

# Core Arboretum Newsletter

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## Bridge over the Arboretum?

The Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) is working to determine the best location for a new bridge across the Monongahela River, and the project may threaten the Arboretum. One of several options being considered as part of the I-79 Access Study is extending Patteson Drive past the Coliseum and building a bridge over the Arboretum, high above the river, to connect to the other side near the Monongalia County Ballpark. This bridge would have multiple devastating effects on the Arboretum. There has already been one public meeting and public comment period for the project, and the MMMPO received over 300 letters against building a bridge over the Arboretum! These letters included a wonderful letter from the administration at WVU, which strongly supports the Arboretum and opposes any bridge project that would impact the Arboretum. Despite the massive response against it, the bridge over the Arboretum option is currently still being considered. The MMMPO will release its next report sometime in April, and perhaps this option will be removed from consideration by then. However, it is possible that the MMMPO will recommend building a bridge over the Arboretum in its final report in July. There will be another public meeting and public comment period for the project in May, after the next report comes out. The website for the I-79 Access Study project is <http://www.i79accessstudywv.com>.

## Arboretum Online

Our new website is <http://arboretum.wvu.edu>. We can be found on Facebook as WVU Core Arboretum, and on Twitter and Instagram as [wvuarboretum](#). The new website makes it easy to give online!

## Volunteers Help Keep Arboretum Beautiful

Thanks to the 128+ volunteers who worked a combined total of over 450 hours for the Arboretum last year! These volunteers participated in invasive species removal efforts, assisted with promotion and events at the Arboretum, cleaned up litter and trash along the trails and river, and helped with trail and drainage work. Our partnership with WVU Center for Service and Learning has been a really valuable component of our volunteer efforts.

## Spring Walks at Arboretum

Mark your calendars for the WVU Department of Biology spring ephemeral wildflower walks and the Mountaineer Audubon spring bird walks. These free, guided tours are a spring tradition at the Arboretum. The wildflower walks will happen the last three Sundays in April (April 10, 17, 24) at 2 p.m. The bird walks will be the last two Tuesdays in April and the first two Tuesdays in May (April 19, 26 and May 3, 10) at 7:30 a.m. All tours will meet in the Arboretum parking lot. Additional free parking is available at the nearby Coliseum. No reservations are needed. Dress appropriately for the weather and for hiking.

## Emerald Ash Borer in Arboretum

The Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is a beetle native to Asia that kills North American ash trees (*Fraxinus sp.*). The beetle was first detected in the US in 2002, and in WV in 2007. It is now present in the Morgantown area and has already killed several trees in the Arboretum. Students in the WVU Environmental Geosciences capstone class are monitoring ash trees in the Arboretum and researching questions about the effects of the beetle on our forests.

## First Annual Pawpaw Parties

The Arboretum hosted two Pawpaw Parties at the end of last September. The pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) is the largest fruit native to West Virginia. Pawpaws grow on trees and have a very luscious, tropical flavor and a smooth, creamy texture. Over 100 people, in total, attended the Pawpaw parties and got to taste and learn about pawpaws. We also had literature available about pawpaws and how to save and grow the pawpaw seeds that were left after trying the fruit. We hope to make this an annual event, so pay attention next year in late September, if you are interested.

## Brood V Cicada Emergence

Periodical cicadas will emerge by the millions in this region late this Spring. Brood V, as this cohort of cicadas is called, includes 3 species of *Magicicada* 17-year periodical cicadas. Brood V last emerged in 1999, and will be back in late April or early May 2016. The whole above-ground event should be mostly finished by July. Although the adults do feed a little bit on tree sap, and their egg laying does damage the tips of branches, they do not really harm mature, healthy trees. They do not hurt people at all, other than by being a bit of a nuisance with their noise and presence. We are excited for their emergence here at the Arboretum, and we are planning a Magicicada Festival for May 28 to celebrate these fascinating organisms! We are still finalizing the schedule, but you can look forward to discussions about the biology and ecology of periodical cicadas, presentations of cicada-related research, fieldwork on species identification and more, eating cicadas in various preparations, and perhaps some music (other than the chorusing cicadas) and art.