The Arboretum is always changing with the seasons and years. However, some years see more concentrated, project-based change than others, and 2023 was certainly one of those. For the first time since the completion of the New Zealand Forest in 2013, one project dominated most of the plantings undertaken in the Arboretum. After many years of planning and development, the long-awaited renovation and expansion of Rhododendron Glen was completed.

By late fall of 2022, the major construction elements in the mid-to-lower sections of the Glen were finished, and the site was ready for planting. These elements included an extensive renovation and restoration of the streambed, new planting beds with irrigation, and a new seating area and viewpoint connected by a new gravel path. Beginning in mid-December, the horticulture staff got to work, executing the first of many phases of planting that lasted until late spring 2023.

Just before the winter holidays, we installed 17 trees in several areas along both sides of the stream in the middle and lower Glen. Many were examples grown from seed collected in the wild, and several were new species or varieties to the Arboretum. Planting continued through the winter and spring, and every month saw the addition of new layers and areas of focus along the stream.

**Middle Rhododendron Glen: Woody Plants**

On the north bank of the newly widened stream channel, we added the conifer *Thujopsis dolabrata* ‘Variegata’ (hiba arborvitae) to provide some year-round structure and interest. Native to Japan, the straight species features broad and thick, scale-like leaves that resemble those of *Thuja plicata* (western red cedar) but are much bolder, with a prominent band of white underneath each scale. (See the Spring 2023 “Arboretum Bulletin” for an in-depth profile of the tree.) Adding to the foliage effects, the leaves and branches of the cultivar we planted...
are irregularly and lightly splashed with creamy-white variegation. Slower-growing than the species, ‘Variegata’ will reach 15 to 20 feet high in time and form a pyramidal spire.

Farther to the northeast, we planted a young specimen of the deciduous tree *Meliosma veitchiorum*. This was given to us by Far Reaches Farm, from their collection trip to China several years ago. Seed was collected from an impressive 50-foot tree in the wild, and we are delighted to have a young example for such a prominent position. The leaves are large and pinnate, with strikingly red petioles. Forming a broad column over time, it produces large plumes of small, white flowers in May that age to creamy-yellow. The flowers are followed by marble-sized, blue-black fruits. Autumn color is generally excellent, in shades of orange. Growing up to 45 feet over time, the species prefers some summer water and enjoys bright shade to sun.

On the south side of the Glen channel, we added a specimen of *Stewartia sinensis* var. *brevicalyx*, received from Dan Hinkley, who grew it from seed collected in Zhejiang Province in China. The species has been described as having some of the finest bark of any deciduous tree. Mottled—with tones of cinnamon, brown and rich tans at the beginning of the season—the bark eventually peels away in strips of purples and browns as fall arrives. The underlying bark is remarkably smooth and light colored. The tree’s yellow-centered, white, camellia-like flowers are smaller than those of other members of the *Stewartia* genus, and the fall color—ranging from yellow to orange and red—is good. Young twigs are reddish and often covered in hairs, as are the leaf undersides. Our tree should reach 15 to 25 feet high in time, and the bark effects will become more prominent with age.

Adjacent to the stewartia, we added an example of *Rhododendron arizelum*. Native from Tibet to Myanmar/Burma, this species has attractive, large foliage with woolly, deep-bronze indumentum (hairs) on the undersides of the leaves. More compact than many other large-leaf rhody species, this one can range from six to 10 feet high in cultivation. Flowers vary in color on individual plants from white to cream to pink—and sometimes a combination of the three. This specimen is another grown from seed collected in the wild by Dan Hinkley.

We also planted two varieties of *Rhododendron stenopetalum*: ‘Leucantha’ and ‘Kochozoroi’. The species is native to Japan and prefers sun to open shade. It features light-green, softly-fuzzy leaves that are distinctive from those of many other rhododendron species. The most commonly seen selection of this species in Northwest gardens is ‘Linearifolium’, with its strap-like leaves and spidery, hot-pink flowers.
Our new plants grow to the same ultimate size (four to five feet tall) but are quite different, starting with the leaves, which are rounded. The flower color differs, too, with ‘Leucantha’ bearing white blossoms and ‘Kochozoroi’ featuring creamy-green flowers with pinkish markings at the base. The interesting leaf shape and flower colors will add a nice variety to the planting bed in coming years.

