapes around us. In April 1996, Richard Schulhof left the Arnold Arboretum to become director of Descanso Gardens in California and Sheila Connor assumed responsibilities as project director with the assistance of Chris Strand, Outreach Horticulturist and Stacy Senflug, Arboretum Intern. Museum Design Associates of

Cambridge, Massachusetts designed the exhibit, GPI Models of Boston constructed the scale model, and WB Incorporated fabricated and installed the exhibit.



"Trees" awaiting planting



Lilac collection in "bloom"

The 8'x16' scale model of the Arnold Arboretum landscape provided a centerpiece for the exhibition and included more than 4,000 miniature trees that replicate the Arboretum's living collection. Built on a 40':1" scale, the model employed as many as 20 different shades of green. Vignettes of different eras in the Arboretum's history were featured on the model. Other parts of the exhibit highlighted the cultural history of the Arboretum, the design of the landscape, plant collecting expeditions, forest conservation, American horticulture, and the many uses of wood and the collaboration between Charles Sprague Sargent, the Arnold Arboretum's first director and Fredrick Law Olmsted, America's preminent landscape architect.



American horticulture



Fredrick Law Olmsted and his plan for the Arboretum

### Scope and Content

The collection includes correspondence from 1990-1996, design proposals and specifications, contracts and invoices, video and audio recordings, extra trees for the model and wood specimens, negatives and slides of artwork.

### Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 3 series.

**Series I:** Administrative Documents

**Series II:** Exhibit Materials

**Series III:** Exhibit Artwork

## Container List

### Box 1

#### Series I: Administrative Documents

#### Folder

1. Material in this folder covers 1991-1993 during the period staff worked with Richard Rabinowitz, American History Workshop with a goal of producing a permanent interpretative exhibit to occupy the exhibit hall in 1993 after the completion of the Hunnewell building renovation. Relations with American History Workshop ended in 1993. In 1994, David Seibert, principal of Museum Design Associates [MDA], of Cambridge, Massachusetts was hired to complete the project
2. Material in this folder covers 1992-1993. More information regarding original project.



Stephen Spongberg, Sergio Marino GPI, and Chris Strand at the GPI shop



Stephen Spongberg and John Del Rosso working on finishing touches at the Arboretum

3. Contracts: MDA, exhibit designer GPI, construction of the model, WB Inc. fabrication and installation
4. Arnold Arboretum inter-office correspondence related to exhibits.
5. Correspondence, general exhibit, 1990-1993
6. Original proposal, 1991
7. Drafts for Mass. Foundation Report, 1992
8. NEH budget
9. NEH and Mass. Foundation for the Humanities; application and reports
10. Graphic layout package from MDA
11. Drawings and correspondence from MDA
12. Specifications from MDA

- 13.** Exhibit fabrication drawings from MDA
- 14.** Exhibit fabrication proposal from WB Inc.
- 15.** Correspondence from WB Inc.
- 16.** Exhibit maintenance, cleaning and specification manual from WB Inc.
- 17.** Correspondence and information from GPI Models
- 18.** Correspondence from Douglas Reed, Landscape Architect. In regard to the creation of drawings depicting 3 different time periods in the Arboretum's evolution
  - "A Landscape Evolves: Original Farmstead."
  - "A Landscape Evolves: Early 20th Century."
  - "A Landscape Evolves: Today"

*Note:* Three framed Arboretum landscape maps, by the Douglas Reed Landscape Architecture firm, hang in the stairwell between the 3rd and 4th floor
- 19.** Correspondence regarding Martha Stewart's audio recording on horticulture.
- 20.** International Wood Collector's Society.
- 21.** Misc. invoices.



Preparing for exhibit opening : representatives of MDC, WB and GPI with Bob Cook (bowtie) and Sheila Connor (holding schedule) October 16, 1996

**22:** Exhibit opening invitations

*Note: see also ["New Exhibit Opens: Science in the Pleasure Ground"](#)*



**23:** Photos of model and exhibit opening.

**24:** Photos of Harvard Yard Memorial Elm

**25:** Press coverage on exhibit opening

**26:** Exhibit installation and opening, 18, 35mm slides, photographer Phyllis

Anderson, October 1996

**27:** Possible designers and bids for exhibit

**28:** Updates on Exhibit, 2001-02

**Box 2****Series II: Exhibit Materials**

- Video Recordings (VHS)
  - "The Unbroken Chain: Repotting Bonsai at the Arnold Arboretum."
  - "A Tree Grows in Boston: Tree Planting at the Arnold Arboretum."
- Video Recording (16mm B&W videotape)
  - "Growing a Flower Garden from Seed"
- Video Recording (laser disc)
  - "The Unbroken Chain: Repotting Bonsai at the Arnold Arboretum."
  - "A Tree Grows in Boston: Tree Planting at the Arnold Arboretum."
- Audio Recordings
  - Martha Stewart
- Misc. Audio/Video equipment

**Box 3:** Extra wood block specimens and miniature trees

- *Acer saccharinum*
- *Carpinus caroliniana*
- *Carya ovata*
- *Fagus grandifolia*
- *Liriodendron tulipifera*
- *Pinus strobus*
- *Prunus serotina*
- *Quercus alba*
- *Sassafras albidum*
- *Ulmus americana*

