

FRIENDS *of the* Central Experimental Farm

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The New CelebriTree Program – A Sold-Out Success

By Elizabeth Atkinson



PHOTOS ABOVE:
Fraser Fir (*Abies fraseri*), one of the new *CelebriTrees* in the Arboretum. This species is grown in Canada primarily as a Christmas tree. R. Hinchcliff.

It's impossible to walk through the historical Dominion Arboretum and be anything but awestruck by the height or spread of a tree, the glorious autumn and spring colours, or the complex textures of a tree's bark. I often find myself trying to calculate a tree's age and growth and comparing it to my own.

Getting to know the trees at the Arboretum is both educational and inspiring. Many trees are tagged with their scientific names, their date of planting and the geophysical location. Plaques also indicate when a particular tree was planted to honour an individual. Both the trees and the people which they honour have a story to tell.

Usually, these designated trees had been planted as a result of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm's Donor Tree and Shelterbelt programs, which ran from 1990 to 2005 and 2005 to 2018, respectively. Dedicated plantings of this kind stopped in 2018. But in September 2023, through the introduction of the *CelebriTree* Program, it became possible for the public to add a young new tree to the Arboretum's collection, and in doing so, have a very meaningful way to celebrate a special person or event.

The *CelebriTree* Program obviously fulfilled a pent-up demand from the public, since all the trees in the 2023 program were snapped up within 36 hours of their release! The Friends received a total of 34 applications

during the intake period from September 12 to 25, a most gratifying response.

The new saplings had received a good start in the Arboretum with expert planting and care from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff, followed by favourable summer and fall weather. Carefully sited among their older, established guardians, the new trees are lovely.

The 2023 *CelebriTree* program was a pilot to determine interest in a new tree donation opportunity and to try out a few new program features. Taking greater advantage of technology, the new program offers donors the chance to tell a story about the person or event being celebrated on the FCEF *CelebriTree* webpage. Using your phone to scan the QR code inscribed on the tree's tag, anyone walking in the Arboretum can not only learn about the tree but also the individual(s) or event it celebrates. With your phone and the Google map found on the *CelebriTree* webpage, you can tour all of the *CelebriTrees* throughout the Arboretum.

The tree tags themselves are a new approach for the Arboretum, as they are being hung on the branches rather than being affixed to the tree trunk. This is an attempt to cause less harm to the tree's growth. We will revisit the tag "solution" in the coming years to determine its

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We Soldier On Nous persévérons

PHOTO
R. Hinchcliff



ERIC JONES

*President, Friends of the Central Experimental Farm
Président, Les Amis de la Ferme expérimentale centrale*

Things continue to change around the Central Experimental Farm. A large pile of debris, from construction for the new hospital, has popped up across the road from the Arboretum. Tall buildings, part of the City's intensification plan, are being planned and approved around the perimeter of the Farm. While I'm writing this, development applications have led to questions about the Farm's very place and future within the City—questions from those who know little about the Farm.

In the midst of this uncertainty, the Friends of the Farm carry on their work. The Board of Directors held a strategic planning session recently, which they haven't done for some time. Its purpose was to consider both external and internal changes, review our mission and goals, and look at ways to better achieve our objectives. We'll report on the results of this review in coming months.

The Board has also drafted a Health and Safety Policy to help protect volunteers on the Friends of the Farm gardening teams, or on any other Friends initiative. The purpose of the policy is to promote volunteer health, safety, and well-being awareness, to provide useful information and education about health and safety, and to monitor hazards on an ongoing basis. If you volunteer with us, you should become familiar with this policy, when it becomes available.

The Friends are also planning projects and events for 2024 (check our website for periodic updates). Among the highlights: more donor tree opportunities as we

continue our successful 2023 program (see <https://friendsofthefarm.ca/dedication-tree-program/>); a new tree book that will expand on some of the walks and trees in our now-out-of-print volume *For the Love of Trees*; and more events, building on the success of our 2023 plant and book sales. The Friends will also be looking at new programs to help stabilize the Farm in these uncertain times.

Filling gaps

We always need more volunteers to help us out. Beyond gardening assistance, we require people who are keen on other activities, such as events, media, finance, promotion, tours, and volunteers. Also, folks who have plant and tree knowledge are needed to help with programs related to the Farm's collections. If you're interested, send an email to volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca.

Les choses continuent de changer, d'évoluer autour de la Ferme. Un gros tas de débris, provenant de la construction du nouvel hôpital, a soudainement fait son apparition sur le chemin en face de l'Arboretum. Selon le plan de densification de la Ville et en cours de planification et d'approbation, des immeubles de grande hauteur seront érigés le long du périmètre de la Ferme. Au moment d'écrire ces lignes, des demandes d'aménagement ont soulevé des questions quant à la place même de la Ferme et de son avenir au sein de la Ville, questions venant de ceux qui connaissent très peu la Ferme.

