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## Bulletin No. 7: The Connecticut Arboretum: Its History and the Establishment of the Natural Area

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ARBORETUM

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BULLETIN NO. 7.

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RICHARD H. GOODWIN  
Director

BULLETIN NO. 7  
MAY 1952



## The Arboretum Comes of Age

The year of 1952 marks the 21st birthday of the Connecticut Arboretum and thus establishes a milestone in the history of a project which has been concerned continuously with the development and rehabilitation of land for the study of trees and shrubs. To celebrate the coming of age of the Arboretum this account of its growth, its history and its present program has been prepared with the hope that it will be a source of additional interest and information to all those who have belief in the value of the venture, as well as to those unfamiliar with the project.

## What the Arboretum Is

An arboretum is a place where trees and shrubs are grown for scientific and educational purposes. The practice of limiting its collection to the native flora—that is, the woody plants of Connecticut and adjoining states—makes the Connecticut Arboretum nearly unique among arboreta. The woody flora of the northeastern United States is unusually rich and most of the species are particularly well suited to growing under our local conditions. Knowledge of the use of native plants in enriching and beautifying our environment is extremely valuable in this age of over-development and exploitation of our natural resources, and much can be learned through the medium of an arboretum.

At the Connecticut Arboretum it is possible for students and other interested persons to examine and study 374 native or naturalized species, 30 varieties and 5 hybrids, representing 116 genera. In addition, a large number of ornamental species and varieties may be seen in the Caroline Black Botanic Garden on the east side of the campus and on the campus itself.

A recently published check list and guide to the plantings is helpful for those wishing to become better acquainted with the Arboretum collections and may be procured from the Director.

## What the Arboretum Does

The Arboretum serves many purposes, but of first importance is its wide use as an outdoor laboratory for many aspects of nature study—the native flora, plant and animal ecology, ornithology, and aquatic biology. The area, therefore, is frequently used by garden clubs and local schools for study and exploration as well as being an objective for field trips by numerous college classes. It is also the site of the New London Girl Scout Day Camp each summer.

The area is also an important recreational area, both for the College and the community. The outdoor theater provides an ideal natural setting for

occasional festivities such as College Class Day. Buck Lodge with its large stone fireplace and comfortable porch is a favorite meeting place for picnics and other gatherings of many college and outside groups. The Arboretum is always open to the public and serves as New London's most beautiful park.

The Arboretum publishes occasional bulletins, of which this is the seventh in the series. Bulletin Number 4, "A Plant Handbook: Lists of Plants for Specific Landscape Uses," has filled a real need for those interested in landscape work.

The Arboretum sponsors occasional meetings, often in cooperation with the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. In the past these have dealt with such topics as the Dutch Elm Disease, Civic Planting, and Horticulture. Certain native trees and shrubs have been propagated in the Arboretum nurseries for distribution to organizations for civic planting projects.



*Dedication of the memorial bench and planting to the memory of Mrs. John R. Demarest, September 21, 1950. Left to right: Mrs. George T. Brown, Dr. Richard H. Goodwin, Director of the Arboretum; Dr. Rosemary Park, President of Connecticut College; Mr. Paul F. Laubenstein, and Mrs. Woolsey S. Conover, President of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut.*

# CONNECTICUT ARBORETUM LAND ACQUISITION — 1911 TO 1951

1. BOLLESWOOD (1911) comprises 16.5 acres of wild woodland, including ledges, hemlock grove, and swamp, which have never been cleared. This tract will become part of the natural area. It was given to the College by Anna Hempstead Branch and Mary L. Bolles Branch and is named in honor of John R. Bolles.

2. BRANCH PURCHASE (1911) consists of 21.6 acres of fields and pasture, which were farmed up until the date of purchase. The eastern portion, now under semi-cultivation, includes the laurel walk, outdoor theatre, Buck Lodge, and plantings. The western corner is wooded and will become part of the natural area. This land was purchased by the College from Mary L. Bolles Branch.

3. COMSTOCK PURCHASE (1926) includes 3.8 acres of cultivated fields which are now used for plantings and nursery. It was purchased by the College from Frank A. Comstock.

