

Notes from the Arnold Arboretum

A walk through the Arboretum on a mild day in winter can be a rewarding experience but, judging from the number of visitors we see at this time of year, few people are aware of this. Possibly the cold weather is responsible for such a seasonal lack of interest in plants, but it is more probable that we judge the beauty of a plant too much in terms of the flowers it produces, of the fruit it bears, or of its fall color.

It is true that climate places rather severe restrictions upon the types of plants that can be grown in this area. In comparison with milder parts of the country, we certainly cannot boast a long list of broad-leaved evergreens to brighten a dreary landscape. Smaller still would be a list of those plants which retain conspicuous attractive fruits or berries throughout the winter, and even smaller would be a list of flowers that could be seen in the few mild interludes between winter blasts.

What, then, does the Arboretum have to offer during nearly six months of the year when leaves are gone from the trees? Mainly, there is a chance to see many things which are either hidden or unnoticed at other times.

The true character of the shape and habit of growth of individual trees can be fully appreciated. The *Phellodendrons* along the Meadow Road present a remarkable picture with their wide, arching, ascending, corky branches supporting a delicate tracery of twigs posed against the blue winter sky. Further along the road ancient oaks in the natural woods somberly proclaim the grace and dignity which only age can impart. The picture is repeated in various ways throughout the Arboretum, and particularly good examples of diversity of form may be found among the lindens, maples, elms, oaks, and especially the conifers. It is difficult to imagine a lovelier view in any garden than that of the Pinetum after a heavy fall of snow.

Another favorite winter scene is that of the American Beeches on the bank of Bussey Brook opposite Hemlock Hill. Surrounded on three sides by dark conifers, the silver-gray trunks and branches literally glow in the sunlight and present a striking

example of the use of color in the winter landscape. Near the three ponds at the far end of the Meadow Road are extensive plantings of *Cornus sericea* and *C. sericea* 'Flaviramea'. Stems of the former are red; those of the latter, bright yellow. This pleasing contrast is enhanced by the dull red twigs of the Virginia Rose, *Rosa virginiana*, planted as a low informal hedge in the foreground.

Scattered throughout the Arboretum are noteworthy trees which, for one reason or another, have interesting bark characteristics. Some are brightly colored, some are striped, others ex-foliate. The magnificent specimen of the Paperbark Maple, *Acer griseum*, on Bussey Hill should not be missed. The peeling cinnamon-brown bark which glows in the low rays of the winter sun provides about as much as any photographer could demand.

A walk past the shrub beds by the Centre Street wall will reveal a number of broad-leaved evergreens which are hardy at the Arboretum, and the dwarf conifers on the slope below the bonsai house deserve a visit to see the variations in color which these plants exhibit in winter.

ROBERT S. HEBB

Summary of weather data recorded at the Dana Greenhouses,
January 1968–November 1969

1968			1969		
Precipitation	Avg. 8 a.m. Temp.		Precipitation	Avg. 8 a.m. Temp.	
4.14	20	JAN	2.41	25	
.82	22.5	FEB	5.45	27	
9.20	36.5	MAR	2.41	33	
2.16	51	APR	5.06	49.7	
3.91	54.2	MAY	2.84	57.1	
6.25	64	JUN	1.18	67.6	
.61	71.9	JUL	3.01	68.7	
1.86	66.1	AUG	2.28	68.5	
2.14	58.6	SEP	4.90	58.6	
1.75	51.3	OCT	1.97	48.1	
7.26	39.3	NOV	9.72	40.4	
6.15	26.8	DEC	—	—	

Fig. 4, opposite: Arnold Arboretum, conifers in winter.
Photo: P. Bruns.



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