



THE LEAFLET

Newsletter of the Morgan Arboretum Association

"All is leaf"
- Goethe

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Fall 2008

You are invited to the

Annual General Meeting

of the members
of the MAA

on Saturday, September 13
at 10:00 am

Please join us
at the Conservation Centre

- to hear reports from the Board and Staff,
- to approve the financial statement for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2008,
- and to elect directors for the ensuing year.

Only members in good standing
will be allowed to vote.

A note from the President

Dear members,

I'd like to extend an enthusiastic welcome to our new and returning members for the 2008/2009 year. We are currently transitioning through a period of revitalization for our Board of Directors and membership. The past year has witnessed an increased activism with a doubling of Board meetings from bi-monthly to monthly, and a marked increase in volunteerism from the members. An important next step lies before us. A joint "Arboretum Vision" Committee has been formed from members of the MAA and McGill.

This committee will be developing a vision for the coming years that will guide decision-making and provide focus for future investment in the Arboretum. They will review the site's past and present as a shared use facility - McGill for research, teaching, local educational services for group tours and activities, and Association members for their recreation: walking, birding, photography, dog walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, relaxing, etc. The committee will be looking at how the needs have changed and what they might be in the future. The work is in its early stages and will continue for some time.

This summer, Gaz Métropolitain has undertaken preventative maintenance work on their pipeline that runs along the southernmost and western perimeter of the Arboretum. The work affected the terrain along a portion of the blue ski trail but is now completed. Gaz Métro will repair the damage made to the Blue Trail once conditions are drier -just in time for the ski season!

Dog owning members should be aware that just over 300 had renewed by the beginning of July (renewal deadline for 2008/2009 was August 1st). People on the dog membership waiting list will be contacted to attend a dog evaluation day on September 6th or 7th. Also of note were the both positive and negative comments received in response to my e mail concerning dogs and their 'presents'. Several dog members went out of their way to pick up the leavings of others and thus improved the situation; thank you. Please remember that dog walking in the Arboretum is a special privilege and owners should read and abide by the code of conduct and regulations that can be found in the brochure included with their membership packages as well as on our website.

In closing I'd like to remind you that by providing the Gatehouse (514-398-7811) with your e-mail address, you will be taking advantage of our forthcoming communications initiatives. Lastly, I invite you to attend the Association's Annual General Meeting on September 13 (see announcement on the left-hand side) where the year's reports will be delivered, any member can make their opinions known, and he/she can be elected to the Board of Directors.

Ian Claudi
MAA President

Arboretum Bird Bonanza

As anyone who has picked up a copy of the Arboretum bird checklist from the Gatehouse will discover, over 180 species of birds have been reported in our forest over recent seasons... but, have you ever wondered just how many of those you might encounter in a day of wandering the arboretum's trails? You would be surprised how long your list would be. Many people will say that they rarely see birds in the forest, possibly a couple of sparrows or a woodpecker, but often the comment

mean when you say there's nothing there? Amazing isn't it - especially amazing when you think that we are so close to a major city surrounded by fairly dense communities and agricultural land.



A Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Photo: Richard Gregson



Birders surveying the forest during the MBO fundraiser
Photo: Richard Gregson

is "there's nothing there". How wrong you can be. Admittedly, the thick leaf cover can make bird sightings tricky at times but an attentive ear, a systematic scanning of the area you are walking through, and a simple pair of binoculars will bring the birds to you.

Just down the hill between the Arboretum and the Ecomuseum is the McGill Bird Observatory (MBO)*, a banding station that monitors migrating birds throughout the year. It is one of a network of sites across the continent. Running such a station is expensive and so fundraising activities are held. Recently on a weekend in late May, a sponsored birding walk began at the MBO and continued into the Arboretum where almost all the trails and hidden corners were visited. Good weather provided for a lengthy day where participants were sponsored for each species of bird they found.

Of the 180+ possibilities, how many species were seen? - a fabulous total of 94 between 6:00 am and mid-afternoon! And, no one went into restricted areas. Participants had the same number of eyes and ears as everyone else so what do you

Some highlights. Twenty-two warbler species out of a possible twenty-seven on the Montreal checklist, including a couple of species, such as the Canada Warbler, that are threatened in the region. The presence of Bobolinks were confirmed once again - a bird that we are trying to preserve in the arboretum fields as it suffers greatly from habitat loss everywhere and we are lucky to have them breeding here. Four species of raptor (Coopers, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks plus a Merlin), two species of Sandpiper (check Rudy's ponds just west of the access road), a Black-billed Cuckoo, four species of Woodpecker and four of Flycatchers, five species of Swallows as well as Chimney Swifts, six of Sparrows and five of Thrushes plus a host of other wonderful birds were seen or heard. All for the price of a day wandering the trails. The best places to see birds for the average person are probably Blossom Corner and Pullin's Pasture. Also check out the field between the car parks, the Bobolink field, and in the denser woodland along the Blue trail. Remember to look up and down, different species prefer different levels in the forest. Keep your ears open, birds

The birds
overwintering
at the Arboretum
are fed by:



Bird Protection
Protection des oiseaux
Quebec du Québec

www.birdprotectionquebec.org

will often tell you where they are by their songs.