4. COMSTOCK PURCHASE (1927) comprises 21.8 acres of pasture and bog, with wooded areas particularly at the western end. The red pine grove to the south of the pond was planted at the time of purchase in 1927. The western end will become part of the natural area. The tract was purchased by the College from Frank A. Comstock.

5. RAVINE TRACT (1937) consists of 15.7 acres of wild woodland which was used for pasture and woodlot up to the date of acquisition. A power line crosses the southwestern corner. Everything north of the power line will become part of the natural area. This tract was a gift to the Arboretum of 36 individuals, the Lawrence & Memorial Hospitals staff, the New London and Hartford Garden Clubs, and the New London Horticultural Society.

6. BENHAM AVENUE EXTENSION (1942), 10 acres of pasture, was mostly reforested with white pine and hemlock in 1942. It was the gift of 31 individuals and the New London and Hartford Garden Clubs. Its use is restricted to Arboretum purposes.

7. GEORGE S. AVERY TRACT (1944), 33 acres of ledges, woodland (repeatedly burned) and pasture, had had some topsoil and gravel deposits removed before the date of acquisition. Open portions have now been partially reforested with white pine. Gifts from over 100 individuals and 20 Connecticut garden clubs accounted for over 75 per cent of the purchase price. It is named in honor of Dr. George S. Avery, Jr., Director of the Arboretum from 1931 to 1944.

8. KATHARINE MATTHIES TRACT (1946), 26 acres of old orchard and

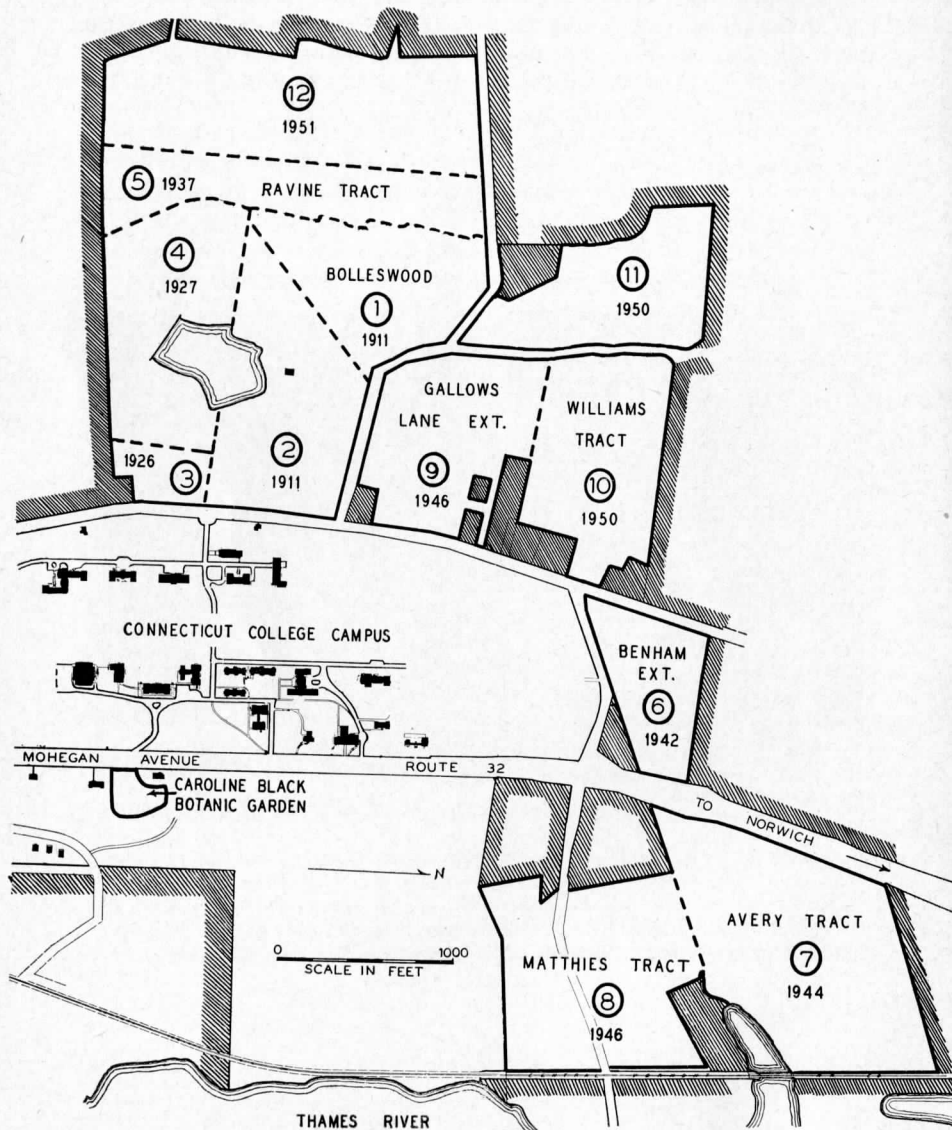
farm land, has now been partially reforested with white pine. The bottom land is now kept under cultivation. This tract was given in 1944 by Miss Katharine Matthies, Secretary of the Connecticut Arboretum Association from 1931 to 1951.