We planted a variety of huckleberries (*Vaccinium* species) on the south side of the stream, including the lower-growing evergreen species *V. nummularia* (Himalayan whortleberry). This has long been a personal favorite, because it resembles a compact version of our native evergreen huckleberry, *V. ovatum*, with slightly curved leaves. As with evergreen huckleberry, new growth appears in shades of bronze, red and light green before darkening to a deep green later in the season. The white flowers are bell shaped, with red striping. Unlike our native, this species needs summer moisture, and we have planted it in a bed with newly installed irrigation. It will grow slowly to three feet tall and wide.

**Middle Glen: Herbaceous Plants**

Many herbaceous (non-woody) plants were planted along the streambanks in this section as well. On both sides of the stream, we added several primrose species grown from seed, both candelabra (with flowers grouped along a long stem) and belled types. These are intended to bloom and politely self-sow along the channel as they establish in favored conditions in and along the water channel. Species include dozens of *Primula pulverulenta*, a perennial candelabra type from China with powder-coated stems and pink-to-burgundy flowers, and *Primula bulleyana*, another candelabra type from Myanmar and China with yellow to orange flowers.

On the north side of the channel is another plant we grew from seed, *Darmera peltata* (umbrella plant). This robust, big-leaved perennial hails from the Siskiyou Mountains of Oregon and California and is at home along stream banks and woodlands. Pink flowers appear on long stalks in early spring and are followed by large, rounded green leaves that can reach two feet in diameter. The seeds for these specimens came from plantings long-established in the Woodland Garden.

Other additions in this area include our native *Aruncus dioicus* (goat’s beard), a large, deciduous perennial bearing dark-green, feather-shaped, compound leaves and frothy, creamy-white blooms in late spring atop three-foot-high stems. We planted a variety of *Rodgersia* cultivars for their bold foliage, astilbe-like flowers, and fondness for wet soils. Ferns added to the site include the evergreen *Dryopteris championii* (Champion’s wood fern), native to Japan, Korea.
and China. Its shiny, dark-green fronds grow between two and three feet tall. The new growth is a bright green, sometimes with bronze tints.

**Lower Rhododendron Glen: Trailside Plantings**

Farther to the north, along the west side of the new trail leading to the seating area, we installed three wild-sourced specimens of *Acer pycnanthum* (Japanese red maple, *hananoki*), our first planting of the species in more than 50 years. They were among several seedlings sent to us by the Arnold Arboretum in 2020, and I remember eagerly potting them up as soon as the package arrived. Rare in cultivation, the species is closely related to the red maple (*Acer rubrum*) of eastern North America and is similar in many respects in terms of leaf shape, preferred growing conditions, and fall coloration. It does grow a bit smaller in size than its cousin (but can still reach 45 feet in cultivation) and produces a pyramidal habit (as opposed to rounded). Fall color ranges from red to orange and yellow.

In the lowest, wettest part of this area north of the stream, we planted many examples of our native evergreen *Rhododendron groenlandicum* (bog Labrador tea), formerly *Ledum groenlandicum*. A denizen of bogs and swamps, it can be challenging to grow in the garden. It requires a sunny site with consistent moisture throughout the year. The area adjacent to the lower Rhody Glen stream only has wet soils from fall through spring, but the new irrigation system will help us to cultivate the plant successfully through our drier summers. Bog Labrador tea grows from two to three feet tall and bears narrow, slightly curled leaves and round clusters of small, white, late-spring flowers.

Close by, we also planted a large example of *Nyssa sinensis* (Chinese tupelo), a medium-sized tree native to wet forests in southern China, with lovely bright-red to orange-red fall color, as well as more *Darmera peltata* and other moisture-appreciating perennials.

