



Please visit our website at uidaho.edu/arboretum

## Inside this Issue

Is it a Yucca?	1-3
Message from the President	4
Calendar of Upcoming Events	4
Paul Warnick Arboretum Scholarship Endowment	5
Arboretum Associates Donor Roll	6-7
Re-siding the Arboretum Barn	8-9
Report from the Horticulturist 10	0-11

# ArborNotes

A Newsletter of the Arboretum Associates

February 2021

## Is it a Yucca?

In this year of the pandemic, there has been one very entertaining distraction in the Arboretum. A plant in the Xeriscape garden put up a spectacular bloom for the first time since it was planted 17 years ago. I received the plant as a small, 4" potted seedling from Pat Wells, a research scientist with the U.S. Forest Service at their lab here in Moscow. I planted it in the Xeriscape garden in 2003. At the time, he had an older plant from the same seed collection in his front yard here in Moscow. He told me it was from a Yucca that he had collected the seeds from near Mule Creek, New Mexico; but since it hadn't flowered yet he didn't know exactly what species it was. A few years passed, and his plant flowered spectacularly one summer. The flower spike was more than 20' tall, with the foliage part well over 6'. If he was able to identify it at that time I never found out, and since he has passed away, I will never know. His plant was much larger than the one in the Arboretum, probably because it was growing in his irrigated front lawn. The year after flowering his plant died, which is not particularly unusual in that family of plants. Essentially the plant gambles all of its resources on producing one big bang of flowers to produce seed to propagate itself, then dies. The term to describe that is 'monocarpic' and there are several forms of succulents, especially agaves, that exhibit that pattern.



## **Come Grow With Us**

## ArborNotes

A Newsletter of the Arboretum Associates University of Idaho Arboretum and Botanical Garden

Published by ARBORETUM ASSOCIATES University of Idaho 875 Perimeter Drive MS 3143 Moscow, Idaho 83844-3143

> *President* Katherine Clancy

Vice-President Bill Bowler

Secretary Nancy Sprague

> *Treasurer* Joy Fisher

Past President Kris Roby

*Members-at-Large* Jan Leander Julie Miller

Arboretum Horticulturist Paul Warnick 875 Perimeter Drive MS 2281 Moscow, ID 83844-2281 Phone: (208) 885-5978 arboretum@uidaho.edu

#### **FEBRUARY 2021**

Now, this June, I see a flower spike beginning to form on the plant in the Xeriscape garden and it proceeds to pretty much explode upwards. It grew more than 2' per week for the next few weeks, before topping out at more than 15' and flowering. At that point, I thought it would be a fairly straightforward process to identify the species, then rapidly discovered how wrong I was. I assumed that finding a trunk forming, tall flowering spike, monocarpic yucca native to Central New Mexico would be a simple google search away.

No such luck, as nothing quite fit all those criteria. Then I consulted with various people, both here on campus and further afield (including the Denver Botanic Garden and the Desert Museum in Phoenix, AZ.). They all had suggestions, but no firm commitments and still nothing quite checked all the right boxes.

Then to further muddy the waters, I got an email telling me about another plant flowering here in Moscow that looked like the one in the Arboretum, only even bigger! Of course, I ran right over and had a look at it and confirmed that it had to be the same plant. It took several trips (I expect the neighbors were becoming suspicious) but eventually found someone at home to ask about the plant. Unfortunately they had only lived in the house for about 10 years, so they didn't know anything about the origins of the plant—but, he did have big news, the plant had flowered the same way three times in the 10 years he had lived there!



#### February 2021

I wanted to confirm there was a connection between this plant and the one in the Arboretum so I did a title search on the house. There had been two previous owners of the house, neither of the names meant anything to me, but I asked some people who had worked with Pat Wells ( the original plant supplier) and amazingly they knew both previous owners and they both had known and worked with Pat Wells. Unfortunately, the original owner, who planted the plant has also died, so I probably will never know for sure, but it seems very likely that Pat shared a plant with him from the original planting that he had in his front yard.