9. GALLOWS LANE EXTENSION (1946) comprises 19 acres of overgrown pasture (eastern half) and wild woodland, partly burned in 1944 (western half). The western portion will become part of the natural area. Gifts from four persons accounted for about 20 per cent of the purchase price.

10. WILLIAMS TRACT (1950) includes 19 acres of open pasture, with some swampy woodland in the central and western portions. A barn is on the property, and the land is crossed by a telephone easement. The open pasture was planted to white and red pine in 1951. The western end will become part of the natural area. Gifts from 24 persons accounted for 40 per cent of the purchase price. The tract was named in honor of Mrs. S. H. Williams, Trustee of the College from 1915 to 1947.

11. MONROE TRACT (1950) consists of 15.7 acres of woodland, ledges and swamp. A portion of the woodland is second growth. This tract will become part of the natural area. It was given to the College by 30 persons and the Executive Board of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, to be used for Arboretum.

12. RIBAUDO PURCHASE (1951) comprises 29.2 acres of swampy woods, fields and pasture. A power line crosses the southern end. Everything north of the power line will become part of the natural area. Gifts of 35 individuals, the American Tree Association, the Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation, the New London Garden Club and the Robertson Paper Box Company covered 90 per cent of the purchase price.



## Before the Arboretum

At the founding of Connecticut College in 1911, numerous tracts of land were purchased for the campus, among them a farm belonging to the Branch family. At the time of these purchases Anna Hempstead Branch, the poetess, and her mother gave the College a 16-acre tract of wild rocky woodland requesting "that the land herein conveyed shall be used . . . as a park for the use and engagement of the students of said College and their friends and . . . that said land shall be known and designated as 'Bolleswood' in memory of the late John R. Bolles . . . grandfather of Anna Hempstead Branch." This property originally came into the possession of the Bolles family in 1693, when it was purchased by Thomas Bolles from the Mohegan Sachem, Owaneco, son of Uncas, for "four yards of duffels." The original receipt for this transaction is on deposit in the College Library.

The Bolleswood (see map on page 4) was locally famous for its magnificent hemlock grove which was decimated by the great hurricane of 1938. The trees in this grove were between 150 and 200 years old at the time of the blowdown.<sup>1</sup> There are no stone walls within the area and the tract is almost certain never to have been cleared by man. Bolleswood has been in constant use by students and visitors ever since the College opened in 1915. As for the "engagement of the students," it may be necessary to poll the alumnae before assessing this aspect of the use of the Branch gift.

The land lying between Bolleswood and the new campus was actively farmed in 1911. The Branch property, now the site of the laurel walk, the outdoor theatre, Buck Lodge and many of the plantings (tract No. 2 on the map), lay fallow for twenty years and portions of it grew up to impenetrable brier thickets. In 1926 and 1927 two additional tracts of farm land were added to the College holdings. Part of tract No. 3 was used at once as a campus nursery.