Along the drier east side of the new trail, we added a number of new trees, shrubs and perennials. One tree that I’m excited about is *Styrax huanus*, a Chinese species related to the commonly seen Japanese snowbell, *Styrax japonica*. Like the latter species, it produces an abundant floral display of fragrant, bell-shaped white flowers in late spring, but its leaves are larger and rounder. It does best in sun or partial shade, and should do fine in the well-drained soils in this location. If all goes well, it should reach up to 35 or 40 feet high in time.

Also on the east side of the trail, we added several rhododendrons, including some new to the Arboretum collection. These include a nice example of *Rhododendron liliiflorum*, a

Continued on page 8.
In keeping with the historical plantings installed in the upper Glen more than 60 years ago, magnolias comprised a healthy share of the new trees installed this past year. Along the south side of the stream, just west of the major streambed restoration, we planted *Magnolia foveolata*, an evergreen species from southeast China and northern Vietnam. Flowers are fragrant and relatively large, and individual trees show variation in flower color from pale yellow to white or white with greenish tints. Only introduced into western cultivation in the 1990s, this species has done well in our climate so far. Our specimen was grown from seed collected by Far Reaches Farm in northern Vietnam. We have one other example of this species in the Arboretum from 1998, planted just south of Loderi Valley, where it has done well. The new specimen is in a brighter spot and should flower freely in time.

Across the stream to the north is a new species for us, *Magnolia rostrata*. Native to portions of southeastern Tibet, Yunnan Province, China and northeastern Burma, this large-leaf deciduous tree is seldom encountered in North American gardens. In Great Britain, it is cultivated in warmer areas, and our specimen was grown from seed sent to Far Reaches Farm by the Tregrehan Garden in Cornwall. The leaves can be enormous, reaching up to 20 inches long, though the flowers are relatively small. Whitish with tints of green and pink, the blossoms are fragrant (described as melon-scented) and emerge after the leaves. Young branches can be brittle, so we are hoping that the specimen’s fairly wind-protected position gives it a chance to reach its full potential. With time, this tree can grow to between 30 and 60 feet tall in cultivation.

West of the new seating area that overlooks the lower Glen and Azalea Way Pond, we planted three specimens of *Magnolia ashei* (a species described in last year’s “Year in Review” article), native to northern Florida. These were received as tiny seedlings in 2017 from seed collections made in the wild by Dr. Gary Knox of the University of Florida, as part of our membership in the Magnolia Plant Collections Network. We are trialing this species throughout the Arboretum in different conditions to examine its potential for Northwest gardens. So far, in this relatively sunny position, the plants produced large white blooms along with the rather amazingly large leaves. They should develop into a nice grove of small trees in the coming years, providing dappled shade to the stream and nearby plantings. ✅
medium-sized shrub from China that features attractive, peeling, cinnamon-colored bark and large, trumpet-shaped white flowers in late spring. The species has proven hardy in Federal Way for the last 15 years, where winters are usually five to 10 degrees cooler, so we have high hopes that this unusual species will do well in the Arboretum.

**Lower Glen: Azalea Way Pond Hillside**

On the hillside directly below the new seating area, we created extensive new planting beds along the south side of the stream. Before the project, this site was largely lawn, with persistent patches of invasive blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) and yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) adjacent to the stream itself. There were no trees or shrubs to shade and cool the water. In order to more fully display the great diversity of the rhododendron family (*Ericaceae*), we wanted to create more optimal conditions for plants adapted to full sun, well-draining soil, and— courtesy of the irrigation—summer rain.

We consulted extensively with rhododendron experts—especially Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden—on how to create the best conditions. While many rhododendron species don’t like wet feet, they can tolerate wetter soils if most of their upper roots are given well-draining conditions. We removed several hundred square feet of lawn between Azalea Way Pond and the new seating area, installed irrigation lines, and brought in a special mix of gravel and sand for the top six inches of the beds.

Around the seating area, we added several *Arctostaphylos* (manzanita) species and cultivars, including *Arctostaphylos nummularia* (glossyleaf manzanita) planted as a groundcover. This species, native to Mendocino County in California, reaches 18 inches tall with a several-foot spread. It features small, rounded to oval-shaped leaves on reddish stems and small, white, spherically bell-shaped flowers in spring. It should cascade nicely over the area’s low rock border and among adjacent taller plantings.

