



# Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Spring 2011 Newsletter

Volume 23 No. 2

## Magnolias – Spring's First Star Attraction



R. Hincheliff

*Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' and Drumstick primula (*Primula denticulata*)  
in the scented border, Ornamental Gardens

*Why has the collection of magnolias at the Arboretum been such a success? Crispin Wood, Lead Hand, Arboretum, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, explains.*

**T**he magnolias are the first of the various collections of flowering trees and shrubs in the Dominion

Arboretum to welcome spring. Before the lilacs, crab apples, and cherries bloom, magnolias are the star attraction.

Not known for their winter hardiness, many magnolias have only recently proven their worthiness as an ornamental in Ottawa's cold climate. Consequently, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's

(AAFC) collection is relatively small, with fewer than 100 specimens, the majority of which are less than 15 years old. (See Page 6 for the location of magnolias around the Farm.)

### A hidden treasure

Nestled in the north end of the Arboretum, just out of sight from Prince of Wales Drive, rests a grove of a dozen or so mature magnolias and several young, newer cultivars. A hidden treasure, this unique collection is a concise representation of the various magnolia species that can tolerate Ottawa's harsh northern winters. Not all of the magnolia species and cultivars in this collection, however, are hardy enough to survive just anywhere in Ottawa. Several factors such as topography and genetic selection figure prominently in the existence of these wonderful specimens.

### The cold air tunnel/funnel

In 1967, the first train passed through the newly constructed Dow's Lake train tunnel (now the O-train tunnel). Previously, the track was above ground. The construction of the tunnel, which included a deep trench extending through the north end of the Arboretum, had an interesting effect on the climate in that part of the Arboretum. The cold winter air that once sat in the valley below the north-facing escarpment could now funnel down into the tunnel. At that time, Farm staff decided to test this hypothesis, planting tender southern species such as magnolia, adjacent to the tunnel.

*Continued on Page 3*

## President's Message

The gardening season is just around the corner and our volunteers will soon be at work in the Ornamental Gardens, Arboretum and Shelterbelt. I certainly look forward to getting outdoors again and hope you will join us if you can.

Meanwhile, the inside work continues. Our dedicated office volunteers do not have an off season and do a marvellous job taking care of a myriad of administrative tasks. The work of the Board of Directors also continues. With their varied backgrounds, Board members (see photo) cover a wide range of responsibilities, working together to accomplish the mission of the Friends of the Farm. Please feel free to contact us or the office at any time. Your input is always welcome.

Chuck Craddock

## Mots du président

La saison du jardinage arrive bientôt et nos bénévoles travailleront aussitôt dans les Jardins ornementaux, dans l'Arboretum et dans le brise-vent. J'ai vraiment hâte de me retrouver dehors, dans les jardins, et j'espère que vous vous joindrez à nous si vous le pouvez.

D'ici là, nous continuons le travail à l'intérieur. Nos généreux bénévoles au bureau ne connaissent pas de saison de repos et font un excellent travail à s'occuper de mille et une tâches administratives. Le travail du Conseil d'administration aussi se poursuit. Grâce à la variété de leur expérience, les membres du CA (voir la photographie) partagent de nombreuses responsabilités et travaillent ensemble pour répondre à la mission des Amis de la ferme. N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous au bureau, quand vous le voudrez. Nous apprécions toujours vos commentaires.

## Board of Directors, Friends of the Farm, 2010-11



(Seated, left to right) Richard Conway – secretary, Chuck Craddock – president, Roman Popadiouk – vice president, Denise Kennedy – membership

(Rear, left to right) Diana Dakers-Ryan – events, Bert Titcomb – communications, Mary Ann Smythe – volunteers, Eric Jones – arboretum, Polly McColl – past president, John Gribbon – treasurer, Judy Benner – at large, Dennis Doucette – at large

## We're Looking for Volunteers

With the new gardening and fundraising season just around the corner, we're in need of helping hands.

Whether you're available for only one event or have the time to join a weekly gardening team, we'd like to hear from you.

As a Friends of the Farm volunteer, you'll have a hand in

helping to preserve, protect and enhance the Arboretum, Ornamental Gardens and other public areas of the Central Experimental Farm – and have fun in the process.

We offer volunteer opportunities to suit all interests. To find out more about becoming a Friends of the Farm volunteer, log on to our website, [www.friendsofthefarm.ca](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca) and click on "Become a Volunteer" or contact us by phone at 613-230-3276 for more information.



## Magnolias – Spring's First Star Attraction *(continued from Page 1)*

While a few of the magnolias in this collection predate the tunnel, the majority were planted during its construction. The soil was dug out for the new magnolia beds and replaced with bails of peat. Several rail cars of peat arrived and John Kevern, Chief, Lawn Care and Sites and Services, AAFC, remembers off loading the rail cars very close to the beds.