En dépit de cette incertitude, les Amis de la Ferme continuent leur travail. Le conseil

d'administration a tenu une séance stratégique récemment, ce qui n'avait pas été fait depuis quelque temps. Son but consistait principalement à prendre en considération certains changements à la fois externes et internes, faire un examen approfondi de notre mission et de nos buts et d'explorer des moyens qui nous permettront d'atteindre nos objectifs de façon plus efficace. Nous rendrons compte des résultats de cet examen dans les prochains mois.

Le conseil a également rédigé une politique sur la santé et la sécurité comme mesure d'aide dans la protection à l'égard des bénévoles, que ce soit au sein d'équipes de jardinage ou de toute activité entreprise par les Amis. Le but de la politique est de sensibiliser les bénévoles à la santé, à la sécurité et au bien-être, de fournir des informations et une éducation utiles en matière de santé et de sécurité, et de surveiller les risques de manière continue. Si vous faites partie de nos bénévoles, je vous invite à consulter cette politique lorsqu'elle sera rendue publique.

Les Amis se penchent actuellement sur la planification de projets et d'activités prévus en 2024 (voir les mises à jour périodiques sur le site Web). Parmi les points saillants, notons les suivants :

- des occasions offertes en plus grand nombre dans le choix d'arbres pour les donateurs, dans la foulée de l'initiative entreprise en 2023, laquelle a remporté un vif succès (voir <https://friendsofthefarm.ca/dedication-tree-program/>);
- une nouvelle publication sur les arbres qui mettra en valeur les promenades et comprendra également certaines photos qui avaient paru dans un premier volume, « *For the Love of Trees* », celui-ci maintenant épuisé;
- bien d'autres activités encore, compte tenu du succès obtenu par les ventes de plantes et de livres.

Les Amis examineront de nouveaux programmes pour aider à stabiliser la Ferme en ces temps incertains.

Comblant des lacunes

Nous avons toujours besoin de bénévoles et en plus grand nombre. En plus d'aide dans les jardins, nous avons besoin de personnes qui prennent intérêt à d'autres activités, par exemple les évènements, les médias, les finances, la publicité, les visites sur la Ferme et les bénévoles. De plus, les personnes qui possèdent une bonne connaissance des plantes et des arbres peuvent nécessairement contribuer aux programmes liés aux collections de la Ferme.

Si un tel bénévolat vous intéresse, veuillez envoyer un courriel à volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca.



PHOTO
Summer Cascade Birch (*Betula nigra* 'Summer Cascade'), a CelebriTree on Heart Island in the Arboretum.
Elizabeth Atkinson.

appropriateness for the individual tree as it grows. Perhaps by that time, we will be able to access the tree information and the celebration stories when the information is delivered to our phones merely through our physical proximity to the tree. But for now, I invite you to tour the **CelebriTree** webpage, explore the trees on the Google map and then visit them in-person.

A very big thank you to everyone who applied for to the 2023 **CelebriTree** program. A gathering of donors is anticipated in the spring as the trees begin another year of growth. For those who did not secure a celebration tree this year, please do check in with the **CelebriTree** webpage from time to time where information on a 2024 program will be posted in due course. If you are interested in learning more about the program, please check out the dedicated webpage and especially the FAQ section.

One final word - delivering a large and significant program like this one draws upon many different skills from our volunteer community. If you would like to contribute to this very rewarding effort, please do let us know by dropping a line to info@friendsofthefarm.ca or calling our office at (613) 230-3276.

Elizabeth Atkinson, a Friends of the Farm board member, directs the CelebriTree program.

EVENTS



Book sale, 2023. *Donna Pape*

SUCCESSFUL BOOK SALE

In October, after a COVID hiatus, book lovers came in droves to the Friends' used book sale. With thousands of books sold, it was a huge success, raising over \$13,000 to help support our work to preserve, protect, maintain, and enhance the public areas of the Farm.

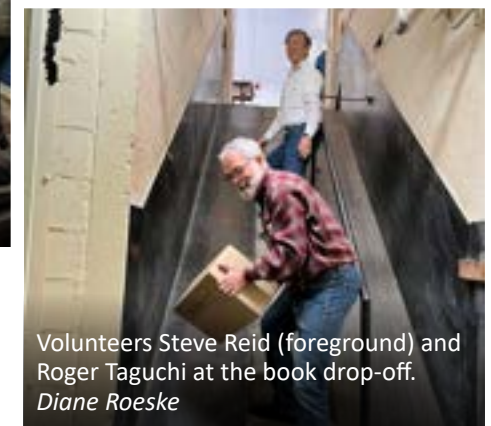
Many faithful donors who had contacted us during the pandemic, when we couldn't take their books, kindly agreed to keep them for us until we could hold the sale. Without the generous support of our members and donors there would not be a Friends' book sale.