Below the seating area to the west, we planted specimens of two adaptable manzanita hybrids. *Arctostaphylos ‘Sunset’* grows quickly to between three and four feet tall by six feet wide and produces orange-tinged new growth and red-and-white, bell-shaped spring flowers. *Arctostaphylos ‘John Dourley’* is lower-growing than ‘Sunset’ and blooms earlier in the season, often in late winter. New foliage is reddish, and the bark is an attractive cinnamon color.

In this area, we also added three examples of *Rhododendron pseudochrysanthum*, an evergreen species native to the mountains of Taiwan. Preferring sun and well-drained soils, it is one of the most beautiful foliage plants in the genus, with bright, silvery-white indumentum (surface hair) atop the leaves and cinnamon-colored indumentum below. In the Northwest, given sun and some summer water, this is a compact
shrubs growing up three feet high and wide. Its bell-shaped spring flowers are flushed with white and pale-pink to pink.

Farther downhill, we planted a mix of woody plants to provide shade to the stream, foliar interest, and a long season of blooms. Trees include *Cornus kousa* ‘Rutpink’ (Scarlet Fire®), a fuchsia-pink selection of the popular and disease-resistant Kousa dogwood. This will reach 18 to 20 feet tall in time. Blooming in late May for several weeks, it will provide a nice complement to the *Cornus × elwinortonii* ‘KN4-43’ (Starlight®) that was planted closer to the pond in 2016, and which produces creamy-white flowers a bit earlier in the season.

Shrubs include a specimen of *Emmenopterys henryi* (described in my 2018 “Year in Review” article), a deciduous species from China with fragrant, creamy-white flower clusters reminiscent of those of climbing hydrangea and large, red-petioled leaves. Also here, we added a mix of deciduous and evergreen rhododendrons, including a pink-flowering selection of the typically white-flowering *Rhododendron auriculatum* (eared rhododendron). It’s intended to complement the huge, tree-size example of this species growing on the other side of the Azalea Way Pond. Another Chinese native, *Rhododendron auriculatum* is one of the hardiest of the large-leaf species, producing larger trusses of fragrant flowers in late June to early July. We can only hope our new specimen will do as well as its older relative.

**Azalea Way Pond Shoreline**

Near the northeast corner of Azalea Way Pond, several large stepping stones were placed so that visitors can cross the stream from the Centennial Garden and view the Rhody Glen hillside plantings, as well as a new bed we created on the eastern edge of the pond. Here, we installed a mix of lower-growing plants that won’t obscure the pond view from the seating area up the hill.

Shrubs include five specimens of *Hydrangea quercifolia* ‘Pee Wee’ (oak leaf hydrangea), a summer-bloomer growing up to four feet high with lightly fragrant, white flowers fading to pink. Not only is this plant compact in habit and size, but also its flowers and oak-shaped leaves are smaller than those of the straight species. These specimens were part of the Climate Ready Landscape Plants research project at the Center for Urban Horticulture (see the Fall 2021 “Arboretum Bulletin” for details). Professor Soo-Hyung Kim and his team donated the plants to the Arboretum collection after testing their performance in low-irrigation conditions. ‘Pee Wee’ is a great multi-season shrub, that also boasts orange and red fall color and—with time—attractive, exfoliating bark.

We also planted three specimens of *Rhododendron pubescens* from the mountains of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces in China. Listed as vulnerable to extinction in the wild, this is one of the many species of conservation value donated to the Arboretum by our friends at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden (rhodygarden.org). An evergreen rhododendron with curved, narrowly elliptic, blue-green leaves, it tolerates sunnier conditions and will eventually

*Continued on page 12.*
One of the pleasures of 2023 was working with students from the UW Department of Landscape Architecture Design-Build class on a long-planned landscape improvement project. Over the past few years, we had been looking at ways to enhance the water outlet channel from the Woodland Garden ponds. For decades, the ponds’ outflow pipe—constructed in the 1930s from cedar staves—traveled under Azalea Way into a ditch that led to a large PVC pipe that then emptied into a grate that shunted water under Lake Washington Boulevard into Arboretum Creek. Over the years, large rain events had caused erosion of the ditch and deepened the channel, leading to flooding across the boulevard and sediment build-up in the creek.

