



# Cornell Plantations **Annual Report** 2009

As Cornell  
Plantations grows  
forward, your  
support continues  
to sustain our gardens,  
natural areas,  
and educational  
programs.

Walking through the botanical garden in early February, I was delighted to see a number of leafy plants thriving in spite of the winter's cold. Though spring won't really come to Ithaca until well after the vernal equinox, I took heart from these abundant signs that the growth cycle never stops.

Economic trends, though not as reliable as the change of seasons, also tend to follow patterns. As I write this, there are encouraging signs that the national economy is recovering, and that Cornell's and Plantations' financial health is improving.

Over the past year, we implemented a series of cost-saving actions at Plantations to balance our budget, while still remaining focused on our mission. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated staff and a tremendous corps of volunteers, we have made considerable progress on our top priorities. To achieve the successes highlighted in this report, Plantations has also relied on many partners. In addition to the university administration and our colleagues in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, we have benefited greatly from private foundations, the State of New York, and Ithaca's Discovery Trail.

What I have found most gratifying though, is the continued generosity of Cornell's devoted alumni and the many other donors who have sustained Plantations with their gifts. In a year when charitable giving declined for almost all of our peer universities and public gardens, our donors gave 11 percent more to Plantations!

In the year ahead, I am looking forward to celebrating our 65th year with the opening of the Cornell Plantations Nevin Welcome Center next fall. With your involvement and support, I am confident that Plantations will continue growing forward as a progressive, sustainably oriented, and multi-dimensional public garden.

**Donald A. Rakow**, The Elizabeth Newman Wilds Director, Cornell Plantations



Pam Shade

# Cornell Plantations Highlights 2009

## Progressive Education

- New endowments established with generous gifts from long-time volunteers will provide permanent support for education programs. Betty Rowley established the Bente King Arts Enrichment Fund. Charlotte and Arthur Shull created the Raylene Ludgate Fund for Wildflower Explorations, and a fund for Plantations' Youth Programs was established with a gift from the estate of Sue Battaglioni.
- Now in its 10th year, the Plantations Graduate Fellowship Program in Public Garden Leadership continues to produce talented and successful graduates. Recent alumni include Jessica Blohm '08, interpretive specialist, New York Botanical Garden; Jonathan Landsman '09, gardener, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation; Miriam Pinsker '08, campaign manager, Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia; and Melanie Sifton '09, director, Humber Arboretum and Centre for Urban Ecology in Toronto.

## Collaborative Research

A grant from the Newman's Own Foundation is funding our continued conservation efforts to restore local and regional populations of the rare American globeflower (*Trollius laxus*), in partnership with the Center for Plant Conservation.

- Researchers from Cornell's Department of Natural Resources are studying a new biocontrol agent to combat the hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA). In October 2009, extension associate Mark Whitmore released 300 predatory beetles (*Laricobius nigrinus*) at our Edwards Lake Cliffs natural area. Our natural areas staff and volunteers are collaborating with Whitmore to monitor the beetles' effectiveness in destroying the HWA infestation at this preserve. Many of Plantations' natural areas are essential research sites that support Cornell's academic and research mission.
- The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), whose mission is to develop and reforest eastern U.S. woodlands with blight-resistant chestnut trees, donated two *Castanea dentata* saplings to our chestnut collection. Plantations horticulture staff will monitor their growth, evaluate their disease resistance, and share the findings with TACF.



In September 2009, *Judy's Day Journey the World Through Plants*, our biennial family learning festival, drew more than 1,500 visitors to explore and experience plant traditions from around the world. Over 150 Cornell students and 270 volunteers from the campus and local community helped to organize and staff this popular event.

## Plant Diversity

- With construction now complete on the lath house, new raised beds, and irrigation system at the Plant Production Facility, our horticulture staff now grow 100 percent of the annuals planted each year in the Robison Herb Garden, Pounder Heritage Vegetable Garden, Young Flower Garden, and the Class of 1953 Container Garden.
- Plantations' landscape designer has been working closely with our Collections and Design Committee (including faculty and local landscape architects) to develop the site plan for the botanical gardens surrounding the Nevin Welcome Center. Our beautiful peonies will return to a larger perennial garden, and the international crops garden will be redesigned in a more ornamental fashion. As funding allows, these and other new gardens will be installed following completion of the new visitor center.



Completely redesigned with a large palette of perennials and new roses against a backdrop of flowering shrubs, the Martha Howell Young Flower Garden burst into exuberant bloom last summer. By reducing the number of tender annuals in this collection, the garden now better reflects our commitment to both sustainable gardening practices and improving our botanical collections.