Our book sale is a "green initiative" in a way. Many organizations look for ways to share, recycle, or repurpose books rather than simply throwing them away. For example, in the spirit of "paying forward", a local organization donated hundreds of their surplus copies of high-quality non-fiction books, which greatly boosted our fundraising. Friends of the Farm also collaborates with other local charities that hold used book sales, accepting their leftovers so that those books are given another chance rather than being discarded.

Clearly there remains a huge audience of readers, eager for hard-copy books, despite our online and tech-driven world! Local book lovers are vigilant in their search for good used books at bargain prices. And no doubt many people enjoy not only the buying but also the browsing, especially when the books are so well ordered and presented.

Kudos to our wonderful team of volunteers led by Diane and David Roeske who did a mammoth job of sorting, organizing, and selling the mountain of books. And a big shout-out to Marc Couturier of Scouts Canada for the team of Scouts who did a lot of heavy lifting while carting the books up from our basement storage area.

Finally, we are immensely grateful for the ongoing support we get from Agriculture



Volunteers Steve Reid (foreground) and Roger Taguchi at the book drop-off.
Diane Roeske

and Agri-Food Canada's grounds staff who, without fail, always step up when we ask for assistance; for example, in liaising with AAFC's administration, and organizing space for drop-offs, sales, and book storage.

MASTER GARDENER SPRING LECTURES, 2024

Another series of spring lectures by the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton, hosted by the Friends of the Farm, is planned for this year.

Watch for details at ...

www.friendsofthefarm.ca/fcef-annual-events/master-gardener-lectures/

STAY TUNED!

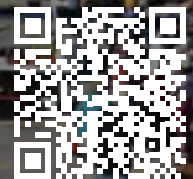
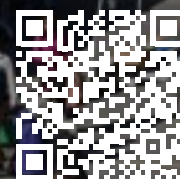
For details on **Spring Volunteer Recruitment, Plant Sale, & Used Book Sale!**

Check our website at www.friendsofthefarm.ca/fcef-annual-events/

Or, use the QR codes below

2024 Events

Facebook



For Nicki Quintero, Gardening is a Lifetime Passion

By Martin MacLeod

Gardening goes way back in Nicki Quintero's life. "Well, my whole life, actually" she says. She grew up on a farm near Brighton, Ontario, an area of dairy farms and apple orchards. Her parents, terrified of snakes (they are plentiful there), decided to raise pigs because the pigs kept the snakes down. Her father had about fifty sows and two hogs. There were also vegetable and flower gardens at the farm, and Nicki was especially impressed by the lupins and roses her mother grew.

Decades later, after she moved to Ottawa West, the condo board in her building decided to act on requests made by residents to add flower gardens to the property. Nicki volunteered to make this happen, but the offer lay dormant until she retired. She was delighted when the board made good on the offer for garden space, and since that time she has expanded and diversified the gardens to the point where she could stay busy full-time if she wished.

She took up curling the first winter after retiring. Someone there suggested that she might enjoy volunteering at the Experimental Farm. She signed up for the Iris & Daylily Team and the Perennials Team, and that continued until Covid-19 shut everything down.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

"When we came back in mid-2021, things had changed." For one thing, she now headed the Perennials Team since the previous Team Leader, Christine Banfill, decided not to continue. Nicki got a call from Polly McColl asking if she would take on the task for a year. She said yes to a commitment of one year – and it has been two and a half so far. Fortunately, Evelyne Power has become her able assistant.

The gardens were in poor shape after the COVID-related shutdown. Farm staff had done their best, but weeding is labour-intensive, and without



Martin MacLeod.

volunteers the beds were looking far from their best. Nicki's recollection is that even with the whole perennials team working in just one of the six beds for a morning's shift, they would wonder if they had accomplished anything! But with dedicated effort, by 2023 things finally looked much better.

Even so, unusual things happen. "Last summer there was one really memorable Tuesday," Nicki notes. "At 08:30 the sky was orange with forest fire smoke. I showed up with three others, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Chief of Grounds Maintenance Jeremy DiZazzo ran down to ask 'what are you people doing here'? Good question! We agreed to work for an hour and leave. A strange day!"

"Hot weather is another growing concern. There is no shade in the perennial gardens, and it is taxing work for the team members. I think we'll have to shorten our hours more frequently when it gets too hot." Back in 2022, it was frequent rain which slowed gardening progress.

