

Safari to Ohio

LOUIS B. MARTIN

1962 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboretums (AABGA), held in Wooster, Ohio.

Dressed in business suit, carrying attache cases stuffed with a few clean shirts and socks, the members of the safari converged on the Wooster College Inn, Wednesday, May 30. They were to spend the next three days exploring four botanical centers: Dawes Arboretum, Newark; Kingwood Center, Mansfield; Secrest Arboretum, Wooster; Holden Arboretum, Mentor. Armed with cameras, notebooks and questions, their game was plant displays, taxonomic peculiarities and cultural secrets.

Ohio, from Cleveland south to Wooster (a small town northeast of Columbus) has never looked more lush. This spring's foliage on tree and bush was bright.

To assemble the group, a half day business meeting was held. Committee chairmen gave their reports, plans for next year's meeting were discussed and the meeting adjourned.

Lunch and then we were off to Secrest Arboretum.

Secrest is a 75 acre portion of the Ohio State University Experimental Station. Founded in 1908, the objectives of the combined Station and Arboretum serve both fundamental and applied research.

Modern brick buildings, all new, form a respective quadrangle in the shadow of the large castle-like sandstone buildings of an earlier era. Greenhouses, in numbers, furnish year around growing facilities. All these necessities appear as islands in a great green sea of clipped blue grass. As we moved out toward the Arboretum, clean white barns, green fields (protected by white fences from cud-chewing cows) and freshly plowed earth greeted our gaze. For a view of our safari transportation, please see accompanying picture.

Over narrow dirt roads we progressed through timber lots of white pine, red cedar, white oak, pin oak, tulip trees. Past the flowering crab apple collections, redbuds, lilacs, philadelphus. For the naturalists aboard, there were open meadows, small swampy bogs, understory of native wild flowers. Brown thrashers, wild canaries, red wing blackbirds and the cardinal were all seen. Even bull and green frogs made their presence known.

The twenty year old *Taxus* species and variety planting was of special note and group interest. This collection supplies culture data and ornamental potential of *Taxus* for home owners through the midwest and Eastern states. Nurserymen continue to expand the number of varieties by giving their most esteemed selections to the Arboretum.

Fulfilling its educational role, Secrest is used as a study area for botany and horticulture students of Ohio State University.

This day came to an end with a social hour, dinner, a speaker, a short walk in the cool, storm threatening night air and to bed.

Friday morning early, our chartered bus transported us, at breakneck speeds over the narrow two lane highways, with even narrower bridges, to Dawes Arboretum.

From the entrance, Dawes appears to consist of a winding unpaved road, leading to a typical Ohio two-story home of mellowed red brick. A wide front porch, painted white and a *Philadelphus* foundation planting completed the picture.

Located on State Route 13, 6 miles south of Newark, Ohio, Dawes was dedicated to the public in 1929 by Hon. Beman G. Dawes. Its purpose, "The Pleasure of the Public and Education of the Youth."



The AABGA members pose on their 'safari' wagons just before the trip through Secret Arboretum, Wooster, Ohio.

His bequest consists of 500 acres in rolling hills, native woodland, a large lake and bogs where swamp Baldcypress grow with well developed "knees" exposed to catch the air.

Again we boarded a tractor drawn wagon as a safari vehicle and away we went. Well not exactly. Our combined weight, there were about 50 explorers, broke a portion of the wagon. After rearrangements were made in the seating, we continued, sagging wagon and all.

We rode and tramped through forests of maples, ash, pines of many kinds, Ohio buckeyes; flowering crab apples and hawthorn collections, honey locust collection, rhododendrons; past white fringe trees, Kentucky coffee trees, metasequoias, ginkgos. And finally to the farthest point from the entrance where a gigantic hedge is located.

This hedge of clipped *Thuja occidentalis* (Eastern Arborvitae) must be highlighted. Spelling out the words "Dawes Arboretum," it is 2100 feet long, 145 feet wide and approximately 5 feet high!

One other feature assures uniqueness at Dawes. The 64 trees planted by world famous personalities, i.e. Will Rogers, Wiley Post, and General Pershing to name but a few. Each tree is marked with a large bronze plaque.