The fact that the newly discovered plant had flowered three times pretty much threw out the monocarpic trait as an identifier and the species that most everyone had agreed upon didn't work anymore! So now the consensus seems to be that the plant is a form of Yucca elata with an unusually large flower spike.

I had hoped that the plant in the Xeriscape garden would set seeds and we would be able to propagate them again; but many Yuccas have very specific pollinator relationships and although there were lots of bees and hummingbirds around the flowers, apparently none got pollinated and no seeds formed. Now the big question is whether or not the parent plant will die. So far, it shows no signs of decline, so I am hopeful it will continue to grow and hopefully put on another show in the future.

> PaulWarnick 11-12-20







## Message from the President

It has been a challenging year for the Arboretum Board and the world. We started the year wondering if Arboretum maintenance would be outsourced to a private contractor and we might lose Paul to early retirement. Just as those worries came off our plate, Covid-19 reared its ugly head and we had to dial back or cancel our events. Because Paul had ordered plants for it, a small plant "sale" was held in May on the lawn by the red barn, at the south entrance (see separate article). Both the Annual Meeting and the Summer Concert had to be cancelled. So this newsletter is a little shorter than usual. We hold our meetings on Zoom and look forward to a time when we can meet in person again.

But we were able to get the red barn re-sided and stained (see separate article) and it looks great! It was exciting to watch the yucca grow tall and then flower. Since people did not feel comfortable being indoors with friends, many came to walk in and enjoy the Arboretum, as did a family of moose. It is nice to walk amongst the plants and trees that know nothing of Covid-19 and provide their beauty to brighten our spirits.

Heartfelt thanks go to Paul for deciding not to retire early and then working without his normal staff for much of the summer. The Arboretum always looks lovely and we so appreciate the work he does to make that happen. We are also grateful to all of you who support the U of I Arboretum and our events. It is looking like maybe we will get to have some by summer 2021. We are excited about a new scholarship endowment that gives priority to the students who work in the Arboretum. Learn more about it in the article by Kris Roby.

On behalf of the Board, thank you again for your continued support through your donations, membership in Arboretum Associates and your volunteer work on behalf of the U of I Arboretum and Botanical Gardens.

> Katherine Clancy, President Arboretum Associates Board



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

#### DATE AND TIME TO BE DETERMINED

#### Arboretum Associates Annual Meeting

#### Time: TBD Join us for appetizers and a no-host bar followed by a brief business meeting and a presentation by Paul Warnick, Arboretum Horticulturist

1912 Center Great Room, 412 E. 3rd Street, Moscow

### DATE AND TIME TO BE DETERMINED Arboretum Associates Annual Plant Sale!

Time: TBD. Palouse Ice Rink, Latah County Fairgrounds

#### JULY 12, 2021

#### 20th Annual "Summer Breezes and Sweet Sounds" Concert

7:00 p.m. Bring your blankets and lawn chairs *Free Concert in the Arboretum* 

## Paul Warnick Arboretum Scholarship Endowment

It is a pleasure to announce a newly established endowment to honor and support the work of Paul Warnick, Arboretum Horticulturist. Phyllis Vettrus (Dean L. and Phyllis J. Vettrus Living Trust) and friends recently gave generous gifts to establish a scholarship that gives first preference to students who work alongside Paul in the Arboretum. Phyllis and her late husband, Dean, worked closely with Paul on a three-year project from 2015 to 2018 culminating in a beautiful granite rock wall and terraces called "This Gathering Place" also known as the "Vettrus Gathering Place." It is located at the north end of the Arboretum across the road from the upper kiosk and has quickly become a favorite place to gather and a popular site for photo shoots. The project honors Dean's lead volunteer work in the early development of the Arboretum and his 26 years as director of the UI Student Union and ASUI.

While working with Paul on the major project, Phyllis said she and Dean came to know Paul quite well and admired his dedication, work ethic, and exceptional efforts. In a recent phone conversation, Phyllis said, "Paul is such a delightful person. He has many creative ideas, is a good listener, and collaborates well with others." She went on to say that she would like him to have more help with the maintenance and continued growth of the Arboretum and wanted to provide incentive and financial support to students who work for Paul.