PICKING HER FAVOURITES

Nicki particularly likes peonies, roses, butterfly bushes, and columbines. "The perennial gardens give you such a variety of wonderful plants across the whole gardening season." She enjoys spring which is full of expectation for what is to come. "It's less entertaining in the fall when everything gets cut down, but finally there's some time for planning."

Problems? "Goldenrod has been one recently; it proliferated during the pandemic years, and we had to remove a lot of it. And the asters—they had overrun half of an entire bed and needed to be controlled."

When asked who at the Farm has most impressed her over the years, Nicki is quick to reply: "Without a doubt, Sharon Saunders, who was Lead Hand on the Ornamental Gardens staff. She was a gold mine of plant knowledge and had excellent ideas for what kept the gardens prospering. I miss her."

"It is a challenging job to properly maintain so many species (about 200) and use the space effectively. Perhaps we could take cues from what the Rock Garden Team has been doing in the past few years. The Rock Garden is looking very much improved. I think we have the talent among our team members to do that too, alongside Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff."

A Friends volunteer since 2007, Martin MacLeod is the author of "Perennials in the Ornamental Gardens" in the Collections pages on the Friends' website www.friendsofthefarm.ca.

Tupelo leaves starting to turn red. *Owen Clarkin.*

Autumn Colours at the Dominion Arboretum

By *Owen Clarkin*

It was gratifying to see the public interest shown for this tree tour: a crowd of about 40 came out to see and discuss autumn colours at the Dominion Arboretum.

Our tour began with a Black Maple, located near the parking lot behind Building 72. While slightly less showy on average than its famous close cousin Sugar Maple, this tree was turning a nice range of colours from yellow to orange and red.

Heading into the maples area, we enjoyed peak colours of Freeman, Red, Silver, and Sugar Maples. The related Buckeyes are nearby, and they too were approaching their peak colours with the tall Yellow Buckeye in particular turning attractive shades of orange-red.

Checking out the oaks, it was apparent we were too early for White Oak to put on its

rosy-leaved show, and Black Oak was still mostly a shiny green.

Coming back toward the circle, we took time to notice the pleasant multicoloured leaves of rare native species American Hazelnut. This shrub is much showier than the Beaked Hazelnut which is more common in Ottawa's local environment.

We then checked out the southern species Sweetgum, which was still mostly green, as its peak showtime is typically later into early and mid-November.

Katsura's yellow colour was then admired, and an observant attendee noted that it smelled sweet (a bit like vanilla).

Our final stops were two of the very attractive trees native to southern Ontario. Tupelo had just started turning red, with

a couple of leaves already bright scarlet. Then we ended the tour with some moments spent appreciating the dogwood-like red autumn colour of Sassafras. Three examples of this tree have been planted in the Arboretum this season, and we are excited to watch them grow over the coming years!

In addition to leading public nature hikes, Owen Clarkin contributes to local and worldwide plant identification forums on social media.



Eric Jones.



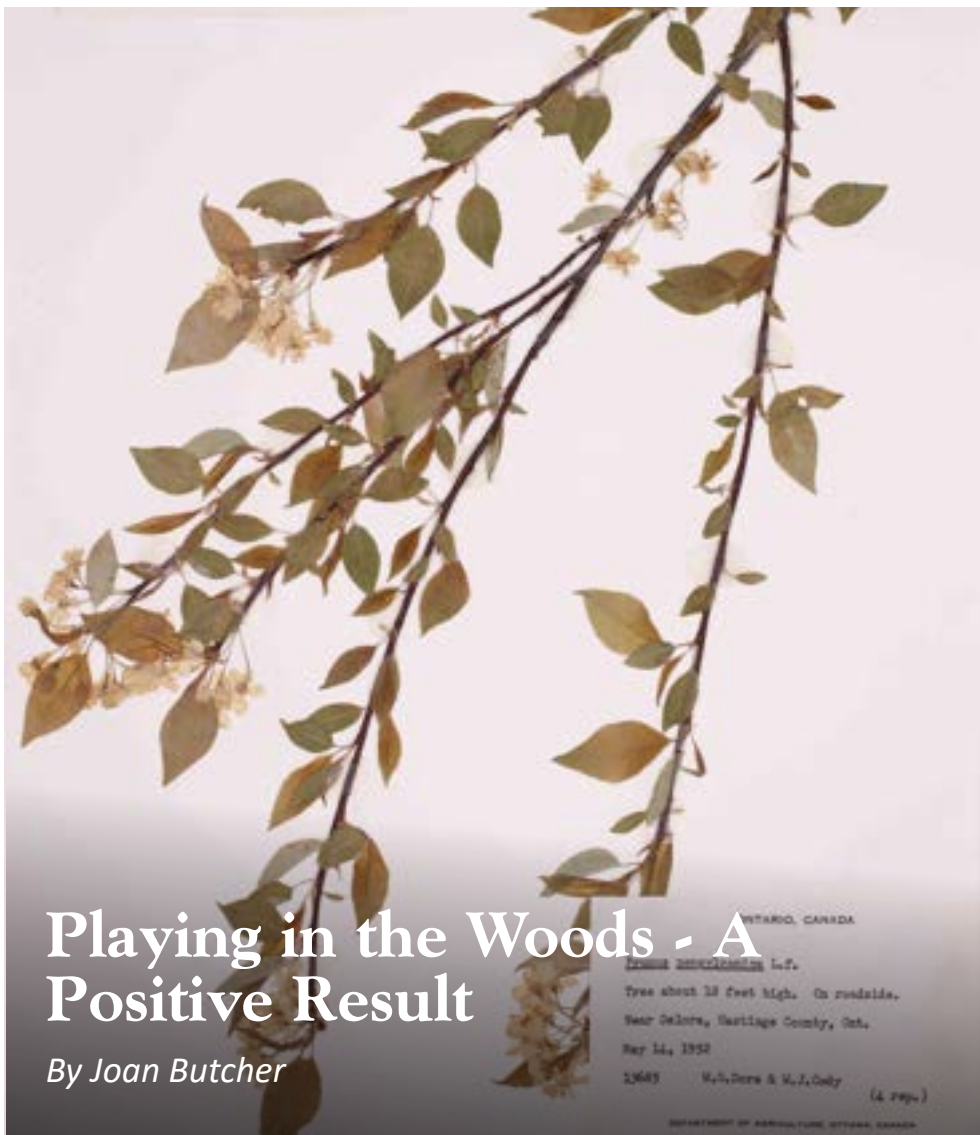
Dogwood-like red autumn colour of Sassafras leaves. *Owen Clarkin.*