This last may not appeal to purist, but this was one man's dream and idea to attract people to see magnificent tree specimens, for years to come. The fact that Beman Dawes continued to build tree collections and finally endowed the land for posterity, far over-

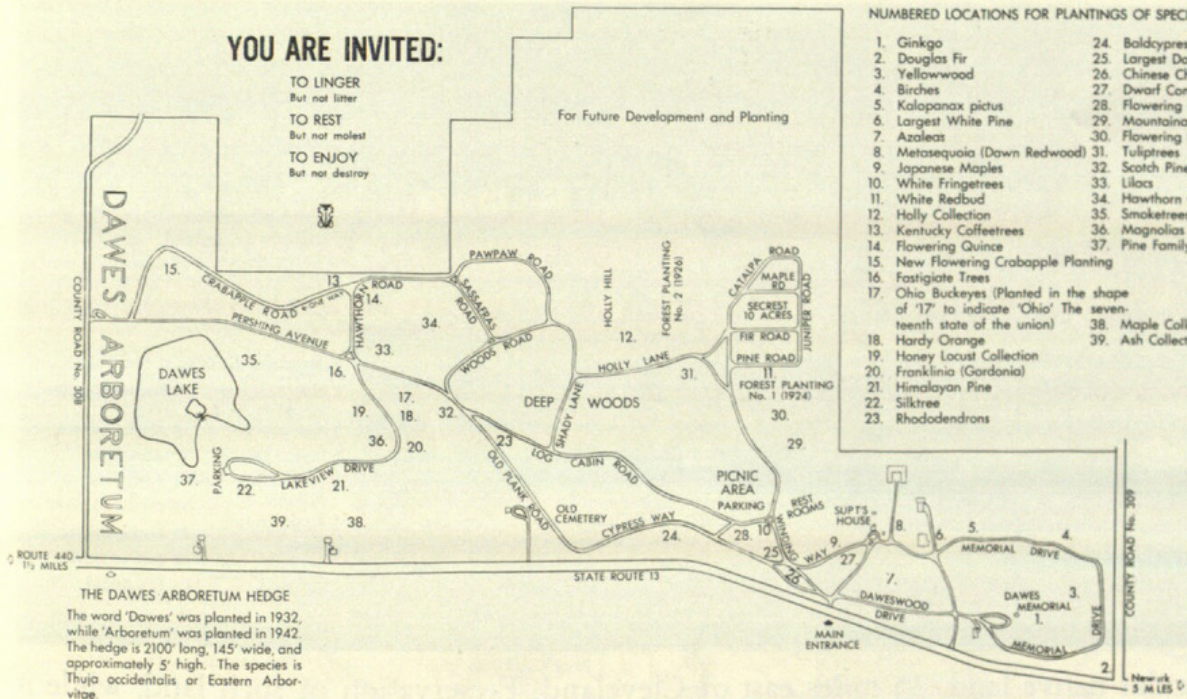
YOU ARE INVITED:

TO LINGER
But not litter
TO REST
But not molest
TO ENJOY
But not destroy

For Future Development and Planting

NUMBERED LOCATIONS FOR PLANTINGS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Ginkgo | 24. Baldcypress Swamp |
| 2. Douglas Fir | 25. Largest Dogwood |
| 3. Yellowwood | 26. Chinese Chestnuts |
| 4. Birches | 27. Dwarf Conifers |
| 5. Kalapanax pictus | 28. Flowering Crabapples |
| 6. Largest White Pine | 29. Mountainash |
| 7. Azaleas | 30. Flowering Cherries |
| 8. Metasequoia (Down Redwood) | 31. Tuliptrees |
| 9. Japanese Maples | 32. Scotch Pines |
| 10. White Fringetrees | 33. Lilacs |
| 11. White Redbud | 34. Hawthorn Collection |
| 12. Holly Collection | 35. Smoketrees |
| 13. Kentucky Coffeetrees | 36. Magnolias |
| 14. Flowering Quince | 37. Pine Family Collection |
| 15. New Flowering Crabapple Planting | |
| 16. Fastigiate Trees | |
| 17. Ohio Buckeyes (Planted in the shape of '17' to indicate 'Ohio' The seven-teenth state of the union) | 38. Maple Collection |
| 18. Hardy Orange | 39. Ash Collection |
| 19. Honey Locust Collection | |
| 20. Franklinia (Gordonia) | |
| 21. Himalayan Pine | |
| 22. Silktree | |
| 23. Rhododendrons | |



shadows any quaint affectations about labelling he might have had.

We'll leave the reader much to see on his own visit but if B. G. Dawes, Jr., son of the founder, asks you into the cellar room of the house, for light refreshments, do not hesitate. It's like stepping back through history. The secret room, behind whose steel door frightened travelers of the "underground railroad" found refuge, has a temperature the year round, just right for vintage beverages.