### Ingredients for success

While it could be argued that the tunnel is the reason for the success of this magnolia collection, the site has several other characteristics that contribute to ideal growing conditions. The topography in the area is such that the site is sheltered from strong west winds that could desiccate tender buds during the cold winter months. The slightly acidic soil at the site, relatively unique to the Ottawa area, also makes for favourable growing conditions, as magnolia prefer a pH range of 5.5 to 6.5. Brian Douglas, former

foreman of the Dominion Arboretum, has also suggested that because this collection faces north it remains cool late into the spring, thus preventing early bud break and the potential for damage to emerging buds by a late frost.

With this in mind, it should be noted that it has been mainly through trial and error that this magnolia collection exists today. A mission of the Dominion Arboretum is, and always has been, to test new species, varieties and cultivars of ornamental trees and shrubs for suitability in Ottawa's climate. This process has involved the acquisition and propagation of thousands of trees and shrubs over the last 125 years or so. In the case of magnolias, there have been hundreds of attempts to import, rear and/or relocate specimens from around the globe. The current collection's success rests on the particular specimens in our collection today – specimens whose unique characteristics or genetic traits provide a tolerance to the cold.

### Adding to the collection

Today the complete collection of magnolias stretches across the campus of the Central Experimental Farm. It has been recently expanded by taking advantage of the various microclimates created by the topography, windbreaks, and soil structure, and by introducing new, known and tested hardy cultivars. Starting in the late 1990s, Brian Douglas, foreman at the time, began a program to expand the collection, and within a few years the number of specimens in the Arboretum more than doubled. This program, while scaled back to allow resources to be redirected to other collections, continues today with new cultivars purchased and existing specimens propagated each year.



Crispin Wood

## Our Volunteers Respond

*Many thanks to Friends' volunteers who participated in our recent survey. Mary Ann Smythe, director of volunteers, reports on the results.*

**W**hat's it like to be a Friends of the Farm volunteer? Fun? Informative? Satisfying? A great way to learn new skills and meet people from all walks of life? It's that and more according to the results of our Volunteer Survey.

More than 65% of the surveys were completed and returned – most of them within two weeks. The following are some of the survey highlights:

- 55% of the respondents have been Friends' volunteers for over four years;
- 66% work on one or more garden

teams, and many of them also help at fundraising events;

- the big draw for the garden teams is "working outdoors" and "meeting new people";
- at fundraising events, volunteers enjoy "helping a non-profit agency" and "working with other volunteers";
- 93% of respondents feel that the tasks they have been asked to perform are well suited to their experience/skills/interests;
- 96% of respondents feel that their

contribution is "usually" or "always" appreciated; and

- 87% rated their overall volunteer experience as "very good" or "excellent."

Many volunteers added positive comments, but none more telling than the musings of a garden volunteer:

"Working in the gardens with the other volunteers is a real joy, amongst the beautiful flowers and graceful big trees. If heaven is not a great deal like our gardens, I am not going there."

Mary Ann Smythe

## Correction

The staff in the photo on Page 2 of the Winter newsletter comprise the Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens sections of the Grounds Maintenance Team of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. That team also includes Lawn Care and Sites and Services (road maintenance, snow removal, fence maintenance, etc.).

Lawn Care and Sites and Services are under the supervision of John Kevern. Randy Arnott is Lead Hand, Lawn Care, and Joanne Mongeon Lead Hand, Sites and Services. Other staff are: Denis Lamadeleine, Normand Mayer, Sam Labarbera, Jeff Lafontaine, Katrina Anderson, Claude Denommée and Jason Ottaway.

Les employés qui paraissent dans la photo à la page deux du numéro d'hiver du bulletin comprennent les groupes de l'Arboretum et des jardins ornementaux au sein de l'équipe d'entretien des terrains d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada. L'équipe d'entretien des terrains comprend aussi les groupes de l'entretien des pelouses et des sites et services (tels l'entretien des chemins, le déneigement, l'entretien des clôtures, etc.).

John Kevern supervise les travaux d'entretien des pelouses et des sites et services. Randy Arnott est chef d'équipe de l'entretien des pelouses et Joanne Mongeon est chef d'équipe des sites et services. Les autres employés sont : Denis Lamadeleine, Normand Mayer, Sam Labarbera, Jeff Lafontaine, Katrina Anderson, Claude Denommée et Jason Ottaway.

## Upcoming Events

For more information, visit [www.friendsofthefarm.ca](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca) or call 613 230-3276.

### Craft and Bake Sale

- April 9 and 10, 10 am to 4 pm.
- Come and see the creations of area artisans and taste delicious baked goods.
- Location: Building 72, Arboretum, CEF.
- Admission and parking are free.

### Rare and Unusual Plant Sale

- Sunday, May 8, 9 am to 1 pm.
- Get what you need for your garden from the many specialty growers and nurseries gathered for this event.
- Master Gardeners of Ottawa Carleton will be available to answer your questions.
- Location: Parking lot at the greenhouses, Maple Drive, CEF.
- Entry fee: Donation for the Food Bank or \$5.



