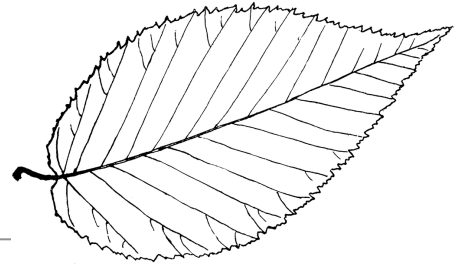


LEAF




---

## Living on the Edge of Arden Forests

---

### Did you know?

☼ Arden and the Arden Woods were named after the Arden Forest that appears as a setting in William Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. The Arden Shakespeare Guild performs this play every ten years. They are due to perform it next in 2020. When they performed this play in 2010, neighbors left each other notes by "tree mail" as they do in the play.

☼ Sherwood Forest is home to the Harvester (*Feniseca tarquinius*), North America's only carnivorous butterfly. In Arden Woods, beavers have been sighted making their lodges in Naaman's Creek.

☼ Area children grow up "hop-rocking" on Naaman's Creek, but did you know that the large rocks are actually igneous rocks that were formed when magma cooled underground over 400 million years ago? The rocks in Naaman's Creek are considered the *Arden Granitic Suite* which is part of the *Arden Plutonic Supersuite* which stretches into Pennsylvania.

## Welcome Hither

In your hands is the premiere issue of our newsletter dedicated to the neighbors of one of our great resources—the Forests of Ardens. Admit it, this picturesque setting played a role in your choice to live where you do. We are the lucky ones who live close to I-95 and can enjoy the cultural bounty of both Wilmington and Philadelphia. We can be at the beach in 90 minutes, but when we come home, it is to the edges of ***Sherwood Forest*** and ***The Arden Woods***—newly named to the Old-Growth Forest Network.

Our purpose for this newsletter is two-fold: to encourage communication with those who share our forest borders and to promote stewardship of this resource. Addressing the first aim, we encourage all of you to join the ***Facebook group: Forests of the Ardens***. In this group, we not only share photos of the woods and wildlife, but we also give notice of activities such as geological hikes or forest weed walks and discuss issues like water management, path construction, and forest rehabilitation.

As for encouraging stewardship, we hope the information provided will spur you to think about new ways in which you can be a good neighbor to our forests with ideas such as monitoring invasive plants on your property, ensuring proper disposal of yard waste, and respecting the border of the forest. Or maybe you are ready to take the next step and join us the next time we have an ivy-pull, create a new trail, or sponsor a stream clean-up.

Forest stewardship is great lesson to pass onto our children. Our youth have been some of our greatest allies as evidenced by new paths created by Eagle Scouts and bridges built by the Ardens' summer co-op participants. Ready for some details on how you can be a force of nature for our forests? Read on.



## Plant this... not that

### Trees

- Instead of *Norway Maples*, plant **Black Gum** or **Red Maple**
- Instead of *Bradford Pears*, plant **Crabapple** or **Serviceberry**

### Shrubs

- Instead of *Japanese Barberry*, plant **Spirea** or **Bayberry**
- Instead of *Butterfly Bush*, plant **Butterfly milkweed** or **Bottlebrush Buckeye**
- Instead of *Winged Burning Bush*, plant **Red and Black Chokeberry** or **Winterthur Viburnum**

### Groundcover

- Instead of *English Ivy*, plant **Wood Aster** or **Goldenstar**

For more ideas, search: **Plants for a Livable Delaware** or check out...

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/udextension/lawngarden/files/2012/06/PLD.pdf>

## A Conversation with Elaine Schmerling

*Elaine is the Ardentown Natural Lands Steward on the Public Works & Safety Committee. She is also a volunteer Delaware Nature Society Habitat Steward and has a BA in Environmental Studies and Biology.*

### You are one of the Ardens' top forest advocates. How did that process start for you?

I have always loved forests. My favorite course in college was a woods plant identification class, so Arden, as a community, was a natural fit. When I moved to Arden in 1991, I was interested in gardening, but I bought plants for their aesthetic appeal more than anything. I did shop at native plant sales, but it wasn't until I moved to Ardentown in 2000 that I became more knowledgeable. At first it was personal. Every tree on our property was covered in ivy, and we had to spend thousands to remove dead trees. Neighbor Sue Rothrock taught me that the trees had died because the Norway maples on the property were invasive and out-competed the other trees for water and nutrients. After cutting them down, we re-planted with native understory trees such as Ironwood and Witch Hazel and began a whole learning process.