Paul began working in the U of I Arboreta in 2000 and took over supervision of the Arboreta upon Dr. Richard Naskali's retirement in 2003. He has worked tirelessly to develop and enhance the Arboretum and make it one of the most popular places on the Palouse. It is often referred to as the "crown jewel" of the University of Idaho.



All gifts received will be applied to the Paul Warnick Arboretum Scholarship Endowment and will help meet Phyllis' goal of permanently funding the scholarship with a minimum of \$25,000. Once the \$25,000 is met, future gifts to augment the endowment will always be welcome.

## If you would like to participate in this fundraising effort, see below for giving options:

 Send a check, made payable to: University of Idaho Foundation 875 Perimeter Drive, MS 3143 Moscow, ID 83844-3143

Please include a note or write on the check that the gift should be applied to designation

#### EE846: Paul Warnick Arboretum Scholarship Endowment.

- Make a credit card gift online at www.uidaho. edu/givenow and type Paul Warnick in the Designation field.
- **3)** To make a credit card gift over the phone contact the University of Idaho Foundation at 208-885-4000.
- 4) To make a gift of stock (marketable securities) contact the University of Idaho Foundation at 208-885-4000.
- 5) To make a direct gift from an IRA or to plan an estate gift contact Sharon Morgan by phone at 866-671-7041 or by email at morgans@uidaho.edu.
- 6) To make a gift via University of Idaho payroll deduction, contact the University of Idaho Foundation at 208-885-4000.
- 7) For any other gift inquiries, contact the University of Idaho Foundation at 208-885-4000.

Kris Roby, Past President



## Arboretum Associates Donor Roll

Thank you to the many generous donors who supported the University of Idaho Arboretum and Botanical Garden from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. At total of \$49,022.16 was received from membership gifts, gifts for endowments that support the Arboretum, and gifts to support specific Arboretum projects. Your support makes a difference.

#### Life Associates

American International Group, Inc. Auverson Family Mineral Trust Elna Barton Judi Beck & Tom Alberg Bert Bowler Ben Bowler Warren Bowler Wilma & Edd Bowler John Burlison Sharon Christoph & Christopher Davidson Roberta & Charles Graham Terry & Christine Gray C. Scott & Gabriella Green Alma & David Hanson Patricia Jordan Jean & Roger Korus Jan & Dick Leander Louise Luce Makiia & Chris Lucier Judith Marineau Luz & Albert Merkel Moscow Rotary Club Marcia & Rob Parish Raven Trust Fund Teita & Tom Reveley Melissa Rockwood Nancy & Garth Sasser Jean'ne Shreeve Craig & Jane Spencer Marguerite Smiley Robert N. Steele Jeanne Steinhoff William Stellmon **Ellen** Thiem Lauren Wenny **Doris Williams** Jaki Wright & Bill Bowler

## Fiscal Year 2020 Membership Gifts

Life Associate

C. Scott & Gabriella Green David & Alma Hanson Richard & Jan Leander Garth & Nancy Sasser Craig & Jane Spencer Ellen Thiem

#### Sponsor

Alane & Roger Blanchard Frank & Wendy Burlison Ray & Jill Dacey Walter Hesford & Elinor Michel David & Darla Port Martin & Julia Trail Donna Vincenti

#### Patron

Cheryl & William Ardrey Laurie Austin Deborah Bell Patricia Colberg & N. Swoboda-Colberg Jane Erickson Douglas & Robin Finch Joy Fisher Karla Harman Thomas Hardin & Carol Kawula Joan Kirkby John & Jennifer O'Laughlin Susan Roberts Kris Roby & Rodney Frey Steven & Mary Ullrich USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Lauren Wenny

#### Donor

David Barber Steven Basoa & Sarah Rial Karl & MaryAnn Boehmke Kenton Bird & Gerri Sayler Teresa Boykin James & Susan Calvert Linda Fry & Duane Char Lawrence & Karen Chinn Mary Katherine Clancy Steve & Sally Davidson Danelle Elder James & Lucinda Fisher David & Rhonda Gaylord Archie & Mary George John & Carol Gilligan John & Sandra Goffinet Zena Hartung Charles Horgan & Andrea Sharps Linn Hower & Elisabeth Ridgway Mark Hume & Mary DuPree Mark & Diane Jackson Crawford & Joan Judge Steve Kadlec Darrell & Janice Kent Margaret Kenyon Larry & Joanne Kirkland