Winter Approaches at the Dominion Arboretum

In November, following his tour of autumn colour in the Arboretum, Owen Clarkin led a tour that had a focus on the condition of trees as winter approaches.

He discussed with the tour group the joys of exploring trees and forests in winter and offered tips on how to do so. He raised topics of tree dormancy, deciduous versus evergreen, fallen leaves, cold-hardiness, and effects of a long cold winter.

Eric Jones.



Playing in the Woods - A Positive Result

By Joan Butcher

Being responsible for a vast and irreplaceable collection of internationally-shared data presents quite a challenge, demanding energy, commitment, and both scientific and technical expertise. But Shannon Asencio, Collection Manager of AAF's herbaria, deems it to be a "truly amazing job!"

Shannon grew up on a farm in a remote community in BC, in an area that was close to forests. She took to being a naturalist at a young age, taking every opportunity to wander about and collect specimens and press flowers. Reflecting on her childhood enthusiasm for plants, Shannon admits that "when I was a small child collecting plants for my own enjoyment, I never could have imagined that one day I would be responsible for managing a federal collection of well over a million plant specimens that were preserved in a manner similar to my own collections. It is so important to foster budding naturalists' interest in nature. If you have a child in your life who loves nature, take every opportunity you can to support their interests."

Shannon studied environmental biology and plant systematics at the University of Saskatchewan, receiving a B.Sc. and M.Sc. In 2005, Shannon began working at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, first as a curatorial assistant and later as project coordinator (digitization).

In 2014, she began work as Head of Collections Services and Information Management at the Canadian Museum of Nature, where she gained tremendous knowledge of best practices for museum management and specimen preservation. Four years later, eager to get back to more hands-on work with specimens, she joined AAF's Biological Collections Division.

Shannon certainly has her hands full now. Located in an historic building that presents various preservation challenges, this huge and growing collection also has very old specimens that are arranged according to an antiquated filing system, and there is a limited online catalogue. There is a real need for more modern methods of organization and distribution of information, and enhanced physical preservation.

PHOTO LEFT:

Prunus pensylvanica (Pin Cherry) specimen collected in 1952 by botanist W.G. Dore and former Curator of the herbarium W.J. Cody. Image provided by National Collection of Vascular Plants (DAO), © His Majesty The King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, licensed under the Open Government Licence – Canada.

HANDLING WITH CARE

It's a painstaking job preparing so many specimens for permanent storage. Each must be dried, pressed, and glued onto herbarium sheets, a special type of archival paper. The sheets are labelled to indicate details such as where, when and by whom they were obtained, as well as descriptions of the plant in the field and its habitat. Then they are placed into well-sealed steel cabinets. Relative humidity (RH) and temperature must be controlled, with 45% to 55% being the optimum RH range in rooms maintained at 18 degrees Celsius. This level of RH prevents specimens from warping and cracking (RH too low), and greatly reduces susceptibility to mould (high RH). Rooms are kept at this temperature to reduce the threat of devastating insect pests that feed on specimens, since these cannot reproduce at this temperature.