### What is so bad about Norway Maples?

They are all over Ardentown. Years ago, a town elder purposely planted them because the seedlings were easy to find and free. But, they are from Norway. They don't support our local wildlife and grow out of control with our warmer weather, and with nothing to keep them in check, they out-compete our native trees and shrubs and seed in everywhere. Conversely, our native plants support the whole ecosystem: they are hosts to native insects that feed the whole gamut, including supporting our native birds who all feed insects to their young; and most of their seeds are food for critters. Not usually so with invasives – hence more of them sprout.

### So, after you found out about the insidious nature of plants like ivy and Norway Maples, what did you do?

I was lucky to get to know Bev Barnett on the Arden Forest Committee who had removed quite a lot of ivy already from Sherwood Forest and introduced me to many resources. We formed a regular "Wednesday Weed-n-Walk" volunteer group for all three Ardens and had educational walks, too, with Botanist Janet Ebert—who did Arden's plant inventories. They educated me on native and non-native plants, and I began to see that our woods had the same problem as my property—except on a much larger scale. We learned that there were many other invasive plants all around us. We went out regularly and removed thousands of the worst ones, some with grant-funding.

*Continued on page 3*

*Continued from page 2*

### **Would you say that invasive plants are the number one problem of our local forests?**

I am definitely seeing fewer butterflies and moths, which are easy indicators of a problem. There used to be huge moths all around in the evening which I don't see at all anymore. Even things like the number of species in our streams are on the decline, according to Dave Jones, one of our area environmentalists.

Invasives seed in every year and displace native plants, and people don't even realize it. Before you know it a tree has grown, an Asian bush honeysuckle became a full-size shrub, or ivy has taken over an entire area, and people think they were always there. And we keep finding new invasive plants every year.

### **What can we do to be good neighbors to the forest?**

Number one action is to plant native plants. Native plant sales are great, but we need to also ask for them at all commercial plant stores, and support those sales and increase the demand. Highland Orchards and Old Country, for example, sells some.

Be careful when getting shared plants and buying ones you don't know at a commercial store – look them up and make sure they are not invasive. It is heartening that people are planting more pollinator and other native plant gardens. Every bit helps.

Second, learn to identify plants in your yard. If you have non-native plants in your yard, you can remove them or, at the very least, make sure they don't go to seed and spread. Even if the plants aren't on the forest edge, birds or the wind can carry seeds into the forest.

Number three, you can volunteer to help remove invasives from the forest. We have ivy pulls in the fall and can save trees, and allow wildflowers and the next generation of trees to grow where the ivy once covered.

**Thank you for talking with us, Elaine. And thank you for the work you are doing on behalf of the forests.**

Want a great field trip to experience the beauty of the area's best native plants? Check out MOUNT CUBA CENTER, 3120 Barley Mill Road; Hockessin, DE 19707. General admission is Wed-Sun, 10 AM - 4 PM, April-November. <https://mtcubacenter.org>

## **Sherwood Forest Restoration Project**

Arden and their partner New Castle Conservation District received a Community Water Quality Improvement grant from DNREC to repair a deeply incised channel in the Sherwood Forest. Incised channels are caused by excessive storm water rushing into the woods and eroding the forest floor. With ever deeper channels gouged in the forest, the delicate balance between the trees and plants and the water table is disturbed and this can disrupt the environment killing trees and changing plant populations.

The project has an experimental aspect; we are constructing hybrid rock vanes to slow the flow and collect the sediment from the storm water which is a pollutant that damages water quality and aquatic life. The vanes (low level dams) will be planted with red maples to become part of the ecology and strengthen the structure. Part of our grant includes studying Perkins Run and documenting the outcome of these efforts. The project is currently at the bidding stage. We hope that work can begin this fall.