When the Arboretum Loop Trail was constructed, the PVC culvert beyond the ditch was removed and a small bridge was added so that water could travel under the trail into a low swale to the grate along the boulevard. However, this didn’t address the scouring in the ditch, and the watercourse was not as naturalistic or highly functional as it could be.

In 2018, the Arboretum Foundation secured funding from the Aldarra Foundation to work on some improvements in the outlet channel. (Foundation Unit 26 contributed additional project funds in 2022.) We worked with the Berger Partnership on developing a schematic design and permitting plan, and we had a strategy to move forward with work. Then the pandemic hit.
During this time, I reached out to the Department of Landscape Architecture to see if their well-regarded Design-Build class—which has done many landscape projects in the Seattle area and abroad in recent decades—would be interested in working with us on a project closer to home. They had an open spot in their calendar for the winter quarter of 2023, so in late 2021 we committed to working with them. In 2022, Seattle Parks and Recreation staff helped secure the needed permits, and UW Botanic Gardens staff began early work to widen and prepare the existing ditch in advance of the class project.

The class began with two design charrettes (meetings with stakeholders), in which groups of students presented ideas to the Arboretum partners for input. We narrowed down the options based on various factors, and the whole class worked on the final design, which was completed by early February 2023.

Then the on-site work began in earnest, with the students moving soil, constructing site features and installing plants. In the upper channel, they used cut stone and natural rock to draw attention to the historic and still-functional cedar-stave pipe. Then they used logs and finer stream cobble to create larger areas for water to be slowed and settled, and to create planting pockets along the stream. For the lower channel, they used soil, stone and logs to create a more sinuous and ecologically friendly watercourse. All of these features worked together to reduce the scouring during large rain events and slow and clean the water of sediment before it reached the culvert at the boulevard.

The students built a reclaimed juniper wood overlook with stone seating so visitors could have a place to sit, relax and enjoy the sounds of the stream. Concurrent with the construction, I worked with the students to finalize the planting plan and source the plant material. We used some plants from the Arboretum’s nursery at the Center for Urban Horticulture, along with ferns, shrubs, and a tree from another garden where the class had previously worked.

The Miller Botanical Garden’s Great Plant Picks program donated two large trees that had grown too big for their indoor display at the Northwest Flower and Garden Festival. *Magnolia grandiflora* ‘Victoria’ is a compact, cold-hardy selection of the southern magnolia, featuring large, fragrant, white flowers from July to October. *Picea orientalis* ‘Skylands’ is a golden-needled selection of this durable tree from Turkey and Georgia. Both specimens will grow slowly to about 30 feet tall.

Along the stream, the students planted ferns, grasses and perennials. By the overlook platform, they added a sizable example of *Cornus* ‘Eddie’s White Wonder’, a free-flowering hybrid of *Cornus florida* (eastern flowering dogwood), and our native *Cornus nuttallii* (Pacific dogwood). Some find its large, rounded, white bracts a bit gaudy, but the plant puts on a flamboyant show each spring and stands out like few other flowering trees in the landscape. It will eventually reach 25 to 30 feet high and 20 feet wide.
reach three to four feet high. The flowers are rose-pink and arrive in April, continuing for several weeks.

We added one small tree to this shoreline bed, *Sorbus microphylla* (small leaf mountain ash), a species or species complex from the Sino-Himalaya region. Our specimen was grown from seed collected by Dan Hinkley in the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, in India. In cultivation, it should develop into a small, vase-shaped tree or large shrub. The foliage is very fine for a mountain ash, and the fruits are white. Fall color is an excellent orange-red.

**West of the Graham Visitors Center**

In November 2020, three large native trees blew over in a windstorm just across Arboretum Drive from the Visitors Center: two western hemlocks (*Tsuga heterophylla*) and one Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). This trio had been growing very closely together for many decades in a relatively small area. Underground, their roots became entangled as they competed for space. Sadly, when one tree fell, the others followed.