So, as you can see, our Arboretum is not just a place of trees and trails but a wonderfully rich avian habitat that has much to offer anyone who takes the trouble to just look around as they walk, alone or with friends or their dogs. This is one of the richest and most accessible places in the region for you to enjoy the company of forest birds. Next time you come, do remember those binoculars and a note-book. You might surprise yourself at what you can see. For those on that birding walk in May it was seeing 50% of the possible species in one average day. Can you beat that?

Anyone wanting more information can get a copy of the Arboretum checklist at the Gatehouse and there is an informative article about the Arboretum birds and where to see them on our own website at <http://www.morganarboretum.org/english/wildlife/birds.htm>. Other sites worth visiting are those of:

Bird Protection Quebec
<http://www.birdprotectionquebec.org/>

Birding Montreal
http://www.sparrowworks.ca/Site_pages/morganar-bo2.html

*Note: the MBO is a research facility and is out of bounds to the general public. You cannot visit without prior arrangement or as part of an organized event.

Richard Gregson
MAA Director



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for their annual contributions to our mission**



The Arboretum at the heart of the Senneville Woods ecoterritory

Ecoterritories are places with a large concentration of natural environments and a high ecological value. Under its Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats,

(reptiles and amphibians), birds and mammals. To ensure that it continues to foster such biodiversity, it is essential for the Arboretum to stay connected to the natural ecosystems of the Rivière à l'Orme area by preserving a sizeable natural corridor within the Bois de la Roche agricultural park.



Aerial view of the well conserved Senneville Woods.
Photo: City of Montréal

The Morgan Arboretum, at the heart of Senneville Woods, affords protection for several endangered species of flora, including rare forest stands such as beech, red oak and eastern hemlock. The beech and hemlock stands are the largest on the Island of Montreal.

The Arboretum also plays a vital role in the maintenance and quality of the soil water regime. Featuring an extensive plateau, it is located at the head of all the drainage basins on the western tip of the Island of Montreal.

Given its strategic hydrological position, the diversity of its natural habitats and its exceptional flora, the Morgan Arboretum is an invaluable green space that is truly worth preserving.

adopted in December 2004, the City of Montréal identified 10 ecoterritories within the Greater Montreal area, one being Senneville Woods.

Senneville Woods, which comprises the Morgan Arboretum forests and surrounding woodlands is the largest forest on the Island of Montreal (almost 300 hectares), and is of particular ecological interest. It is dominated by stands of mature trees (deciduous and coniferous) and includes several streams and a number of wetland areas (ponds, marshes and swamps). The extent of forest cover and the diversity in the landscape make this exceptional ecoterritory prime habitat for herpetofauna

Claude Thiffault
Urban Planning Adviser - Biologist
Direction des grands parcs et de la nature en ville
City of Montréal

Translation: Nicola Elie

The *Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats* is available online at
http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=175,1722057&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL




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Flowing down from headwater

Members and other visitors of the Morgan Arboretum are probably well aware of the wet nature of the trail system during spring and late fall. The reason for this excessive moisture is that the Morgan Arboretum's forest lands actually serve as a 'trap' for falling rain and snow, cleaning this water before it flows into various streams and rivers. Because it is the starting point for a large amount of waterflow, our Arboretum is also known as a headwater.

Water falls upon the Arboretum and enters one of its many watersheds, areas of land that drain water to a specific stream, river or lake. As water passes through the trees' leaves, enters the soil and filters through tree roots, the water often becomes cleaner than when it initially fell from the sky. After being trapped within the Arboretum, watershed water exits the property in many locations, both below ground as ground water and above ground in streams and drainage ditches, to feed the Lake of Two Mountains and Lake St-Louis. See if you can identify a few streams leaving the site during your next visit. Interestingly, one Arboretum watershed sends its



A submerged part of the snowshoe trail.
Photo: Rebecca Zeran



flow to Rivière à l'Orme before reaching the Lake of Two Mountains.

The natural Arboretum system of water capture is quite different to the one found in most urban areas. In very densely populated areas there is very little green surface, i.e. trees, plants, grass, to initially absorb rain and snowmelt water. This results in the majority of water falling upon city streets, picking up street pollutants such as salt and oil, and being directed immediately to stormwater systems, without being filtered and cleaned beforehand. In addition, because most water is not absorbed into the ground, stormwaters tend to swell our lakes rather than replenishing our very important groundwater systems. Therefore, under this unnatural system flooding during heavy rainstorms is often more prevalent.

The Arboretum therefore offers even greater benefits to our community than simply a space with fresh, cool air, high diversity of plants and wildlife, calm atmosphere, exercise location, etc., it also provides us with clean water... enjoy.