#### February 2021

Michael Kyte & Martha Ford Thomas & Carolyn Leege Corinne Lyle **Julie Miller** Lawrence & Marjorie O'Keeffe Dennis & Catharina Parry William Phillips & Nancy Sprague Steven & Beverly Poole Dan & Martha Schmidt Paul & Teresa Scott Philip Shinn Charles Simpson Virginia Snyder Robert N. Steele John & Sandra Stoops Joanne Sutton Thomas & Jeanette von Alten Diane Walker Gerald Wright

#### Sustaining

Fauna & James Allen Elinor Anderson Louise Avery Carolyn Bowler Elisabeth Berlinger Caroline Christenson Margaret Conrad Marc Needham & Deborah Crichton John K. Fellman & Harriet Hughes Candida Gillis Leo & Jackie Greenwalt Patricia Heekin Gretchen Kelley Bietz & Forrest Bietz Matt & Marie Kleffner Shawna Lindquist Judith Marineau Peter Kitman II & Jody Northcutt Howard & Jan Peavy

Roger Rowley & Carise Skinner Adelaide Snider Charles Swift & Deborah Stenkamp Robert & Brenda Tribelhorn Mark & Ann Girand Ulliman Grace Wallace Mike & Carol Wilson

#### Active

Glenda Gardiner Elizabeth Heidelberger David & Kerri Renner George Bridges Anna & Paul Conditt Jerry & Nona Henderson Amy Newsome John Perrigo Tom & Krista Stanley Lawrence & Justine Landes Jacob & Kiz Leppert Bill London & Gina Gormley Christine Mallon Joe & Mary May Marci Miller David & Jan Rauk Donald Regan & Maureen Taylor Regan Matt & Karen Telin Phyllis Vettrus Gary Ingram & Tonie Fitzgerald William & Lori Krasselt Scott Lawrence Juan Chiquito Nina Pulido Sarah Smith

#### Endowment

Alfred & Bonnie Janssen Julie McCabe Robert Steele

#### Projects

Eric Anderson Grace Barca Ben & Mollie Beckler Bill Bowler & Jaki Wright David & Carlotta Boyd Karen & Don Burnett City of Moscow Jeremiah & Kira Deweber Judy Ferguson Jeffrey Gossard Shelley Hill Raymond & Bettie Hoff Doral & Jodell Hoff Bobbi Hughes Richard & Marlene Johnston David & Rebecca Knapp John & Lois Menard Reid & Nancy Miller Duane & Joyce Parr Carol & John Reid Shirley Rencken Marjory Stage Charlotte A. Staihar Robert & Margaret Stovicek Kathryn Swenson Greg & Linda Teske Kimberly & Dee Thompson Valley Garden Club Gary Williams & Joy Passanante Cathryn Willmes Martin & Julia Trail Ray & Jill Dacey James & Lucinda Fisher Charles Simpson Mike & Carol Wilson

## Re-siding the Arboretum Barn

The Arboretum barn has become a local landmark, known either as the 'red barn' or the 'Arboretum barn'. It presides over the south entry to the Arboretum, making an easily identifiable destination. The barn was built in 1908, the oldest barn on the U of I campus. It is an amazing structure, consisting of a main level and a loft, both of which step down three levels to follow the slope. It does not have a solid foundation, but sits on rocks and mortared bricks, and yet after more than 110 years it is still remarkably square and level. The barn has undergone several changes over the years, and that history was well documented in an article written by Dr. Naskali, the Arboretum's first Director, in 2009. That article is available at Arbor Notes - April 2009.