Mid-afternoon. Back on the bus and then some 50 miles due north, our safari arrived at Kingwood Center, Mansfield. Formerly the estate of Charles K. King, his generosity of the property and a substantial endowment, given to the people of this part of Ohio, unites horticulture and fine arts.

Kingwood to the plantsman is a botanical garden; a nature trail; a changing exhibit of the finest bulb plants and annual flowers; a wealthy man's house and home. To the non-plantsman, Kingwood is an outstanding example of Norman architecture; a music recital auditorium; a fine arts gallery; a drama setting; beautifully landscaped grounds.

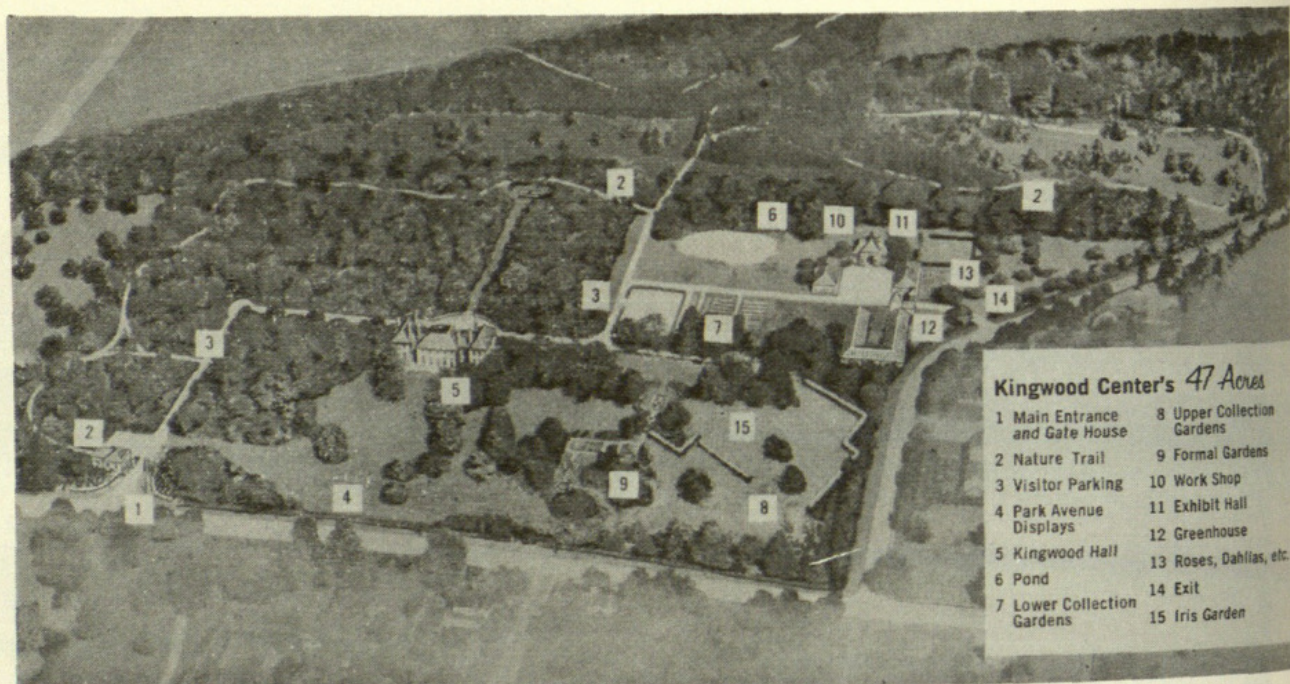
Kingwood is all of these. Plant emphasis is herbaceous, the woody material used as background settings for tulips, iris, peonies, glads and annuals. Much of the yearly color is furnished for purposes of officially testing new plant varieties.

Some 200,000 people visit Kingwood yearly. Many of these come for educational classes in botany and horticulture conducted by the various staff members.

We really did more botanizing than socializing, but when the latter is forced on one, the AABGA is up to any challenge. We were introduced to the five-man Administrative Board of Kingwood and their wives. Their warm reception and interest in our work made all of us feel very much at home. A catered dinner on the patio of Kingwood Hall closed this experience packed day.

Back on the bus, back to Wooster, back to bed. Saturday we were to go 75 miles northeast of Wooster to the Holden Arboretum at Mentor, Ohio.