### Historical Walk at the CEF

- Tuesday, May 17, 7 to 9 pm.
- Join us on this walking tour that showcases the picturesque landscape design, architectural history, and stories of Ottawa's beloved Central Experimental Farm.
- The tour begins at Building 72, Arboretum, CEF.
- Admission: FCEF members \$12, others \$15.
- To register, call 613-230-3276 or email [info@friendsofthefarm.ca](mailto:info@friendsofthefarm.ca).

### Tours of the Lilac Rows

- Saturday in May to be announced, 2 pm.
- Enjoy a guided tour of the CEF lilac rows with the Friends of the Farm lilac team. Discover the many lilac varieties on display.
- Location: Macoun Garden, Ornamental Gardens. Free parking at the Canadian Agriculture Museum, south of the Prince of Wales traffic circle.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.



### Fletcher Wildlife Garden Native Plant Sale

- Saturday, June 4, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.
- Find native plants grown in the area.
- Volunteers and growers available to answer questions and offer suggestions.
- Free admission and parking.
- For more information, visit [www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php](http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php) or call (613) 730-0714.

### Preston Lilac Collection Tour

- Saturday in June to be announced, 2 pm.
- Take a guided tour of the Preston Heritage Lilac Collection with the Friends of the Farm lilac team. Discover the variety of lilacs that Isabella Preston created at the CEF.
- Free parking at the Canadian Agriculture Museum, south of the Prince of Wales Traffic circle.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.

### Peony Tours

- Saturday, June 11, 9 am to noon.
- Enjoy a guided tour of the peony beds at the CEF. Get tips on what would work best in your garden and ways to keep your peonies happy.
- The tour begins at the peony beds in the Ornamental Gardens. Free parking at the Canadian Agriculture Museum, south of the Prince of Wales Traffic circle.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.

### Tour of the Heritage and Explorer Rose

- Sunday, June 12, 1 pm.
- The FCEF rose team will be available to answer your questions. Information on the collection will be available to help you with a self-guided tour of the roses.
- Free parking at the Canadian Agriculture Museum, south of the Prince of Wales Traffic circle.
- Free admission; donations gratefully accepted. No registration required.



### Book Sale

- Saturday, June 18 and Sunday, June 19, from 10 am to 4 pm.
- Come and check out the thousands of books. Stock up for your summer reading.
- Location: Building 72, Arboretum, CEF.
- Admission and parking are free.

### Strawberry Social

- July 1, 11:30 am to 2 pm.
- Come and enjoy a delicious strawberry treat while participating in the Canada Agriculture Museum's holiday activities.
- Admission to the museum is free on Canada Day, the strawberry treat is \$6.
- Visit the museum's website at [www.agriculture.technomuses.ca](http://www.agriculture.technomuses.ca) for more information on the day's events.
- Location: Memory Park, Canada Agriculture Museum. Parking and the main entrance is located off Prince of Wales, south of the traffic circle.



### 10 Mile Run on the Farm

- Wednesday, July 20, 6:30 pm.
- Join the Friends of the Farm and the Run Ottawa Club for a challenging 10-mile run through the Central Experimental Farm.
- Location: Morningside Lane, CEF.
- Visit [www.runottawacub.com](http://www.runottawacub.com) for more information on the race and how to register.



### Victorian Tea

- Sunday, August 8, 2 to 4 pm.
- Classic tea served under the trees of the Arboretum.
- Bring a patio chair and listen to live music.
- Enter the best hat contest and don period costume (optional).
- Location: CEF Arboretum.
- Admission and parking free; formal tea \$6.



### Thousand Islands & Two Castles Tour

- Sunday, September 18, 8 am to 8 pm.
- Join us for an enchanting tour of the islands with visits to Boldt and Singer Castles.
- Includes tour bus, cruise, buffet lunch on the boat, castle entrance.
- Cost (before July 31): FCEF members \$135; others \$143.
- Visit [www.friendsofthefarm.ca](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca) for more information on the tour and how to register.



## Jean and Mike: At Home in the Arboretum



R. Hinchcliff

Jean Currie and Mike

Jean and Mike are a familiar sight at the Central Experimental Farm. They are often spotted strolling through the Arboretum admiring nature's bounty on their almost-daily walk.

Jean is Jean Currie, a Friend of the Farm volunteer, and Mike is her faithful canine companion. A volunteer since 2001, Jean is a member of the Lilac Team and co-leader of the Bloom Time Team. Growing up on a subsistence farm near Arnprior, Jean spent her childhood roaming the hundreds of acres of bush near her home. So when it came time to fill out her Friends' volunteer application, many years later, she jumped at the chance to work with trees. Her first contact with the Friends was a phone call from volunteer Audrey Pullan inviting her to join "the three 'old' ladies on the Lilac Team. I didn't know what to expect,"

laughs Jean, but when she reported in, it was immediately clear what lay ahead. "Audrey forgot to mention that the Lilac Team was brand new and when I arrived I was put right to work, using these huge reels of tape to help set the location of the lilacs. 'Oh my God' I said to myself, 'this certainly isn't going to be a bunch of women sitting around having tea.'"