In 1998 the Idaho State Department of Public Works funded a critical project to replace the original roof and do some structural work on the support beams. Roof failure is usually the cause of barns falling apart. Moisture leaks in and the structure begins to rot and fall apart. The roofing project prevented that and extended the life expectancy of the barn. Then in 2006 the Arboretum Associates donors funded a project to re-paint the barn. Again, the life expectancy was extended; but, even with the painting the original wood siding was beginning to fall apart. In 2002 the wooden siding on the north side of the barn was replaced with steel siding because snow was sliding off the new steel roof, accumulating on the north wall and the moisture was rotting the siding and support framework. Steel siding seemed like the appropriate choice in that situation to avoid further rot issues, but pretty much everyone involved in the decision to re-side the rest of the barn did not want to use steel, feeling it would take away from the charm and character of the building. So, earlier this summer a contract was signed with Quality



#### February 2021

Contractors from Deary, Idaho to re-side the barn with 1x12" rough sawn lumber and 1x4" battens. As you cannot go to Home Depot and pick up that kind of lumber, the contractor had the trees harvested and milled at a saw mill in Kamiah, Idaho this summer, then the lumber was allowed to cure on site until late October to reduce the chance of the boards twisting and splitting. Installation was done in three weeks in late October/ early November. Watching the crew do the project using two large 'man-lifts', one large fork lift and countless power and air driven tools gave me a huge appreciation for the scope of the original project which was accomplished with nothing but man power, hand tools and ladders.

The re-siding project was entirely funded with private donations to Arboretum Associates. I am confident that the project should make it possible for the barn to last another 100 years and appreciate the support of the donors that made that possible.



Paul Warnick



## Report from the Horticulturist

Even without the COVID pandemic it has been an unusual year, with budget cuts, the prospect of outsourcing Arboretum maintenance to a private contractor and potential early retirement incentives all coming before the pandemic came along and pretty much changed everything. I had decided not to retire and the University had decided not to outsource before the shutdown, and the shutdown kind of forced us to spend less money than the budget cuts would have entailed, so all of that more or less worked out for the best.

Because of the shutdown I was not able to hire any seasonal help until the middle of June. In a normal year I like to hire a non-student worker who can start working in late March and two students who can work part time starting then and then transition to full time when classes finish in mid-May. This year, I hired three students in mid-June, two of whom were not able to work after classes started in August, and the remaining student ended up having to do a mandatory quarantine with the rest of his fraternity for 3 weeks in September. So, I have spent a lot of this year as a solo act, trying to fake it and keep the Arboretum as presentable as possible.

The other by-product of the pandemic is a little harder to quantify; but I am sure that the number of people using the Arboretum has grown immensely. Right after the shutdown in March the south parking lot was often full, even on nasty weather week days. The good news is that even with the increased usage, I have not seen a significant increase in litter or other inappropriate use. Right after the shutdown began, I saw a lot more dogs in the Arboretum, and heard some discouraging responses when I asked their owners to take the pets out; but, I think once people realized there was still someone watching, the dogs dropped back down to more normal levels (at least while I was out working).

When the shut down began in March there was some question about whether or not Arboretum work was deemed 'essential' or not, so for the first week or so I did some office work from home. Then it was decided that as state employees, all University employees were considered essential and if they could not do their jobs from home were expected to report to work. Although I questioned a little bit how 'essential' mowing the Arboretum grass was, I felt pretty safe out there working by myself. I try to distance myself from visitors and decided as long as I could do that I was fine with not wearing a mask. Then the wildfire smoke came in record amounts in September and even wearing a mask I could only take working outside half days. That experience gave me a huge appreciation for all of the people who have to wear masks all day at work.

Even with the challenges of the pandemic we have managed to continue to plant more than 600 new 'permanent' plants, over 1,000 annuals and complete one of the bigger improvement projects we have ever done this year. That project was to re-side the Arboretum barn (see separate article).