A concrete dam was constructed on tract No. 4, under the direction of Mr. Lambdin, Business Manager of the College, and the swampy woods were partially cleared away to form the lake. This body of apparently useless water was originally called "Lambdin's Folly" by those who lacked the imagination to visualize its potentialities. At about this same time the red pine grove just to the south of the lake was planted.

Thus it came about that all the makings of an arboretum were at hand—a beautiful wild woodland given to be used as a park, a nursery, an embryonic pine grove, a small lake, and an unsightly piece of overgrown pasture at the College doorstep crying to be developed as an attractive ex-

<sup>1</sup>Avery, G. S., Jr., H. B. Creighton, and C. W. Hock. Annual rings in hemlocks and their relation to environmental factors. *American Journal of Botany*, Vol. 27, pp. 825-831. 1940.

tension to the campus. In 1931 President Katharine Blunt brought Dr. George S. Avery, Jr., to the College as head of the Botany Department and Director of the new Arboretum.

## Growth of the Arboretum

The first decade saw many important developments at the Arboretum. The Washington Entrance, including the laurel walk, was the gift of the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution. The outdoor theatre and Buck Lodge were gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Nelson L. Buck and their daughter, Frances Buck Taylor (Class of 1932). The laurel walk and many of the paths and plantings were laid out at least in part according to the plans drawn up by the landscape architect, Mr. A. F. Brinkerhoff. Some of the construction was carried out by crews of CCC boys working under the direction of Dr. Avery.

In 1936 the threat of a lumbering operation in the ravine just west of the Bolleswood led a group of friends of the Arboretum to purchase this beautiful spot as an important extension to the Arboretum holdings. This was the first of eight land additions. By 1940 it became clear to a number of far-sighted persons interested in the College and the Arboretum that the city was about to envelop the College and that further land acquisitions would have to be made before the real estate became built up. The story of this growth of the Arboretum is told on pages 4 and 5. It can be summarized thus: Eight tracts of land totaling 167.6 acres were acquired between 1937 and 1951. Gifts totaling \$32,000 accounted for 76 per cent of the total cost of all this property, which included a substantial barn. Thanks to many generous friends, the Arboretum now extends in an unbroken sweep around the northern end of the campus and down to the Thames River. Much of this land is now being reforested and is traversed by miles of paths and bridle trails.

The reclamation of some of the abused and abandoned farm land by reforestation has been a slow and costly process, which has involved the clearing away of impenetrable brier thickets, planting with evergreen nursery stock purchased from the State, followed by repeated mowing of the brush until the trees have become well established. Some of the pines planted ten years ago on the Benham Extension are now over twenty feet tall. Fires have been a yearly hazard to the young plantations and damage from this cause has been thus far kept to a minimum by dint of constant vigilance and the prompt cooperation of the New London and Quaker Hill fire companies. The construction and maintenance of miles of fire lanes around the Arboretum boundaries have saved the day in a number of cases. Cigarettes carelessly discarded from car windows have been the chief cause of trouble.







*The Ravine, in the heart of the Natural Area.*

Gallows Lane will be fenced in as soon as funds are available, in order to keep vandalism to a minimum. A good start has been made, as 2100 feet of galvanized fencing have already been purchased.

Plans are being formulated for a long-range scientific investigation of the vegetation within the Natural Area. Sample plots will be carefully chosen for detailed quadrat studies which it is hoped may be repeated at suitable intervals over a period of years. The purpose of this program will be to record the changes which occur in the native vegetation when left in the undisturbed state. The project will receive initial support from the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey, and College students will participate in the field work.

## News and Notes

The 20th Anniversary of the Arboretum was celebrated on October 10, 1951, by an open meeting of the Arboretum Association held in Buck Lodge. The meeting, which was preceded by a picnic luncheon, was attended by about 50 people. Dr. George S. Avery, Jr., the former Director, spoke briefly about the early development of the Arboretum. Dr. Goodwin described the present program. Mr. Kaleb P. Jansson reported on his activities as collector for the Arboretum. Mr. Jansson's work continues to receive support from the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey. The group was addressed by Dr. Harold J. Lutz, Professor of Forestry at Yale University, who outlined the role of arboreta in our present society. He stressed the importance of preserving natural areas. The meeting was followed by guided tours of the Arboretum plantings and newly acquired tracts.