As good neighbors we ask your awareness of the impact water flow can have on your neighbors. Changing slopes and misdirected rain gutters can damage the forest. Be wary of common household chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, automotive products and road salt which can poison those downstream.



\*Reminder: students can earn volunteer hours for work in forest clean-up efforts.

## Good neighbor practices for Autumn

- Fall foliage time is nigh. Don't dump leaves or yard waste in the forest. Yard waste can change the pH of the forest floor, and the decomposition can negatively affect trees when piled. Mulch with leaves as Longwood Gardens does. It will save you money from purchasing processed mulch.
- Be aware of encroachment. Respect the forest boundary and keep lawns, outbuildings, and brush piles within property limits.

LEAF is brought to you by the Arden Forest Committee. The Forest Committee implements the Forest Stewardship Policy, the main tenets being preservation of a natural ecosystem, including appropriate wildlife habitat, and enhancing residents' interaction with and enjoyment of this natural environment. Specifically, the Forest Committee oversees trail improvements to encourage residents to enjoy the woods. We use social media to educate neighbors about appreciating and respecting our forest. In addition, we monitor hazard trees, evaluate risk, and intervene if damage to structures or hikers would occur if the tree fell. The forest committee is charged with the tasks of monitoring forest borders to stop encroachment by leaseholders or neighbors. We also observe water flow in an effort to prevent stream bank erosion and are launching a program to test our waters to ensure stream health. Lastly, we facilitate removal of invasive species to encourage native growth and diversity of native species.

## Forests of the Ardens Events Fall 2018

Friday, September 14, 5-7 PM *Weeding & Wine Happy Hour*. Come pull invasives followed by wine happy hour. Meet at entrance to The Arden Woods on Cherry Lane a.k.a Borders' House.

Sunday, September 23 7:00-9:30 PM, *Full Moon Owl Prowl and Bonfire*. Meet at the labyrinth on the Arden Green near corner of Millers Rd and Woodland Lane.

Saturday, September 29 at 10AM-noon, *Fall Wildflower and Pollinator Hike*. Meet at Ribletts', 2303 Orchard Road, Ardentown. Park at Ivy Gables.

Saturday, October 27 at 11 AM. *Sherwood Forest Geology Hike*. Meet at Buzz Ware Village Center.

Saturday, November 10 at 10AM-noon, *Fall Color Hike*. Meet at Candlelight Theater. parking lot.

Join Facebook Group **Forests of the Ardens** for event details, updates, and future happenings.

## Arden Fair and Forests of the Ardens Patch Program

The Arden Forest Committee is starting an initiative to foster use and care of our forests. Welcome to the 2019 Patch Program. Residents of the Ardens and other communities bordering Sherwood Forest and The Arden Woods can earn an embroidered patch by completing tasks such as taking hikes, helping with stream cleanup and other family-friendly activities. The 2019 patch will feature the Arden white squirrel. To enroll in the program, come see us at our Arden Fair booth on Sept 1—the kickoff of the patch program. We are located on Sherwood Rd. just down from the intersection with The Highway. Pick up a Patch Passport and complete 6 of the 11 activities listed. Return your passport to a member of the Arden Forest Committee or mail it to the committee by June 10, 2019. You can also participate in the program as a group. Groups of four or more who complete the requirements will receive a native tree seedling to plant. Details of the 2019 Patch Program may also be found, downloaded, and printed from the Arden Forest Committee webpage.



### Arden Forest Committee

Buzz Ware Village Center/  
2119 The Highway/  
Wilmington, DE 19810

[http://arden.delaware.gov/  
committees/forest-committee/](http://arden.delaware.gov/committees/forest-committee/)

[forest@arden.delaware.gov](mailto:forest@arden.delaware.gov)

Facebook group: Forests of the Ardens

Current elected members:  
Carol Larson (chair), Jennifer Borders, Jill Althouse-Wood, David Nordheimer, Jeff Martin.

LEAF editor: Jill Althouse-Wood

The goals of this newsletter are forest stewardship and communication—goals we would like to advance through the use of social media and online forums. Future issues of this newsletter will likely be electronic in form. Join Facebook Group **Forests of the Ardens** to stay connected.