### A wonderful learning experience

Ten years and hundreds of hours of weeding, pruning, and record-keeping later, Jean is grateful for the knowledge she has gained and the wonderful people she has met as a Friends' volunteer. It has been a lot of work and a lot of fun, but most of all for the retired high-school teacher, it has been a wonderful learning experience. Jean credits Joan Speirs (the Friends' lilac 'guru')

for making the experience so exciting.

"Joan is a scientist – she knows everything there is to know about lilacs and she is glad to share her knowledge."

Four years ago, Catherine Hooper, the Friends Co-ordinator of Gardens, invited Jean to join the fledgling Bloom Time Team, and Jean found herself facing another "steep learning curve." In early spring, each team member goes out to his/her assigned area (the Arboretum is divided into approximately 10 areas) and records when the trees and shrubs first bloom. It is a task that Jean clearly loves. "It is fascinating – I've been into parts of the Arboretum that I didn't know existed. I've had to learn how to identify blooms of different trees. I've become aware of things that I would have never noticed before." Jean is still amazed at all she has learned and teacher that she is wants to share her knowledge. "Did you know," she asks, "that at the end of cedar fronds there is a little hole and that is the female flower?"

### Magnolia blooms – a spring-time favourite

One of Jean's favourite spring-time blooms is the magnolia. She looks forward to the "beautiful scent of the old magnolias" in the Arboretum, and the "exciting colours of the new cultivars," some of which bloom twice a year.

One advantage of being part of the Bloom Time Team is spotting and reporting to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Farm staff when something appears amiss – for example, a plant or tree that is dying or in need of some TLC, or a tree whose name tag has gone missing or has been mysteriously transposed onto another species. Jean has "the greatest respect for the Farm staff. They are so knowledgeable, so enthusiastic; they really are amazing."

Mike, too, is amazing. While Jean and I talk, he has sat quietly for nearly an hour. But his patience wanes and he paws Jean's arm a few times, and looks mournfully into her eyes. It's time to go – Mike to watch for squirrels and Jean to walk through her beloved Arboretum. "I love being here among the trees," she says, "it is good for my soul."

Mary Ann Smythe



# Where to Find the Farm's Magnolias



R. Hinchcliff

'Elizabeth' magnolia

The magnolia collection is scattered around the Central Experimental Farm (see numbers on aerial photo):

1. The historic collection is found at the north end of the Arboretum. Many of the trees in this collection were planted in the 1960s during construction of the rail tunnel (see Page 1). The magnificent white blooms on the mature Kobus (*Magnolia kobus*), Star (*M. stellata*) and Saucer (*M. x soulangiana*) magnolia trees dominate in the spring.
2. There is a collection of *M. acuminata* hybrids (e.g., 'Elizabeth,' 'Yellow Bird') and "Little Girl" hybrids (e.g., 'Ann,' 'Susan') located above the train tunnel and below the old windbreak. This collection can be seen from across Dow's Lake. The Friends of the Farm supplied funds for the purchase of the first set of trees. All the magnolias in this collection are hardy and supposedly later-blooming to avoid frost damage to buds.
3. A small collection exists in a test garden at the Ornamental Gardens, beside the 'Physic' garden by the old Cereal Barn. Because this is a very protected site, the young magnolias have done extremely well. This collection contains a variety of cultivars from both known and unknown parentage – a mish-mash if you will.

4. A small collection is thriving on the east side of Birch Drive, north of the heritage buildings close to the NCC Driveway. A notable specimen of this collection is *M. kobus* 'Wada's Memory'. This tree form of Kobus Magnolia is borderline hardy in the Ottawa area, yet thrives in our collection. With its magnificent, large blooms, it's a real show-stopper in the spring.



R. Hinchcliff

5. The tree form magnolia in the scented border of the Ornamental Gardens, just east of the Macoun Memorial Garden, is *M. x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' (see Page 1 photo). This specimen is absolutely fantastic with its stellata shaped and coloured flowers.
6. The Cucumber Tree (*M. acuminata*) on the main lawn is unique in size and age. It's one of my favourite trees, one I point out whenever I get the chance.

Crispin Wood  
Lead Hand, Arboretum, AAFC



Magnolias at the Farm. See text for site numbers



## The 'Cameron' Crab Apple

The crab apple tree and blossoms in the photos on this page are the variety 'Cameron', created at the Central Experimental Farm by D. F. Cameron, ornamental plant breeder in the Horticulture Division from 1947 to 1963 (see Pages 8 and 9). This 'Cameron' specimen, planted in 1983, is located across from the woodland area on the east side of the Arboretum.