The biggest planting project expanded the Arboretum collections out into the cultivated field north of the barn. That approximately 20 acre field has been designated as part of the Arboretum since the beginning of the site. It had been farmed by a local farmer for many years, then last year the College of Agriculture took it over to expand their space for research plots. The outside edges of the field are too steep to be useful for research, as the slope will affect the results too much. At some point,





the College will plant drought tolerant grasses and mow those areas. Last year, a professor at North Dakota State University solicited other University Arboreta to work with them on a research project. They were looking to plant 100 trees of two different species of poplars from five different locations in different geographical areas to test their growth in different climates. Dr. George Newcombe, a professor in the College of Natural Resources has done extensive work with poplars and he and one of his graduate students, Abigail Ferson, agreed to take on the research portion of the project. The trees will be grown for 3 years in a plot on the sloped part of the field north of the barn, with data collected on their growth and the timing of things like bud break and leaf drop. There is more information on the project at this website: mini poplar garden article

I hope this project will accomplish two things, first expand the use of the Arboretum for published research, which is important when the Arboretum is accredited with Arbnet, the national Arboretum network; and also to begin expansion into the undeveloped part of the site.

A smaller, but perhaps just as significant project has been a planting of native ferns and wildflowers under the shade of the Western White Pines on the west slope of the Arboretum. The planting is a memorial to Ray Hoff, who was a researcher for the U.S. Forest Service at their lab here in Moscow. The focus of much of his research was on Western White Pines and his family hoped there could be some connection with those trees. There are already quite a few Western White Pines in the collection, so we couldn't really justify more of them; but one of the challenges that has not been addressed is to try to develop an understory of native plants under the shade of the established trees in the Arboretum. So, we decided to try to grow native, shade loving plants under the existing white pines. Last year we built a new pathway across the slope and installed two 'sitting logs' (from white pines removed from the Arboretum), and installed irrigation to the site. Then this spring we planted two varieties of ferns and six wildflower species. If they prove successful (and it looks good so far) we will expand the planting.

With the help of volunteers from Arboretum Associates (Kris Roby, Nancy Sprague and Nancy Sasser) we were able to get nearly as many annual flowers planted as we usually do this year, including the large bed by the barn, a smaller bed by the top entrance and the 'sunflower forest' adjacent to the parking lot at the south end. I also want to express immense gratitude to Bonnie Burkett, who has volunteered in the Arboretum for the past two years, doing all kinds of unglamorous weeding and clean up chores.

The other major newsworthy event in the Arboretum this year was the damage caused by the early snow storm on October 24th. Although it wasn't much snow (less than 3"), it was wet and heavy. That combined with most of the leaves still hanging on the deciduous trees resulted in the worst storm damage I have seen in my 20 years in the Arboretum. The score card so far is seven trees totally removed and 112 trees or shrubs that required chain saw surgery. That does not include at least 15 more that are too high for me to reach with a ladder and a pole pruner, and no doubt there will be several more that show up later. As with most of Mother Nature's work, I am surprised by how random it appears. Often one tree of a particular species had significant damage while another of the same species right next to it looks untouched. Sometimes you can see a bad branch angle or other weakness, but often it seemed like the undamaged one had even worse looking liabilities. Unfortunately, some parts of campus, the Ad Lawn in particular had even worse damage.

As always, all of these projects, including re-siding the barn, are only possible because of support of generous individual donors. That support is what created the Arboretum, and it continues to be the only means of adding to the collections or improving the site. Your support is greatly appreciated and is what motivates me and my crew to continue to work to maintain and improve the Arboretum.

> PaulWarnick 11-12-20





Arboretum Associates 875 Perimeter Drive MS 3143 Moscow, ID 83844-3143



PRESRT STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

**Renew your annual contribution to the Arboretum Associates for Fiscal Year 2021 and contribute to your favorite project fund.** Contributors receive our periodic ARBORNOTES. Please mail your tax deductible contributions to: Arboretum Associates, University of Idaho, 875 Perimeter Drive MS 3143, Moscow, ID 83844-3143.

**OR** Renew your annual contribution using the secure University of Idaho online gift form. Go to <u>uidaho.edu/giving/make-a-gift</u> and search for "Arboretum Associates" when selecting a fund. *Thank You!* 

Name	MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES
Address	Active
City State Zip	Sustaining\$50 - \$99
Fund Contribution   Arboretum Associates \$	Sponsor \$500 - \$999 Life Associate\$1,000 and above
Card# Expiration Date	
Signature	