

Managing the Challenges from Nature



Dear Jenkins family & friends,

ONE OF THE GREAT PLEASURES for me working in horticulture is the opportunity to work with nature; particularly cultivating combinations of plants in various ecological niches to develop a sustainable and beautiful space.

Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens hosts a range of ecological niches along our sloped hillside from dry to low wet areas. In fact, water could be considered a big part of the garden. Being on a hillside, we find water traveling everywhere. In our public parking lot, we have infiltration systems that were built as part of the construction of the John J. Willaman Education Center to capture runoff and allow it to seep slowly back into the ground. In the garden, much of the rain gets absorbed, percolating the water back into the ground and nourishing the plants. At the bottom of our property there is a small unnamed stream that trickles the length of Devon State Road to Trout Creek. One of our more popular trails, the Stream Walk follows this little stream where we grow plants adapted to lowland wet conditions. However, this area has been impacted by some significant alterations.

Stormwater is formed when excessive rainfall accumulates into an immense high velocity torrent of water that causes extensive erosive soil destruction. We have seen, on average, at least two severe storms each year producing damage to the Jenkins property. In 2020, we had two storms coupled with high winds that took out 60 trees (many around the Pond, opening the

area to more sun) and affected a recourse to the streambed flow. In the fall of 2021, we experienced two storms just two weeks apart that each dumped five inches of rain within a short few hours. The stormwater eroded extensive soil from the banks, endangering loss of collection plants and causing damages to nearby infrastructure.

The environment is beautiful and dynamic. We want to find the ways to garden best within it and manage the climate challenges that may come our way.

We are hearing about similar stormwater damage all through the community. We have been learning and working closely with our Township to better understand the issues and critical needs. At Jenkins, we provide public education programs emphasizing topics related to ecology and sustainable landscaping that include steps to manage climate impacts and stormwater erosion. We were fortunate to receive funding to support an environmental engineering study for our site by Meliora Design. Now completed, this plan contains waterflow data and solutions to mitigate stormwater impacts for the Jenkins property. We hope to start implementing these practices and designs to protect valuable assets, while providing opportunities to demonstrate to our visitors how they can apply such practices to protect their properties.

Always growing,

Tom Smarr
Executive Director