'Cameron' was described by Arthur R. Buckley, former curator of the Arboretum, as "the best double-flowering red crab apple tested in the Arboretum."

D. F. Cameron originated several hundred seedlings using Isabella Preston's



'Cameron'



'Cameron' in the Arboretum

Rosybloom crab apples as one parent, and selected the most promising for testing across Canada. After he had left the Horticulture Division at the Farm, the best three were named 'Cameron' (in his honour), 'Maybride' and 'Prince Charming,' and made available at nurseries in 1973. 'Maybride' is a popular dwarf variety, widely available commercially.

R. Hinchcliff

Photos by R. Hinchcliff

## Master Gardeners Lecture Series

Sign up for individual lectures or the entire series. Lectures are held from 7 to 9 pm, Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm. Individual lectures: \$12 FCEF members, \$15 others; series: \$40 FCEF members, \$50 others.

**April 5 - Designing a Garden** by Gaston Tessier  
Considering a new garden or redesigning an existing one? Gaston will discuss the steps that should be considered before planting, as well as what and where to plant. He will relate his own personal experiences of having moved to different areas and growing conditions.

**April 12 - Sustainable Gardening** by Gillian Boyd  
Gillian will share her experiences in making a colourful self-sustaining garden that needs only basic maintenance and provides interest and colour throughout the year. She will

provide some valuable do's and don'ts, show pictures, and share tips and ideas.

**April 19 - Organic Gardening** by Rebecca Last  
Rebecca will provide an overview of the philosophy and practice of organic gardening. Topics include building healthy soils, crop rotation, companion planting, and organic pest control.

**April 26 - Roses** by Edythe Falconer  
Edythe's presentation includes the pros and cons of various plant choices, planting guidelines, pests, mulches, fertilizing, pruning, and general rose garden maintenance. There will also be a special photo gallery of roses developed by local hybridizer Dr. Neville Arnold, whose collection is expected to be available in the next few years.

## D. F. Cameron – Ornamental Plant Breeder ... and More

“**H**e was always trying to get things to grow where they were not supposed to be able to grow,” says Alvin Cameron of his father, D. F. (Daniel Foster) Cameron, an ornamental plant breeder in the Horticulture Division at the Central Experimental Farm from 1947 to 1963.

Born in 1906, Cameron grew up in Ottawa. He attended Ontario Agriculture College at Guelph, graduating in 1933 with double majors in horticulture and landscape design. At that time, during the Great Depression, there were few job opportunities in his field, and so he spent the next two years as a farm labourer in Wingham, Ontario. From there, Cameron did greenhouse and research work at Cornell University for a couple of years, before landing a position as landscape gardener with the Federal District Commission (later known as the NCC), based at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

He enlisted the day after war was declared in 1939 with the prospect of serving in a combat artillery unit. That was not to be, however. There was a dire need for people with the skills to interpret reconnaissance photos taken in enemy territory and, in particular, identify camouflaged military activity. Cameron was selected for the job because of his landscaping knowledge and spent all WWII in southern England poring over aerial photos. To quote his brother Gerald, who was serving with the U.S. military, “My brother Danny never got to fire a shot in anger, yet certainly saved countless lives in his own way.”

### Successor to Isabella Preston

After the war, Cameron returned to Ottawa and to Rideau Hall. In 1947, he won a competition for a research position at the Central Experimental Farm. Isabella Preston had retired in December 1946, and he was hired to take over responsibility for ornamental plant



D. F. Cameron pollinating lilies, Horticulture Division, Central Experimental Farm

breeding. This became an important part of the Horticulture Division's work after Preston was hired in 1920. Ornamental plants bred at the Farm, including lilies, irises, roses, lilacs and crab apples, had been named and made available commercially. Many became famous, as did Preston.

Cameron resumed ornamental plant breeding work, on hold during WWII, in the summer of 1948. Plant groups chosen for breeding included lilies, chrysanthemums, crab apples, lilacs and roses. Cameron enjoyed many successes, most notably among them:

- Cameron named and introduced the yellow lilies 'Addington,' 'Simcoe' and 'Yamaska,' which were created by Preston. When breeding lilies his aim was to improve “the form, size and disease-resistance of yellow-flowered types of lilies; in particular, those with upward-facing flowers.” Cameron's own yellow lily creations, 'Apricot Ripple,' 'Highlander' and 'Noranda Gold,' notes Alvin, are still on display at Hamilton's Royal Botanical Gardens.

- Breeding of garden chrysanthemums was designed to improve hardiness and prolong the blooming period. One of his 'mum' seedlings with these characteristics was selected and named 'Lavender Rose.'
- When breeding crab apple trees, Cameron sought to produce more late-flowering ornamental varieties, preferably without fruit (see Page 7).
- A mock orange (*Philadelphus*) cross that Cameron made in 1959 resulted in its selection and was later named by Dexter Sampson as the ever-popular 'Buckley's Quill,' in honour of Arthur Buckley, former curator of the Arboretum.

