



Hoyt Arboretum

a world of trees for all seasons



“A Word from our Executive Director”

by Mat Sinclair, Executive Director

Did you make any New Years resolutions? I know a lot of folks see January as a time to reflect and set some new personal goals. I've never been one for making a resolution (mostly because they last for about a week) but this year I am making myself, and the Arboretum, a promise. I promise to get to know our members a little better. You are some of our greatest advocates and champions, and to that end I want to thank you and reach out to you.

So how's that going to work? Well, I'm glad you've asked. In the coming months you will hear more about special member events and more opportunities to get involved at Hoyt Arboretum. I also want to invite you to share your thoughts about your experiences in the Arboretum. Just drop me a line at mathew.sinclair@portlandoregon.gov or call me at 503 823-1648. I would really like to share your stories with other members via this newsletter, and with the world on our Facebook page, Twitter, and our website.

On that last note, I want to invite you all to visit the Arboretum...virtually. Thanks to Karen Groves and a team of dedicated volunteers, we have launched a brand new website. Check it out at www.hoytarboretum.org. It's absolutely beautiful and functional to boot!

And finally, fear not, winter does not last forever. Spring is just around the corner and already we can see the earliest signs of life in the trees preparing to burst at just the right moment. In the meantime, the cool damp trails provide a unique and special experience that should not be missed.

Mat Sinclair
Executive Director

“TREE BARK”

by Tripp, Chocolate Lab

Woof! Winter is here! I know that indoor living has made me a little soft around the edges, but all the rain and cold temperatures really make me want to sleep a little longer on the couch when my people aren't looking. Of course that doesn't stop me from taking some long winter hikes up at the Arboretum.

A lot of K9s think this is a time to stay indoors, but I have to say it's a wonderful time to get your people bundled up and out on the trail. Hoyt Arboretum has a beautiful winter garden that is full of blooming plants this time of year. It's also a great time of year to see a number of native birds and some late migrating fowl. Of course it's important to keep your people on their leash and quiet so they don't scare the wildlife. I know it can be a drag, but we all have to be responsible for these precious natural areas. There are plenty of other great spots around town where you're allowed to let your people off leash. In the mean time, don't forget to roll in the puddles!



“Tree Talk”

by Martin Nicholson, Curator

In the summer of 2010 it was noted that a group of five *Abies* (Firs) were recorded as having no ID. The record data base indicated that these trees were planted as *Abies religiosa*. The origin of the seed was Arboretum Mlaney Czechoslovakia in 1956 so it seemed unlikely that this ID was correct. In 1980 some attempt was made to verify the ID of these plants but the notes merely indicated that the plants were not *A. religiosa* which left them as NOID in the plant record database.

Meaghan Rich, Hoyt Arboretum's summer intern 2010, made some initial investigation into likely ID of the firs and came up with *Abies nordmanniana* as a possibility. As there were already *A. nordmanniana* in the collection a comparison was made with the existing trees. This comparison was inconclusive however as there was notable needle form differences between the two trees identified as *A. nordmanniana* in the collection database.

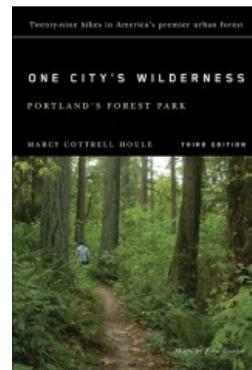
In the fall of 2010 several resources were consulted and a checklist of characteristics including cone structure was created to identify the trees. The Arborists from Treecology came out to the Arboretum to collect intact cones from the top of the 60 foot firs. The cones of fir trees generally disintegrate as the seed is dispersed and as such the opportunity to inspect a complete cone is rare. Damon's Treecology crew was able to bring down several complete cones and the inspection of these confirmed the identification as *A. nordmanniana* Nordman Fir. The next stage was to review the characteristics of the two trees listed as Nordman Fir in the database. Of these one of the trees has pointed needles not the blunt needles as typically found on Nordman Fir. A cone was collected from this tree also and the identification confirmed as *Abies borisii-regis* the Bulgarian Fir named after King Boris who was ruler of Bulgaria in 1920 the year of the tree's recognition as a species.

On most firs the buds are resinous, the lack of resinous bud helps with identifying as only 5 species of firs have non resinous bud. There is a distinction also between slightly resinous and resinous in some identification keys though this difference takes careful observation to distinguish. The Orientation of the needles on the branch is an important feature in the identification of firs. There may or may not be a visible V on the top of the branch where needles are not present. The angle of this V may be small to 90 degrees which is important to note when doing fir species identification.

Upcoming Events

-On February 26, we will welcome local author Marcy Cottrell Houle for a conversation about her recent publication *One City's Wilderness*. The event will include a walk with Marcy and Hoyt Arboretum Curator Martin Nicholson. Watch your email for details.

-Spring Break 2011! Don't forget that the third week in March will bring a week off of school and the first signs of spring to the Arboretum. Plan to visit Hoyt during spring break and join us for daily guided tours at 9:00 and 11:00.



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