Begun in 1931 with 100 acres, Holden Arboretum today, consists of 1700 acres of



spectacular native land, 35 miles east of Cleveland. Preservation of such land, while it is still available, has been an early objective of the Trustees. Although there are almost 4000 varieties of trees, shrubs and woody vines for study, plant collection development is really in its infancy.

We entered the gravelled parking area from a dirt and gravel county road. At first glance, the outer boundaries of Holden appear little different from those of neighboring farms. However, with detailed guide map in hand and headed down either the Blue or Red Trail, one finds that all similarity ends.

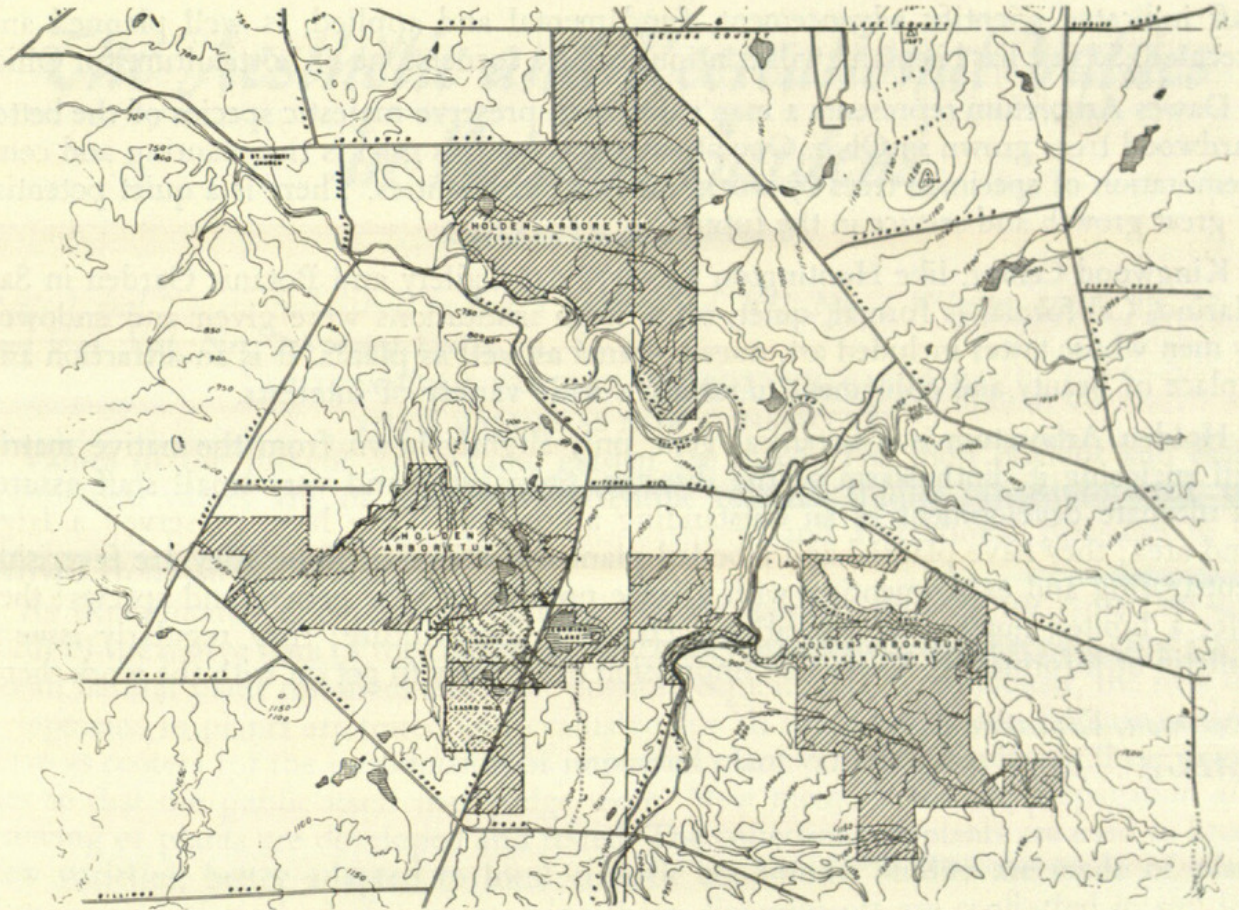
The two trails expose the explorer to: many ecological zones (Fallow Field Stage), (Thorn Scrub Stage), (Sub-Climax Forest of ash, tulip tree, red maples), (Oak-Hickory Forest) and finally (Climax Forest of beech and maple); plantings of *Pinus ponderosa scopulorum*, *Pinus contorta latifolia*, *Picea pungens*, *Picea canadensis*, *Thuja occidentalis* and *Larix laricina*. There's Buttonbush Bog and Owl Bog, each giving way shoreward to bog edge communities, such as American elm—red maple. The lilac collection in its own selected site; the privets and honeysuckle collections; flowering crab apples, hawthornes, pears, cherries and plums. A great number of the species and varieties have been labelled with large wooden display tags; however, there is still much unidentified material.