Other special preventative handling and conservation protocols are observed; for example, herbarium sheets are never flipped over. With all safeguards in place, herbaria can be, and are, maintained for hundreds of years. It is a common practice for multiple specimens of the same species to be retained in order to appropriately document species occurrence both geographically and through time.

SUPPORTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

The DAO supports the work of researchers who are assessing agricultural biodiversity, identifying emerging risks to crops (e.g., invasive species and pathogens) and tracking the spread of risks over time as



DAO cabinets storing plant specimens. Shannon Asencio.



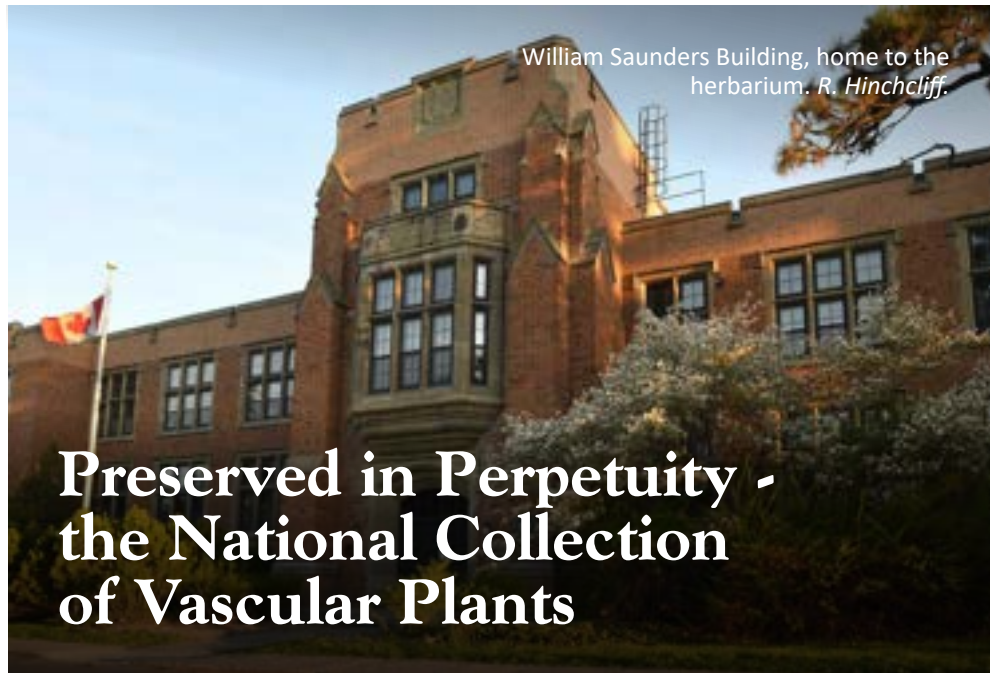
PHOTO ABOVE:
Kelsey Joustra, DAO Herbarium Technician,
with specimens. *Suzanne Saunders.*

well as geographically. The science of taxonomy is highly reliant on the type of data one finds in an herbarium, and systematic, evolutionary, bio-geographical, ecological and applied research are also strongly supported. The DAO is also a source of genetic diversity that can be harnessed to develop new crops.

Providing better access to the collection is a key goal. Over the past 25 years, there has been a huge shift towards providing electronic access to specimen records. Shannon recognizes that data need to be taken out of cabinets and put where researchers all over the world can refer to it. This is being done by staff transcribing the information into databases and capturing high-resolution images, and through the Notes from Nature citizen science data transcription project. [Volunteers are always needed! For more information on this project and to find out how you can participate click here ... <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/md68135/notes-from-nature-digitizing-biological-collections-in-canada>.] Data publication via online data portals such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility will also greatly enhance access for researchers.

Shannon's enthusiasm for undertaking such demanding work is evident, and she describes her job, surrounded by specimens that document the existence of plants from all over the planet, as "a humbling and incredibly fulfilling experience." Under her leadership, the DAO is solidifying its role as an invaluable source of data and inspiration to the scientific community.

Joan Butcher, a Friends of the Farm volunteer, previously worked for the federal government as a communications director.



William Saunders Building, home to the herbarium. *R. Hinchcliff.*

Preserved in Perpetuity - the National Collection of Vascular Plants

As well as the many live plants and trees that grow within its boundaries, the Central Experimental Farm contains an extensive herbarium, the National Collection of Vascular Plants. (Vascular plants are land plants that have tubes to transport water and minerals, and so possess true stems, leaves, and roots.) Maintained in the William Saunders Building by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the National Collection is the largest herbarium of dried and pressed vascular plants in Canada.

