

# The Holden Arboretum

# A History



Myrtle S. Holden  
Wildflower  
Garden

**L**ocated in a native pawpaw patch, the Myrtle S. Holden Wildflower Garden was established in 1968 through the generous donations of the Arthur S. Holden family in memory of Myrtle S. Holden, mother of Arthur S. Holden, Jr. Coupled with the family's wish to commemorate Mrs. Holden's deep love of our native wildflowers was the dedication of Mrs. Elizabeth Martin and Mr. Louis Sturm, whose hard work helped turn a largely untried concept into a reality. Developed through many volunteer hours as a setting to bring in and display the many wildflowers common to Holden's diverse acres, the Myrtle S. Holden Wildflower Garden has evolved to become a showcase of Ohio's native flora and a repository for the vanishing flora of the Great Lakes region.

Early settlers of Ohio were greeted by expansive forests, wetlands, and prairies. Adapting this wilderness to farmland forever changed the face of Ohio's landscape. Almost every mature tree had been cut by 1900; forests which formerly covered 95% of the state now cover only

25%. Thousands of acres of wetlands were drained and, along with the prairies, converted to agricultural use. Presently, only remnants remain of Ohio's original landscape to remind us of our natural heritage.

Of Ohio's estimated 2700 vascular plant species, 1800 are considered native or naturally occurring in the state prior to European settlement of the region. The other 900 plant species have been mostly introduced through agriculture and are so thoroughly established that it is often hard to separate them from the natives.

Native plant species are as much a part of our natural heritage as the land and its physical features. Besides their obvious beauty and aesthetic value, native plants make up the framework and support mechanism upon which thousands of other animal and insect species have evolved. They represent a great, largely untapped, resource for the horticultural and landscape professions, and the home gardener.