Our horticulturist, Mr. William Peck, who has been on the Arboretum staff for 16 years, has left us for a more responsible position. We shall feel the loss of his valuable services.

Successful one-day "School of Applied Gardening" sessions were held on May 2, 1951 and May 7, 1952, under the auspices of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. Each of these meetings was attended by over 50 women.

## Publications

*Bulletins of the Connecticut Arboretum are published from time to time. The following numbers may be obtained from the office of the Director:*

CREIGHTON, HARRIET B. AND PASCO, PRISCILLA. A Plant Handbook: Lists of Plants for Specific Landscape Uses. Bulletin No. 3. 1940.

Price postpaid \$ .65

GOODWIN, RICHARD H., HEINIG, KATHERINE H., AND JANSSON, KALEB P. Check List of Woody Plants Growing in the Connecticut Arboretum and Guide to the Arboretum. Bulletin No. 6. 1950.

Price postpaid \$ .30



## The Arboretum Association

The Arboretum Association is the organization responsible for the Arboretum and its welfare. Arboretum maintenance and development costs are met in part by funds from the College and in part by the Arboretum Association. Association membership comprises organizations and individuals interested in the Arboretum and its conservation program, who give evidence of this interest by joining the Association.

The Advisory Committee of the Association is the policy-determining body. It includes representatives from the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and other persons throughout the state who are leaders in conservation. Its present membership is as follows:

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Dr. Richard H. Goodwin, *Director and Chairman of the Association*

Hon. Christopher L. Avery	Miss Catherine Greer
Mrs. Leon Bascom	Miss Louise C. Howe
Mrs. Oliver Butterworth	Mrs. Herbert K. Keever

Dr. Rosemary Park

### ELECTED MEMBERS

Dr. George S. Avery, Jr.	Dr. Harold J. Lutz
Dr. E. Frances Botsford	Miss Cora A. Marsh
Mrs. George T. Brown	Miss Katharine Matthies
Mrs. Woolsey S. Conover	<i>Vice Chairman of the Association</i>
Mrs. Perry B. Crane	Miss Marcella Putnam
Dr. Pauline Dederer	<i>Secretary of the Association</i>
Mrs. Malcolm J. Edgerton	Dr. Dorothy Richardson
Dr. Katherine Heinig	Dr. Paul B. Sears
Mr. Henry W. Hicock	Mr. William C. Shepard
Mrs. Allan F. Kitchel	Dr. Edmund W. Sinnott
Mr. Robert F. Logan	Dr. Betty F. Thomason

Miss Elizabeth C. Wright

Connecticut College is a private institution without state support. It is therefore necessary for a large part of the cost of development of the Arboretum to come from its friends.

Garden clubs and other civic-minded organization members of the Association may secure "tree dividends" (gifts of young trees and shrubs for civic plantings), and all members may use the Arboretum and its facilities, including Buck Lodge, receive its bulletins, and share in creating landscapes of the future.

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Any interested person may become a member upon payment of an annual fee of \$5. The *Bulletin* will be sent to members without cost. Individuals may become sustaining members upon payment of \$10 yearly.

### ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

Civic and state-minded organizations may become annual members upon payment of \$10 yearly; sustaining members, \$25 yearly; and supporting members, \$100 yearly.