### A private Cameron experimental farm

While still working, Cameron bought a farm near Manotick with the help of the *Veterans' Land Act*. He planted an orchard where “There were umpteen 'Nanking'

*Continued on Page 9*



## D. F. Cameron – Ornamental Plant Breeder *(continued from Page 8)*

cherry trees, 'Kahinta' plums and a quartet of pear varieties named 'Eenie,' 'Meenie,' 'Miney,' and 'Moe.' It was his own private test site," says Alvin. "It was also the first pick-your-own strawberry plot in the district, growing the strawberry varieties developed at the CEF by Lloyd Spangelo. These were the hardy 'soldier' strawberries, named 'Cavalier,' 'Grenadier,' 'Guardman' and 'Redcoat' (the most successful commercially). 'Grenadier' didn't ship well and was not a commercial success, but it was far and away our family's favourite, with juicy, delicious berries getting as big as your fist."

Cameron also raised rare breeds of cattle, swine, sheep and poultry at the Manotick farm. He had 15 bee hives. He tried his hand at growing certified barley, 'Climax' timothy grass seed, and was the first private individual to grow the yellow-flowering birds-foot trefoil as an alternative in a grazing pasture to alfalfa or red clover.

Because Cameron spent so much time at the Experimental Farm, his sons had lots of chores at the home farm –

"Not always appreciated at the time," quips Alvin. "And with the lack of foresight typical of youth, His Dreams were far too often perceived as Our Nightmares!"

Alvin remembers accompanying his father to the Central Experimental Farm, often on Sundays, supposedly his Dad's "day off," helping with pollination and other breeding tasks. "I must have absorbed by osmosis my father's passion for experimentation. At our own place



F. C. Tyrell, Library & Archives Canada, DAP/15A-29

Chrysanthemum Show, 1950

now we have a dozen Redbud trees, various Magnolias, Yellowwoods, Buckeyes, Quinces, and many other things not usually hardy in Ottawa, all propagated from seed. And, of course, specimens of 'Maybride' and 'Cameron'.

### Cameron crab apple trees at the Farm

Cameron left the Horticulture Division in 1963, joining the public information service at the Experimental Farm, where he was much in demand for interviews by the media. He could speak 12 languages and was often called upon to lead a group of foreign visitors around the Farm. In 1972, he retired to his Manotick farm.

Daniel F. Cameron died in 1988, but his legacy lives on at the Experimental Farm. There are four fine specimens of his 'Maybride' crab apple at the southern entrance to the K.W. Neatby Building, the Farm's research centre. The attractive form and beautiful bright flowers of a 'Cameron' crab apple (see Page 7) can be seen across from the woodland area at the east side of the Arboretum.

Richard Hinchcliff

## FCEF Book Sale Book Drop Off – February 5, 2011

The book drop off on February 5th this year was so successful that all our available storage and book sorting space is now completely full – three rooms are packed to overflowing with donated books – and there are more than enough for a successful sale in June. We thank everyone who participated for their wonderful support, their generosity, and their patience in the waiting line of donors!



Polly McCoil

Books galore!



The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is a volunteer organization committed to the maintenance and protection of the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Membership in the Friends of the Farm costs \$25 per year for an individual and \$45 per year for a family, \$20 Seniors/Students. Membership fees support the many projects of the Friends of the Farm.

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## What Are Friends For?

**"A** friend in need is a friend indeed." For years I thought this old saw was a cynical comment on using friendship to get something. Now, I see it as a sage comment on true friendship. To put a slight twist on it, the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) are friends "in deed" – for that is our role – to help by doing.



Why does the Farm need "friends?" A bit of history may help new Friends understand this. The CEF was established in 1886 as the centrepiece and showcase of government improvements in agriculture and horticulture for the benefit of farmers and horticulturists across the land. However, as the Canadian population became overwhelmingly urban, the perceived value of the CEF declined. In the late 1980s, funding for the Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens was under scrutiny and there were concerns in Ottawa over the possible selling of parts of the Farm.

To address these concerns, Peter Elliott, a senior manager with Agriculture Canada, put forward a proposal for an

organization to be called the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, which was to help "preserve, protect, maintain and enhance the Dominion Arboretum, the Ornamental Gardens, and other public areas of the Farm." The Department liked the idea, helped Peter get the Friends incorporated in 1988, and provided office space and the services of Peter until he retired in 1995. Thus the "Friends of the Farm" was born.