Two adjacent western red cedars (*Thuja plicata*) remained, but they had grown very one-sided during the decades of shading and competition from the hemlocks and Douglas-fir. After careful assessment by our arborists—and the discovery of root rot in the trees—we determined that the cedars posed a danger of falling over in future storms. Due to their location, safety dictated removal, which was carried out in 2021. Fortunately, the native conifers in nearby beds were found to be in good condition.

Over many months, a plan was drafted for replanting the space. The cedar trunks were left as snags for wildlife value, and logs were placed to frame the beds and discourage cutting through the newly open area. Because of the root rot in the soil where the conifers fell, we knew that replacing the native trees wasn’t a good long-term option. The site dynamics were also different, as suddenly it had become a relatively sunny area. We added new soil over the next year to create berms and better drainage conditions.

Since the site is right at a major entrance to the Arboretum, we developed a plan to add deciduous trees with flowering interest as a preview to the collections beyond. Thanks to a generous donation from Arboretum Foundation Unit 26, the planting palette was expanded greatly with shrubs, perennials and ferns.

Planting began in May 2023 with the addition of four large hellebores donated by Heuger Horticulture of North America. *Helleborus × glandorfensis* Ice N’ Roses Red (‘COSEH 4800’), Rose (‘COSEH 4200’) and Nightingale (‘COSEH 6100’) will bloom in shades of red, pink and maroon, beginning in February each year.

In June, we started planting the first trees and shrubs. We added two more examples of *Magnolia ashei*, which were in flower at the time of planting. The large leaves and white flowers will provide contrast to the nearby conifers and smaller-leaved trees and shrubs. We also planted Magnolia Black Tulip™ (*Magnolia × soulangiana* ‘Jurmag1’)—which is one of the darker, purplish-pink examples of this popular hybrid and new to the Arboretum’s extensive magnolia collection.

Here also we installed another specimen of *Cornus Starlight ®*. We have planted several specimens of this hybrid of our native *Cornus nuttallii* (Pacific dogwood) and the East Asian
**Cornus kousa** (Kousa dogwood) in recent years. It combines the disease resistance of the latter with the large, white flower bracts and rounded-to-conical habit of our native tree. Flowering is abundant in May, and fall color is a good orange-red. Our specimen should eventually reach 30 feet tall.

Below the tree layer, we planted a large example of **Disanthus cercidifolius**, the redbud hazel. This deciduous witch-hazel relative from China and Japan has the most reliably red fall color of any shrub for partial shade. Growing up to six feet high and wide, it bears attractive, heart-shaped, blue-green leaves in spring and summer. The fall flowers are intriguing, resembling tiny, strap-like stars, but they are very small and lightly produced.

For an evergreen element, we planted several viburnum species, including two examples of **Viburnum hoanglienense**, recently introduced to cultivation from the mountains of Vietnam. It produces unusual green flowers of little note, but these are followed by dark red berries that contrast well with the textured and deeply veined oval leaves. The ultimate height is not yet known, but likely to be six to eight feet, based on early reports.

A new species for us and one that we are excited to try is **Sinopanax formosanus**. An evergreen member of the aralia family (Araliaceae), it looks like a cross between a *Fatsia* with rounded leaves and a *Schefflera*. Native to the mountains of Taiwan, it should grow slowly to between 10 and 15 feet tall. We’ll protect it from the coldest temperatures for the first couple of years and see how it performs. With its fantastic, large, leathery foliage, it will add great contrast to the other plantings in the bed.

From the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden we received three examples of their selection *Rhododendron augustinii* ‘Cerulean Mist’. They consider it the truest “blue” form of this excellent garden plant. Growing between six and eight feet high, it will produce a lovely floral punch in late April and early May.

Rounding out the shrubs in the bed is a selection of our native evergreen huckleberry, **Vaccinium ovatum** ‘Thunderbird’, known for producing larger and bluer fruit than the typical species.