*Checks should be made payable to the Connecticut Arboretum, and mailed to Richard H. Goodwin, Director, at Connecticut College.*



*Stage Steps of the Outdoor Theatre.*

# Arboretum Association Members January 1951 to April 1952

## ORGANIZATION MEMBERS \*

### SUSTAINING

Fairfield Garden Club  
 Stamford Garden Club  
 New London Garden Club

### ANNUAL

Branford Garden Club	Laurel Garden Club
Bridgeport Garden Club	Litchfield Garden Club
Cherry Brook Garden Club	Lyme Garden Club
Cheshire Garden Club	Middletown Garden Club
Clinton Garden Club	Milford Garden Club
Connecticut Botanical Society, Inc.	Millbrook Garden Club
Cornwall Garden Club	Mystic Garden Club
Coventry Garden Club	New Britain Garden Club
Deep River Garden Club	New Canaan Garden Club
East Haddam Garden Club	New London Council of Girl Scouts
East Lyme Garden Club	North Stonington Garden Club
Garden Club of Darien	Norwalk Garden Club
Garden Club of Glenbrook	Old Saybrook-Essex Garden Club
Garden Club of Hartford	Pomperaug Valley Garden Club
Garden Club of Madison	Portland Garden Club
Garden Club of New Haven	Ridgefield Garden Club
Garden Club of Old Greenwich	Riverside Garden Club
Garden Club of Woodbridge	Sasqua Garden Club
Garden Department, Bristol Woman's Club	Shippan Point Garden Club
Garden Department, Stamford Woman's Club	Simsbury Garden Club
Garden Department, Westport Woman's Club	Sons of the American Revolution, Nathan Hale Branch
Greens Farms Garden Club	Spring Glen Garden Club
Greenwich Garden Club	Stratford Garden Club
Greenwich Woman's Club Gardeners	Suffield Garden Club
House and Garden Club of Bridgeport	Wallingford Garden Club
Hubbard Heights Garden Club	West Hartford Garden Club
	West Haven Garden Club
	Westport Garden Club
	Wethersfield Garden Club

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS \*

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Mrs. Belton A. Copp	Mrs. Parker McCollester
Mr. Edwin Dimock	Miss Stella B. Mead
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Mrs. Charles Andrew Edwards	Miss Rosemary Park
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Mr. Harry A. Hansen	Mr. and Mrs. Earle W. Stamm
Mrs. Elon H. Hooker	Miss Anna Lord Strauss
Mr. Walter Howe	Mrs. Charles O. Triebel
Dr. and Mrs. Ivor E. G. Hunter	Miss Edna Leighton Tyler
Mrs. Allan F. Kitchel	Mrs. Dudley Wadsworth

### ANNUAL

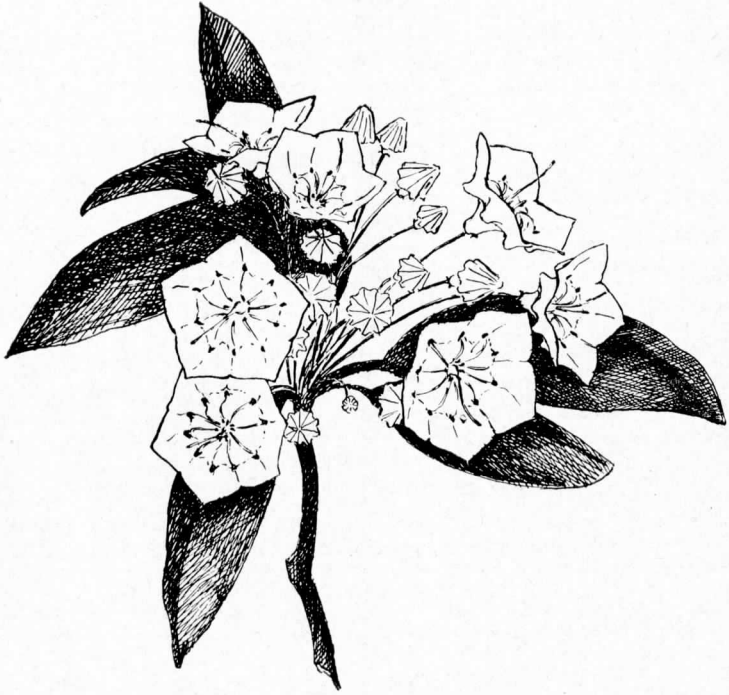
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Mrs. Austin F. Hawes	Mrs. W. Z. White
Miss Jean Hemmerly	Miss Elizabeth C. Wright

## CONTRIBUTORS

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\* Several members have made supplementary gifts.

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# Approaches to the Connecticut Arboretum