**"Some Friends do have great knowledge and expertise to share, but in the end all the decisions are made, as they should be, by the professional grounds staff."**

Today (thanks to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - AAFC), the Friends still share an office in Building 72 with permanent Department staff and work under their auspices. AAFC staff are the bedrock. They plan, design, order and do all the vital tasks involved in rejuvenating the Arboretum and the Ornamental Gardens. How do we help? In deed ... by doing. We weed, prune, collect data, confirm records and maps, give tours and teas ... you get the idea. We do the things the regular staff don't have the manpower or the time for. They rely on us for some of the background work, and we need to remember that we are backgrounders — not front-line staff. It would be good to see the regular grounds staff expanded in number, but until that happens, there's lots of work for us to do.

And our part of that work is done around the work of the regular grounds

staff — the people with the "big picture" and professional knowledge. They are responsible for enormous areas and have schedules that must be maintained. As Friends, we want to help, not get in the way. If the sprinklers are on or the mowers are mowing where we expect to be working, then we should find somewhere else to work (maybe even steal a chance to see what's blooming in the Macoun Garden or admire the annual beds).

Finally, diplomacy is part of friendship. Whether in casual conversation or leading the public, we really don't want to give the impression that we are the experts. Some Friends do have great knowledge and expertise to share, but in the end all the decisions are made, as they should be, by the professional grounds staff.

The rewards for us in this friendship are several. We have watched the beds in the Ornamental Gardens and stock in the Arboretum improved and expanded. We've seen shrubs and trees on the campus revitalized. Knowing we've been part of this is the ultimate reward.

Jean Currie  
Lilac and Bloom Time Teams

### Any Canadian Tire money?

Canadian Tire money that you donate to the Friends is much appreciated. It helps to purchase tools for our gardening teams.



#### NEW MEMBER REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_  
FAX #: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTEREST IN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

YES ☐

NO ☐

#### TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

FAMILY ..... \$45/year  
ADULT ..... \$25/year  
SENIOR/STUDENT ..... \$20/year  
BASIC CORPORATE ..... \$250/year  
NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION ..... \$25/year  
INDIVIDUAL LIFE ..... \$200  
SENIOR COUPLE LIFE ..... \$250  
DONATION ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque or money order payable to: "Friends of the Farm." A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for all donations of \$10 or more.

We are located at Building 72 in the Arboretum. You can visit us or mail this part of the form with your payment to:

**FRIENDS OF THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM**  
Building 72, Central Experimental Farm  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C6

Telephone: (613) 230-3276

Fax: (613) 230-1238

Email: [info@friendsofthefarm.ca](mailto:info@friendsofthefarm.ca)

Website: [www.friendsofthefarm.ca](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca)



## Magnolias for Ottawa *(continued from Page 12)*

pruning. Staking is usually unnecessary and so is winter protection other than mulch. Once settled, magnolias do not like to be moved.

Pruning is largely a “don’t”. When necessary, it is best done just after blossoms fade. The removal of spent flowers will result in the absence of attractive seed pods in the fall. The blooms of 2012 form on 2011 buds and we probably don’t want to interfere with that either. Dead, diseased or damaged parts should be removed as soon as detected. Pruning for shape is another matter. Magnolias can be single or multi-stemmed. We need to determine their preference and act accordingly.

### Magnolias for our zone

The good news in 2011 is that there are many magnolias of proven hardiness and blooming capacity readily available in Zone 5b, and in our colder climate they are largely pest and disease free. Many of them can be viewed at the Central Experimental Farm in spring and early summer.

For novices, Glenn Clark, a long-time and highly knowledgeable grower of magnolias in the Ottawa area, recommends ‘Royal Star’ and ‘Dr. Merrill’. Both are white, hardy, vigorous, generous bloomers with good fragrance, especially ‘Dr. Merrill’.



R. Hinchliff

Star magnolia (*M. stellata*)

Here is a small sampling of magnolias that can be grown in our area:

- *M. stellata* ‘Royal Star’ – white, ‘Centennial’ – white, ‘Pink Star’ – pink. All are hardy;
- *M. liliiflora* x *M. stellata*, the “Little Girl” Series – ‘Susan’, ‘Jane’ (with lemon fragrance), ‘Ann’, ‘Judy’, ‘Ricki’, ‘Randy’, ‘Susan’, ‘Betty’ – all mauve to purple, all hardy;
- *M. x loebneri* hybrids; ‘Leonard Messel’ – pink (see photo, Page 1), ‘Dr. Merrill’ – white and fragrant. All hardy;
- Yellow hybrids; ‘Elizabeth’ (see photos, Page 6), ‘Yellow Bird’, ‘Gold Star’ – mostly hardy;
- *M. kobus* (Kobus magnolia) – white, hardy;
- *M. x soulangiana* (Saucer magnolia) – poor fragrance, ‘Galaxy’ – both marginally hardy;

- *M. sieboldii* – Oyama magnolia;
- Highly recommended new hybrid is ‘Daybreak’ – large, bright pink, fragrant, tulip-shaped flowers.

Great companion plants include all spring-blooming bulbs, bleeding heart, periwinkle, leopard’s bane, hostas and primulas. Ferns and dwarf conifers are companions from magnolias’ primitive past.