Originally, the word "herbarium" was used to describe books about medicinal plants. Later, herbaria containing actual dried plant specimens were created to document and study the properties of plants cultivated in the first botanical gardens, established in Italy in the 16th century. Luca Ghini, a physician and botanist, is credited as the first to preserve plants by drying them onto sheets of paper under pressure. Some of the plant specimens gathered and pressed by his students in the mid-1500s are still intact.

Today's herbaria are carefully maintained collections of named and preserved scientific specimens, providing a physical and historical archive of species' existence and distribution. AAFC's vascular plant collection comprises an impressive 1.5 million specimens, and some 50,000 plant species, which includes about 20% of the world's total. It is usually referred to by the designation it is known by in the international botanical research community—DAO, i.e.,

Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. The DAO's primary role is to facilitate research related to taxonomy, i.e., the naming, describing, and classifying of organisms. Systematic research is also supported, and of course the herbarium is curated in a manner that contributes significantly to many types of agricultural research (e.g., plant breeding and pest management). A heavy concentration of its dried and pressed specimens come from Canada, with emphasis on plants of agricultural significance such as those from the grass, mustard, legume, and sunflower family.

HISTORY

The herbarium had its start in 1886, when James Fletcher, Canada's first dominion entomologist and botanist, donated his own collection of 3,000 dried, preserved plant specimens to the Central Experimental Farm. By the 1940s, there were ca. 100,000 specimens, and now, over a million and a half -- and growing. Some 6,500 new specimens per year are added to the collection, many gathered by AAFC botanists during fieldwork. The other important source of new materials is gifts and exchanges from other herbaria. AAFC loans over 5,000 specimens each year to research centres around the world as part of an international network that readily and regularly shares physical specimens and electronic data. This cooperative approach serves to enhance research, build community, and improve curation of the collections.

Joan Butcher

Raymond Roy's favourite old willow on the "Islet of Tranquility," his suggested name for the small island in the Arboretum, also known as Heart Island.

Ephemeral Tree Art

Last winter, snow designs appeared on a couple of old trees in the Arboretum. A visitor noticed one of them and wrote that she loved "the design that the snow made in the bark". In fact, it was a creation of Ottawa artist Raymond Roy. "It's an honour to think someone believed my Tree Lines were a natural occurrence ... truly the best compliment," said Raymond in response.

In an artist's statement last year, Raymond wrote: "This past winter 2022-23 I started a project I've entitled TREE LINES where I've sculpted snow spirals that represent organic growth and renewal onto the trunks of some of my favourite urban trees in Ottawa. It's a merging of my love of these aging trees with another project where, while snowshoeing, I create large spiral drawings in the snow that refer to the natural elements of wind and water. Both projects are about making art in the urban environment and are ephemeral, temporary, and environmentally friendly markings which slowly dissolve and melt back into the landscape over time."

Raymond plans to continue with the project this winter "if the weather and timing cooperate. It's a long story about the optimum snow texture and temperature for consistency and malleability. I've learned quickly that the best snow conditions are elusive, and I was surprised at how variable those conditions are. It seemed that with every Tree Line, I was faced with different snow quality, from being too powdery to too icy, where it was almost like pellets instead of snow. It's best when the temperature is hovering just below freezing and the snow is sticky and packs to form the best snowballs. But the drawback is that they usually only last until shortly after I've finished creating them and have taken the photograph. Many times, I would finish one and it would come crashing down before I could take a photo. For me, on



This 'Tree Line' lasted long enough to be enjoyed by many visitors to the southern part of the Arboretum.

many levels, it's about the creative process and being in the moment."

FRAGILE, VULNERABLE, TRANSITORY

One of Raymond's photos of a Tree Line was selected by Tree Fest Ottawa for their exhibition entitled *Celebrating Trees*, held in September 2023 at Lansdowne Park. The photo depicted one of his Tree Lines from last winter on a tree alongside the Rideau Canal. In his artist's statement, he wrote:

"This spring I was cycling along the Rideau Canal and noticed to my surprise that this big and beautiful tree I worked on was gone. Nothing but a stump in the ground with only the photo I made to serve as memory to its existence. Apparently, it was severely damaged during a large derecho windstorm like many other trees in the city which had to be cut down.

"Also, my favourite old willow tree in the Arboretum was damaged by that storm breaking off large branches. With that injury, its age, and the core rotting away it now seems to be a shadow of its former resilience. But it is still alive and hopefully

thriving like the majestic Bebb's oak which was struck and severely damaged by lightning a few years ago.

"I used to think of trees as being invincible but over the years have come to realize that, as with everything else in life, they are like the ephemeral drawings I make in the snow—fragile, vulnerable and transitory."



The artist and his work.
Photos by Raymond Roy.