**Pinetum**

We added several spruce species in the south Pinetum, including **Picea chihuahuana** (cahuite), which we received a few years ago from the Hoyt Arboretum of Portland, Oregon. This spruce was only described in 1942 and has a limited distribution in the mountains of southwest Chihuahua and west Durango in Mexico. In the wild, it can reach 75 to 100 tall and features pale-gray, furrowed and platy bark. Like most spruces, it has stiff shoots and leaves and sharp leaf tips. The tree’s blue-green needles, conical habit, and drooping branchlets make it an attractive tree in the landscape. It is endangered in the wild but has performed well in botanical gardens with dry summer climates.

Elsewhere, we planted two specimens of **Pinus sabiniana** (gray pine), a distinct, airy pine from the warm, interior foothills of California. (Isolated patches of the tree also extend into southern Oregon.) It looks quite gray and somewhat sparse from a distance, and it can form conical or irregular crowns. In the wild, it often reaches 50 to 75 feet tall. When happy in gardens it is generally more dense, and the needles are longer. Cones are massive, sharp and heavy (Don’t stand under a gray pine during a windstorm!), but quite ornamental. According to sources in California, this species has been faring poorly during that state’s increasingly hot summers. It may be a...
good candidate for Northwest landscapes as our region also warms up.

**New Zealand Forest**
In the New Zealand Forest, we planted several examples of *Melicytus alpinus* (porcupine shrub), grown from seed collected in the wild by UW Botanic Gardens staff in 2018. Smaller than the *Melicytus angustifolius* planted elsewhere in the forest, it is more typical of higher elevations of the South Island. Evergreen, with small, oval, gray-green leaves arrayed along dense, gray, rigid branches and stems, it resembles a porcupine in shape and size but is not excessively spikey or sharp. Tiny, cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers appear in early summer and lead to white berries with purple markings.

**Australia Entry Garden**
In the Australia Entry Garden, we filled in a few spots with a mix of proven performers. These included *Tasmannia (Drimys) lanceolata* (mountain pepper), one of my favorite Australian species. With attractive dark-red stems, lustrous dark-green leaves, and a well-mannered habit, this evergreen shrub continues to impress year after year. It grows moderately in part sun to full sun, reaching six to eight feet high and half as wide after 10 years. Another reliable plant we installed was *Podocarpus alpinus* ‘Red Tip’, one of the best low-maintenance conifers for small gardens. Compact, with attractive deep-green foliage, it sports lovely bronze-red new growth in spring. It grows slowly to reach up to three feet tall and a bit wider.

**South Entry**
One of the final projects of the year was the installation of a large specimen tree at the south entry rock near the Madison Street entrance. We were contacted over the summer by Big Trees, Inc., who had worked with the City Peoples Garden Store in Madison Park to save some of their plantings in the face of the property’s coming redevelopment. Big Trees inquired if we might have a place for a large (15 feet high by 20 feet wide) *Acer japonicum* ‘Aconitifolium’ (fernleaf fullmoon maple), and we gratefully accepted.

I wanted to find a prominent spot for it and settled on the south entry rock on Lake Washington Boulevard, where this beautiful four-season tree can be enjoyed by the thousands who travel the road and adjacent trail through the Arboretum each day. We worked with Seattle Parks and Recreation to locate utilities and prepared the site. On November 17, Big Trees arrived with the tree, and it was planted.

‘Aconitifolium’ is an outstanding cultivar—one of the best maples for color and form throughout the year. In spring, its rounded and deeply dissected new leaves emerge in a fresh, light green. Red and yellow flowers soon follow and are some of the showiest in the genus. Fall color—in shades of dark orange and russet—can start to show as early as July if the tree is given full sun and the color intensifies through October.

These are just some of the several hundred plants added to the Arboretum’s collections over the past year. We could not achieve so much without our dedicated horticultural staff, and without our partners at Seattle Parks and the Arboretum Foundation. It truly is a team effort. Donors, friends and fellow botanical gardens are also indispensable in making the Arboretum the wonderful public amenity it is for the citizens of the city and region. I hope you enjoy seeing these and many other plantings in the Arboretum as you visit this season.

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