### “These harbingers of spring have it all”

It is easy to become totally addicted to the subtle coloration and myriad forms of magnolias’ remarkable tepals. With parentage

tracing back to the Jurassic Era, a romantic past in the old South, an inspiring presence in oriental art, good foliage, soft yellow fall colour, a good range of bloom times, larger blooms than most hardy trees, startling stamens, delicate to intoxicating fragrance, especially in the evening – these harbingers of spring have it all. Ottawa Valley gardeners may certainly rejoice in the enduring, endearing beauty of magnolias.

Edythe Falconer  
Master Gardener, Ottawa-Carleton

*(For more information on magnolias, go to [www.magnoliasociety.org](http://www.magnoliasociety.org). The Friends of the Farm website, at [www.friendsofthefarm.ca/collections/magnolias.htm](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/collections/magnolias.htm), provides a list of magnolias available in Ottawa and their characteristics. E.F.)*

## Fundraising Season Ends on a High Note

It was almost a year in the making and involved several hundred volunteer hours, but the hard work was handsomely rewarded. The Friends of the Farm fine art exhibition and sale, “For the Love of the Farm,” was a great success. The gorgeous Thanksgiving weekend weather drew big crowds to the Arboretum and nearly 1,000 visitors admired, and purchased, the work of nine local fine artists. The two-day event raised \$7,900, which included artists’ commissions, receipts from the Silent Auction, and free-will donations.

Less than a month later, Building 72 was crowded with shoppers looking for unique Christmas presents from the hands of local crafters and for homemade goodies destined for Christmas celebrations. The November Craft and Bake Sale

netted \$3,300, with sales from the Friends’ promotions table contributing an additional \$850.

Finally, thanks to all members who accepted the invitation to the Friends of the Farm’s non-dinner and did not show up, making it a very successful event! Bert Titcomb, the board member who designed the invitation, reported a return of over \$3,000.

Sincere thanks to everyone who worked on these events. We couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you for generously sharing your time and talents in support of the Central Experimental Farm.

Mary Ann Smythe

## Magnolias for Ottawa – Endearing, Enduring Beauty

*From their mystique to their mulching, Edythe Falconer, Ottawa-Carleton Master Gardener, writes about magnolias and about growing them in this region.*

**M**agnolia mystique – the image that comes to mind is that of beautiful southern women and handsome southern men embracing beneath arching, fragrant magnolia trees. Although the plantations are gone, the magnolias are not. They continue to flourish and diversify their botanical assets. Assisting them are talented hybridizers who strive to develop ever-increasing choices of colour, height and hardiness. These new cultivars bloom fashionably late to avoid lingering spring frosts, but precociously early when it comes to the age of blooming.

Magnolias, very primitive trees, co-existed with dinosaurs and may even have helped feed them. Many flowering plants and beetle pollinators appeared simultaneously in that time period. The beetle “Don Juans” swarmed to the exquisite perfume of magnolia flowers and formed partnerships that permitted magnolias to enjoy more efficient cross-pollination and, therefore, better survival odds.

### Larger blossoms on new varieties

Eight magnolia species are native to North America and another 70 or so originated in Asia. Magnolias came to Western Europe transported by plant adventurers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Although no longer used medicinally, magnolias are still used for fine woodworking, and are highly valued



Kobus magnolia (*M. kobus*) in the Arboretum

Photos by R. Hinchcliff

as specimen trees and for informal shrub groupings.

Magnolias grow from 2-3m to 25m or more. Cup or saucer-shaped blossoms with prominent pistils and stamens emerge at the end of buds that often resemble pussy willows. Tepals, a fusion of petals and sepals, number six or more, and are ovate or slender. Blossoms, many as large as those of Saucer Magnolias, have become even larger on recently developed cultivars. Colours, solid or in combination, include creamy white, pink, purple, yellow and even green. So far, there is no true red. Supporting the trees are fleshy shallow roots assisted by impressive tap roots.

### What magnolias need

Magnolias thrive on rich, loamy, slightly acidic soil that must be kept moist at all times.

Magnolia root systems don't tolerate drought, especially when newly planted. Mulching helps to retain moisture and as the mulch breaks down it enriches the soil beneath. New mulch can be applied annually or biennially over peat moss, compost, and/or well-rotted manure. Peat helps maintain acidity. Azalea fertilizer or synthetic fertilizer, perhaps 10-10-10, can be applied shortly after blooms fade and again in late June.

A good location will provide protection from strong winds, especially nor'westers. It will also provide good sun exposure and protection from salt spray. Several hours of sun per day will encourage generous blooming, although younger trees can tolerate semi-shade until they are mature enough to bloom. Early blooming varieties beat other deciduous trees to available light provided their blooms survive Jack Frost.

Magnolias are best purchased in pots. Ball and burlap may come with problems because of hardened clay or severe root



*Continued on Page 11*