Christina Idziak
Academic Director

Rustic Garden Furniture Building

Traditional Chair

Two weekends:
Sept. 13-14 & 20-21
Cost: \$375 + materials

Instructor: Kim Vergil
okvergil@videotron.ca
www.kimcreations.net

A Home Depot - Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Grant: to keep your feet dry while preserving our wetlands

To better serve Arboretum visitors while respecting the ecology of this humid forested site, we are pleased to announce that we have applied for and received a Home Depot - Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Grant in the amount of \$3000 to construct a series of boardwalks primarily on the Yellow and Red trails. These boardwalks will enable visitors to access the trail system during the wetter periods of spring and fall while not increasing the footprint of existing trails. That is, visitors will be able to comfortably stay on trails rather than being forced into making destructive detours into the forest to avoid wet areas. This project is expected to be completed by July 2009. The MAA wishes to thank Home Depot and the Evergreen Foundation for their generous support to the Morgan Arboretum.



EVERGREEN
Imagine your city with nature

We are currently seeking volunteers to participate in a series of boardwalk-building sessions this fall and next spring. Please submit your name to the office if interested.

Christina Idziak
Academic Director



Challenges in the 21st Century:
World Food Supply

The Food for Thought lecture series will start its 7th season on
Tuesday, September 9

with a talk by series moderator **Don Smith** entitled
Challenges to Global Food Security in the 21st Century
- An Overview.

Subsequent lectures will be held every other Tuesday until
December 2. Please visit the website for details:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/macdonald/events/>

COMMEMORATION PROGRAM

Dedicate one of our benches to a loved one
or select a tree to commemorate a birth,
death or other important event.

For more information, please contact
Anne Godbout at 514-398-8697
anne.godbout@mcgill.ca



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on the Saint Anne's boardwalk
until October 11*



Update on our Biobag Initiative

Since its inception in May 2007, the Arboretum Biobag project has been steadily gaining ground. Off to a slow start, Biobag sales at the Gatehouse are now catching up to the cost of bags being provided free in the dispensers located around the parking lots. We thank Peter Desmier once again for kickstarting this project and to all the members who are supporting the use of compostable doggie bags through their purchases at the Gatehouse. If sales continue to offset freely dispensed bags, Arboretum management will pursue the second stage of this project which is to find funding to purchase a composter for doggie deposits.

Christina Idziak
Academic Director

OKTOBERFEST

Sunday October 5

from 12:00 until 16:30

- ❖ Kiosks & Educational Booths
- ❖ Tours
- ❖ German delicacies
- ❖ Lumberjack Show
- ❖ Cow Paddy Bingo
- ❖ Music



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The Hackberry butterfly is closely associated with the Hackberry tree on which it feeds. Both species can be found on the property although they are rare in Canada. The butterfly is out and active at this time of year. The north-east corner of Centre Road seems to be a good spot to look for it. You may find it on a sunny day hovering in the meadows bordering the trail. See the color version of this photo on our blog which can be accessed from our web site.

Photo: Maxim Larrivée




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*Dedicated to forest conservation,
environmental education
and recreation.*

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THE LEAFLET

is published in English and French,
twice a year: in April and September.

English Revision: Chick Taylor

English Translation: Nicola Elie

French Translation: Christian Hemming

We welcome submissions
and ideas for articles.

Deadline for spring issue: March 31, 2009

Saturday **September 13**
at 10:00

Annual General Meeting
of the members of the Arboretum
at the Conservation Centre

Saturday **September 20**
at 20:00

Seasonal Night Skies
Lecture and Stargazing Event
organised by
the Royal Astronomical Society
Meet at the Conservation Centre
Free Entrance

Sunday **September 21**
from 7:00 am until 10:00 am

Birding Workshop

A 2-hour field trip
at the MBO research station
followed by a 1-hour lecture.

Lead by ornithologists
**Drs. David Bird
& Rodger Titman**

Cost: \$10 for members, others \$15
RSVP

Sunday **October 5**
from 12:00 until 16:30

Oktoberfest

Free for members,
regular entrance fees for others

Info: 514-398-7811

Thanksgiving Monday **October 13**
in French at 13:00
in English at 14:30

The Fall Nature Tour

Learn about the great diversity of
trees found on our grounds and find out
why certain foliage take on
spectacular hues at this time of year.

Free for members,
regular entrance fees for others

Sunday **October 19**
starting at 9:30

Orienteering Challenge

organised by
the Ramblers Orienteering Club
Beginners and advanced courses
Register at the Conservation Centre
between 9:30 and 12:00

Info: www.orienteringquebec.ca

Saturday **October 25**
at 19:00

Seasonal Night Skies

Lecture and Stargazing Event
organised by
the Royal Astronomical Society
Meet at the Conservation Centre
Free Entrance

Sunday **March 22 & 29**
from 12:00 until 16:00

Sugaring off

Meet at the Sugar Shack
to enjoy seasonal delicacies