

Lavalle Cork Tree (*Phellodendron amurense* var. *lavallei*) – Narrated by Pam Thompson

My name is Pam Thompson, and I am the Manager of Adult Education.

We offer children's Field Study programs primarily to City of Boston students. We have a Visitor Center full of information and guidance, and we offer adult classes and lectures, which is what I'm responsible for.

The lectures that I offer include our Director's Lecture Series, with special guests from across the country and around the world coming to talk on topical subjects regarding the climate and the environment. We offer Tree Mobs, which are really fun, informal, short notice educational gatherings in the landscape with an expert.

My more regular classes tend to be on subjects of propagation, tree identification, horticulture, botany, and ecology. We do a bit of landscape history and science in general as it intersects with culture and everyday human lives.

The ways people learn about plants have changed over the past 28 or 30 years that I've been here. Initially, people learned from books and from Arnold Arboretum experts. Then the advent of how-to shows and videos allowed people to learn some information via television. Now, we have the Internet and webinars as tools for learning; however, I find that people still want to learn person-to-person, getting their hands dirty or watching an arborist prune a shrub up close. I also find that people like to learn as part of a community. A lot of what happens in adult education is social learning and sharing from each other's experiences.

People love the Arnold Arboretum's cork trees. The deeply grooved bark calls out to be touched. Their girth is magnificent. So many family portraits have been taken standing in front of these trees. In fact, root compaction from so many visitors led to the demise of one of these grand specimens. In essence, it was loved to death. Though these trees provide food for birds, and are here as a resource to study, they've also proven over time to be quite invasive, so I don't recommend planting these trees. But, they're here for study.

What's so beautiful about this area is the dense and low branching canopy. In the summer, it definitely feels cooler under these trees. In the winter, the light from the setting sun plays beautifully through here; the back lighting, the leafless canopy, and making me notice the architectural structure of these trees in the change of the season. I definitely notice it most here every fall, every November and December, as we lose our leaves and we lose our light, it's in this particular area that I notice that change of season and mark it in my mind.