**Box 4****Series III: Exhibit Artwork**

- Inventory of artwork used in the exhibit
- Workbook used for planning the exhibit
- Negatives, Slides, and Transparencies for artwork used in exhibit
  - Science in the Pleasure Ground - Acknowledgment Panel
  - Landscape
  - Conservation

**Box 5**

Negatives, slides, and transparencies for artwork used in exhibit

- Plant Exploration
- American Horticulture
- Our Forest Wealth - Wood
- Membership - Lobby

**Box 6** Laminated book *Country Estates Transformed* (Removed from exhibit, date unknown)

## Changes in the Science in the Pleasure Ground Exhibit 2001-

### 2001

- Complete carpet replacement:
- Model updated with new LED lights flush with model surface. These replaced the model's overhead lights that never worked correctly (Note: overhead lights were disconnected not removed). All overheads disconnected. Model cleaned at same time. April 2002
- A display rack for education programs (became *Silva*), flyers, and other hand-outs, was purchased for inside main doors. Small display rack for same purchased and mounted on front of front desk. Possibly 2002-2003
- Two trunks in the display area near the camera bolted shut for safety reasons. c. 2003-4
- Video player for "Repotting Bonsai" and "A Tree Grows in Boston" out for repairs in 2003.

### 2004

- Martha Stewart displays temporarily removed to make room for model of Leventritt Sun-Loving Shrub & Vine Garden.
- Leventritt Sun-Loving Shrub & Vine Garden added to large Arboretum model. Model cleaned; discolored trees replaced.

### 2005

- A computer kiosk built and installed to provide visitors with access to our website and plant collection information. This was custom built based on drawing by Dave Russo. New counters installed and displays moved. The herbarium display with photo of Susan Hardy Brown and counter specimen and specimen drawers were moved to south wall to accommodate kiosk on west wall. A short empty alcove counter was left between kiosk and other exhibit counter displays. The computer kiosk was given a public testing period first.
- Several wall boards with exhibit materials have fallen off at various times, they were reattached by Dave Russo.
- Martha Stewart display permanently retired in 2006.
- Model of Shrub & Vine Garden removed and given to the garden's designers –Reed Hilderbrand – late summer/early fall 2006.
- Some electrical work done under west counter to make it safer for children using a microscope that was set up on the south counter (c. 2006).

### 2007

- Small, short table for children to use added to left side of south display counter, Crayons, plant puzzle, large wooden magnifying lens and standing magnifier put there. Empty alcove space between computer kiosk and display counter removed, kiosk moved down to left, display of *Pinus pungens* in plexi turned to face forward, remains to right of kiosk, "Then and Now" board exhibit attached to right of *Pinus pungens*.
- Shallow display counter on south wall (under "Forest Wealth") "claimed" for use of children's displays. "Kid's Corner" hand-outs and plant materials that correspond to the hand-out are displayed in this space.

- Three new non-rolling chairs purchased for the children's area and video area. Replace worn leather chairs in use by video and office type chair. A small wooden stool for children purchased.
- All overhead spotlights in the visitor's center removed and energy efficient bulbs installed.
- Video player out for repairs.

## 2008

- Video player returned
- New kids table/chairs/activity center in May, hanging "pockets" below south window and near children's table for books and finger puppets.

## 2009

- Live plant: Wollemi Pine, *Wollemia nobilis* placed on east windowsill next to Oceania, etc. maps on wall.

## 2010

- Display case of Native American arrowheads moved to right of video – against wall. A table with a display rack with information on invasive insects put where arrowhead display was next to American Elm. There is also a box with preserved insects displayed on the new table. ALB info was put there in 2011.
- After discovery of Asian Longhorn Beetle in August at Faulkner Hospital, displays of beetle (in display shadow box), part of trunk with beetle "hole" and variety of brochures and magnets with ALB information displayed as hand-outs and visitor information. Also, Emerald Ash Borer brochures were put out.
- Model of Weld Hill research building installed in model; informational text on Weld Hill inserted onto model sign display.
- Outside the visitor center south windows, bird feeders installed with money from Edward Whitney fund. Inside viewing station set up with binoculars, "Birdwatching Station" sign and laminated flip sheets with bird ids. Implemented by Robert Mayer (volunteer) and Marc Devokaitis

## 2011

- Selection of children's books purchased to rotate through library and visitor center. Marc Devokaitis worked on selection.
- Formica top on back table under "Our Forest Wealth" sign replaced.
- Computer kiosk table reconfigured (by Dave Russo) into a desk for use with new touch screen computer screen.
- New touch screen computer screen installed on "kiosk" desk.

## 2013

- Visitor Center bookshop closes. Visitor Center operations reorganized.
- Wilson pocket watch and Veitch medal removed from display due to security concerns. Both artifacts are now in Ernest Wilson Papers, Subseries W.I:D: Awards, Certificates, Honors and Oversized Materials, Box 3 (bindery).
- Freestanding display cases added for temporary exhibitions.

## 2014

- Indigenous artifacts reacquired to [Archaeology Collection](#) in the Archives.