Lunch, box style, refreshed the explorers. Some were beginning to show the strain of so much hiking in the open air, away from their air conditioned offices and laboratories.

We boarded a sightseeing bus and after covering the greater portion of the 1700 acres, we stopped at the propagation and nursery area.

We never quite got over one surprise, before another appeared around the bend in these arboretums of Ohio.

The greenhouse, quite old looking was only of academic interest. The nursery beds out back were surprise number one. In mounded beds of shredded corn cobs were row on row of cuttings. The rows were approximately a foot apart and probably 100 feet long. We didn't count the number of rows, but there were many. And who could tell



HOLDEN ARBORETUM

the number of species and varieties starting out? There must have been hundreds. But this wasn't all.

A short walk brought us to the edge of the field nursery and surprise number two. What a sight. Here were two or three acres cut out of a dense native forest; however, this area consisted of row after row of specimen plants. Each row was at least 200 feet long. Here again was displayed a huge number of species and varieties. The contrast between this nursery and the typical gallon can nurseries of California was astonishing. But this wasn't all.

The cuttings behind the greenhouses, the field nursery and acres of new plantings in other parts of the Arboretum are accomplished by one propagator and his helper! Surprise three.

Holden has set an unprecedented membership attraction. Each membership offers fishing privileges in anyone of its five well stocked ponds.

About 5:00 p.m., the explorers shook hands all around, thanked the collective hosts and then scattered like quail flushed from a bush. Some north, some east, some south and two headed for California. Much plant knowledge and experiences had been exchanged, many new friends were acquired, many old friendships were renewed. It had been a wonderfully successful meeting.

Secrest Arboretum serves the largest number of the population of Ohio. The neatness of buildings and grounds, the up to date construction and the friendly nature of the

staff indicated scientific advancement, fundamental and applied, is well planned and executed. Secrest has been and will continue to be a cornerstone of horticulture for Ohio.

Dawes Arboretum represents a man's dream to preserve majestic species of the better hardwood trees grown in Ohio. One attempt toward this goal is the planting and commemoration of specimen trees by world famous personalities. There is a quiet potential of great growth and service in the future.

Kingwood Center, like Huntington Library, Art Gallery and Botanic Garden in San Marino, California, is formal, quiet, calm. Both institutions were given and endowed by men whose tastes included art, music, drama as well as plants. It is an attraction and a place of beauty and enjoyment to satisfy a wide variety of interests.

Holden Arboretum is a botanical gem, only slightly hewn from the native matrix still enclosing it. Enthusiasm of the director, propagator and very small staff assures its ultimate development as an outstanding arboretum. They have preserved a large land area; they have planted and labelled plant collections of note; they are feverishly propagating and experimenting with a large number of new genera and species; they offer a limited number of educational classes in horticulture; they regularly issue a bulletin of information. There's an impression of urgency to get on with the work there.

Chairman, Education Comm.

AABGA

The Red Jacaranda

MRS. MILDRED ORPET

Years ago, either late Roosevelt or early Truman, the plant list from the USDA offered plants of a "red Jacaranda." My husband, E. O. Orpet, ordered two, which we planted in the nursery grounds. In due course they both flowered, both the ordinary blue jacaranda. We were puzzled, but then learned that President Roosevelt, on a goodwill tour, had seen a "red Jacaranda" in Mexico and ordered the seed from the tree collected and sent to the Dept. for propagation and distribution.

Later, a customer, who had been to Mexico a great deal, came in and we told her the story, whereupon she began to laugh. She said that in the plaza of a city down there (she thinks it was Guadalajara now, but has forgotten the incident—alas don't we all forget!) there stands an enormous jacaranda which is almost smothered with a red bougainvillea. Naturally, when the tree isn't in bloom and the bougainvillea is, it must be a striking sight. So the mistake was made! I wonder how many other nurserymen order the red "jacaranda"—and if anyone else has run down the source? At all events, now that we have a white and a blue jacaranda it's too bad we don't have a red one.

Santa Barbara, California



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