# Inspiring Visitor Experiences

- In spring 2009, our construction crew built a beautiful set of stone steps to replace the deteriorating wooden staircase that leads from the Plant Production Facility to the Morgan Smith Trail and the east end of Newman Arboretum. The project was funded by a generous gift from Patricia DeCoursey, Class of 1954.
- To improve visitor orientation in two of our most popular gardens, we created a new sign for the Robison Herb Garden, funded by the Auraca Herbarists. A new, expanded bloom board for the Mundy Wildflower Garden was funded by the Plantations Director's Innovation Fund, a gift from L. John Wilkerson, Ph.D. 1970.



Construction began in August 2009 on the Cornell Plantations Brian C. Nevin Welcome Center. Slated to open in fall 2010, the new building will provide many long wished-for amenities for our visitors. Fully funded by gifts from alumni and friends, the building is named in memory of Brian Nevin, Class of 1950, at the request of his business partner and the lead donor, C. Sherwood "Woody" Southwick.

# Preserving Natural Areas

Our Natural Areas program played a lead role in developing new management plans for the campus gorges. Part of Cornell University's Master Plan, these efforts will help to reinforce the significance of these unique natural areas, and guide appropriate use, protection, and management.



- Cornell University has provided an initial allocation of \$500,000 toward the extensive work Plantations must undertake to repair the Cascadilla Gorge Trail. This new funding partnership acknowledges the importance of restoring the trail, which is one of the most often-used pedestrian thoroughfares by members of the Cornell community and local residents.



# Growing Greener

An experimental native lawn established last spring near the entrance to the Mundy Wildflower Garden flourished this year. Planted with a mix of low-growing grasses, sedges, and forbs, the 3,000-sq. ft. site demonstrates that an attractive and resilient lawn can be created with native species that require significantly less water, fertilizer, pesticides, and mowing.

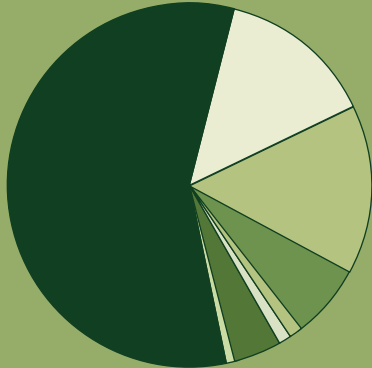
- In keeping with our commitment to progressive collections management and sustainable operations, our staff is developing and implementing a new Invasive Species Policy. Guided by this code of conduct, we will no longer add known invasive plant species to the botanical garden or arboretum, and we are removing or containing plants within the collections that are recognized as invasives.
- Plantations adheres to IPM (Integrated Pest Management) protocols to control greenhouse pests in our Plant Production Facility. Regular scouting by our plant health care team ensures that pests are quickly identified and dealt with before an infestation occurs. We use beneficial insects and mites as biological controls in the greenhouses, supplemented by the judicious use of only those pesticides that pose a minimal risk to humans and our biocontrol agents.

# Thank you

Your gifts ensure the continued growth of Plantations as a vital resource for teaching and research, a leader among public gardens, and a place that inspires everyone who walks our paths.

## Financial Report 2009

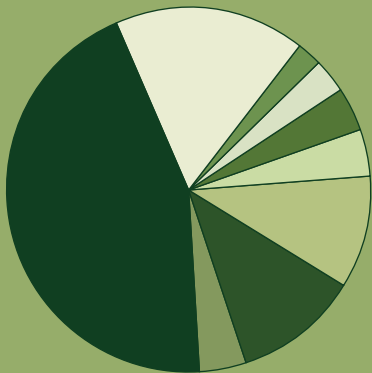
### Income



■ Endowments	\$1,701,871	57.5%
■ Gifts - Unrestricted	\$411,931	13.9%
■ Gifts - Designated & Restricted	\$439,404	14.9%
■ Cornell Endowed	\$239,755	8.1%
■ Visitor Info Center/Gift Shop	\$37,263	1.3%
■ Education Programs	\$16,222	0.5%
■ Grants	\$104,895	3.5%
■ Miscellaneous	\$6,555	0.2%

Total Operating Income **\$2,957,896**

### Expenses



■ Collections	\$1,314,400	44.4%
■ Education Program	\$509,790	17.2%
■ Visitor Resource Center	\$65,274	2.2%
■ Publications/Communications	\$91,183	3.1%
■ Special Projects	\$118,680	4.0%
■ Development/External Relations	\$130,390	4.4%
■ Facilities & Equipment	\$308,948	10.4%
■ Administration & Business	\$315,351	10.7%
■ Transferred (to)/from Holding Accts	\$103,880	3.5%

Total Operating Expenses **\$2,957,896**

Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

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To conserve resources, we have reduced the size of this report and regret that space does not allow us to include the names of all of our members and donors. This list recognizes donors who made gifts of \$500 or more to Cornell Plantations between July 1, 2008, and December 31, 2009. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information. Please contact Beth Anderson at 607-254-4727 or eaf3@cornell.edu regarding any concerns.

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