

# Friends of Oakbourne News

by Tom Bare, President, Friends of Oakbourne

Oakbourne Park and ARBORETUM! How does that sound? After almost a year of collecting data and information on the arboretum area of Oakbourne Park and ensuring that the arboretum met required rigorous standards, I am very pleased to report that Oakbourne Park's arboretum has just been awarded Level 1 Accreditation by the ArbNet Accreditation Program and the world famous Morton Arboretum (visit: <http://arbnet.org/morton-register/oakbourne-park-and-arboretum>). This accreditation verifies that our arboretum has achieved particular standards of professional practices that are deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens. The ArbNet Program is the only global initiative to officially recognize arboreta at various levels of development, capacity, and professionalism. Oakbourne Arboretum is also now recognized as an accredited arboretum in the Morton Register of Arboreta, a database of the world's arboreta and gardens dedicated to woody plants.

The extreme wet weather we've been experiencing over the past year has not been kind to the lavender and roses that we planted in the Oakbourne Mansion's Clock Garden during our recent renovation. Virtually all of the lavender and roses did not survive the winter. In my home garden, every single plant of my rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susans) that have thrived for 15 years did not survive last winter, most likely because of the prolonged wet conditions. The Friends of Oakbourne (FoO) have removed all of the lavender and rose plants from the Clock Garden and will be replacing them with plants more robust and tolerant of wet conditions.

This spring, FoO planted three dedicated trees in the arboretum. A Snow Fountain Weeping Cherry (*Prunus* x 'Snofozam' White; GPS Coordinates: 39.937275643, -75.57147589) was planted in the Cherry Grove area (adjacent to S. Concord Rd) to replace a similar tree that suffered damage by deer. This tree was dedicated to the memory of Beth Ann Larson Heath by Harriet Carroll, Ingrid & Moe Tomlinson, and Stella & Jay Birkmire. Snow Fountain is a good name for this tree since during its spring bloom, the tree looks like a beautiful white cascading waterfall. When I was watering the tree recently (6/7/2019), the branches were loaded with deep reddish-purple berries which were being devoured by a resident mocking bird. At maturity the tree will reach a height of about 12 - 15 feet and a width of 6 - 8 feet.

A Blue Atlas Cedar tree (*Cedrus atlantica* 'glauca'; GPS: 39.93831002, -75.57300004) dedicated to Milton B. Helmuth by his family was planted in the first grouping of conifers encountered on the right side of the drive as you enter the park. Milton served the township in several capacities and was especially fond of the Oakbourne Mansion. Right now the tree is a gangly youngster about 13 feet high, but it will increase in character as it ages, with beautiful silvery blue foliage and a pyramidal shape that can reach a height of 60 feet and a width of 30 to 40 feet.



Blue Atlas Cedar Dedicated to Milton B Helmuth

A Seven-Son Flower Tree (*Heptacodium miconioides*; GPS: 39.93618412, -75.57247333) was planted in the Bark Woodlet area for Rich DiTeodoro by his family in honor of him and his love of nature, which he instilled in his three sons at Oakbourne Park. The heptacodium is a rare and not widely used tree/shrub and was reintroduced to horticulture in the 1980's which helped to save it from extinction. This tree or large multi-stemmed shrub is endemic to China and blooms in late summer/early autumn with creamy white flowers on an arching vase-like framework. Once pollinated (the flowers attract many pollinators!), the white flowers form small cherry-red capsules each crowned by five very showy, flower-like red sepals which last into late fall. When the leaves drop in the fall, the heptacodium's tan exfoliating (peeling) bark is revealed which makes this a plant with four-season interest. FoO planted the multi-stemmed vase-like type of heptacodium which should eventually reach a height of 15 - 20 feet and a spread of 10 feet.



*Heptacodium Miconioides dedicated to Rich DiTeodoro*



*Snow Fountain Weeping Cherry dedicated to Beth Ann Larson Heath*

All of these dedicated trees were all obtained from a nursery that uses the "grow bag" method of growing trees. This is the first time FoO has experienced this type of nursery stock and we will be interested to see how these trees grow compared to all of our previously obtained trees that were grown in plastic containers or obtained with a balled & burlapped root ball. The grow bag method involves growing trees in fabric containers in the ground or in plastic containers. This method of growing produces relatively small, uniformly sized root balls with thousands of fine root tips supposedly enabling higher transplant success and grow rates. Grow bag trees are easier to handle compared to balled & burlapped trees which can weigh 400 -500 pounds, and also usually do not have circling roots often observed in plastic container grown trees. Stay tuned for updates on the growth of these trees.

## INTERESTED IN IMPROVING YOUR BEAUTIFUL TOWNSHIP PARK?

Please join us at the Friends of Oakbourne's upcoming meetings at 7:00 pm on July 18, 2019 at Oakbourne mansion. Contact Tom Bare (tmbare@hotmail.com or 610-399-1572) if you are interested in donating a park bench or tree to be planted in Oakbourne Park to honor a special person or loved one or to commemorate an important occasion.