This cart, or gig, was collected in 1936 in Quebec by Marius Barbeau. It is shown displayed in the Agriculture Museum, which opened in 1937 on the second floor of the Engineering Building (Building 94), Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. The gig (artifact 1967.0065) is now in the Ingenium collection and the building is part of the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum. *Ingenium, CEF-1010-1*

Agriculture Museums on the Central Experimental Farm

By William Knight

The Canada Agriculture and Food Museum (CAFM) officially opened 40 years ago on October 12, 1983. The federal agriculture minister at the time, Eugene Whelan, was on hand to help launch it.

He remarked that the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) already showed visitors the present and future of agriculture. With the museum, the site now also demonstrated the past. That day, CAFM opened two exhibitions, “Haying in Canada—from Scythe to Forage Harvester” and “An Ontario Barn in the 1920s.” Both used artifacts to show technological change in agriculture.

This was not the first time, however, that an agriculture museum had opened its doors on the Central Experimental Farm. As

Whelan went on to explain, there had once been another museum on the site, which had closed in 1966.

In fact, there were two previous incarnations of a CEF museum: one located in the Administration Building, which was in operation during the late 1800s, and the second, as referenced by Whelan, that opened in 1937.

THE FIRST MUSEUM

Not much is known of the first museum. It was located in the original Administration Building, completed in 1889. The Experimental Farm’s annual report for that year states that “the museum room, which covers the second flat [or floor], is ready to receive the requisite fittings for storing and preserving samples of farm products.”



Administration Building, Central Experimental Farm, ca. 1889. The second floor was used as a museum exhibition space to display agricultural produce. *Ingenium, Saunders 1255.*



That description suggests the museum was intended to display produce, in a manner similar to rural agricultural fairs, where farmers annually showed their harvested crops and had them judged. Artifact displays of farm machinery were probably not an intended use of this “museum.”

The Administration Building was not universally liked, by some accounts. Cold and draughty, and rather awkward in design, it was demolished in 1939.

AGRICULTURE-RELATED ARTIFACTS

By then another agriculture museum had opened at the CEF in 1937 in the Engineering Building (Building 94), which is now the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum’s Learning Centre. The building had just been completed and featured a novel construction method, namely, a steel-truss skeleton that was visible on the second floor. This long, roomy, second-floor space was well suited for exhibiting artifacts.

A range of agriculture-related objects was collected from different sources, including from ethnographer Marius Barbeau, who was commissioned in 1936 to find agricultural artifacts in Quebec.

Other items may have been donated to the museum directly from the Central Experimental Farm, a means by which many artifacts have found their way into the Ingenium collection over the past five decades. Some of these objects, including those collected by Barbeau, are still in the collection.

The museum closed in 1966 after the Department of Agriculture’s Research Division determined it had neither the resources nor the expertise to run a museum. The Agriculture Museum artifacts were transferred to the National Museum of Man (now known as the Canadian Museum of History). It acted as temporary custodian of the closed museum’s objects until 1967, when the collection was divided, with 643 artifacts being transferred to the newly established National Museum of Science and Technology.

These objects constituted the core of the agricultural collection that has since grown and is now protected for posterity in the Ingenium Centre, the impressive new collection and administration facility located beside the Canada Science and Technology Museum (CSTM) on St. Laurent Boulevard in Ottawa.

AN IMPORTANT HOMECOMING

Between the closing of the agricultural museum in 1966 and the opening of the present-day museum in 1983, agriculture wasn’t completely ignored at the National Museum of Science and Technology. In 1973, a pavilion was built near the present-day CSTM. It housed several exhibitions, including farming equipment that had been restored for the occasion.

The opening of CAFM in 1983 marked an important homecoming. A museum was once again located on-site at the Farm, housed in some of its most historically important buildings. Objects, many of which had been collected beginning in 1936, were once more available for viewing by the public, connecting them with Canada’s rich agricultural history.

William Knight is Curator of Agriculture and Fisheries at Ingenium, with the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum as his home base.



PHOTOS ABOVE:
 1. A view of the Agriculture Museum, ca. 1930s. *Ingenium, CEF-1005*
 2. The Agriculture Museum in the 1930s. It included exhibits of tools that could then be commonly found on a farm. *Ingenium, CEF-1008.*
 3. Will Knight with a 'Fisher's Garden Seeds' box from Brockville, Ontario, an artifact at the Ingenium Centre. *R. Hinchcliff.*
 4. Archivist Adele Torrance and Will Knight at the Ingenium Centre, with items from the 'Saunders collection.' *R. Hinchcliff.*

Photo by Raymond Roy. (See 'Ephemeral Tree Art' on Page 8.)



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We also accept donations to support our activities and events, which also support the garden teams that maintain the cherished Ornamental Gardens.

A variety of donations can be made through our webpage: www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/.



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