



Aboretum Newsletter, Winter 2012-2013

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The Arboretum

RHODES COLLEGE



Winter 2012-2013

Issue Two



Prof. Rosanna Cappellato and Adam Alsamadisi '12

Introducing A Few of Our Favorite Trees

By Caroline Ponsetti
Rhodes Student Associate

Rhodes has always been loved by the student body and wider community for its luscious campus—the Gothic architecture, the sweeping lawns. But Rhodes would not be the same beautiful place it is today without the foliage that fills its 100 acres. With more than 123 different species of trees, Rhodes became a Level IV Certified Arboretum in 2011, thanks largely to the leadership of Dr. Rosanna Cappellato.

Prior to her death on Thanksgiving Day, Dr. Cappellato was preparing a new edition of the Arboretum Newsletter using research compiled by her students on some of our favorite campus trees.

The Dawn Redwood, a deciduous tree found on campus, is often classified as a “living fossil” since scientists mistakenly believed that it had been extinct



for 20 million years. In 1941, a Dawn Redwood was discovered in the remote mountains of China. The Dawn Redwood contains the secondary metabolite sugiol, which makes it virtually disease and pest free. (cont. on page 2)

Remembering Rosanna Cappellato

By Adam Alsamadisi '12

On Thanksgiving Day, Rhodes College lost an extraordinary leader to whom the community owes tremendous gratitude. Dr. Rosanna Cappellato's wonderful adoration of the natural environment and incredible dedication to the interdisciplinary understanding of the environment had a profound impact on so many members of the Rhodes, greater Memphis, and international communities.

Dr. Cappellato, assistant professor of biology, often emphasized how important an asset the Arboretum was to the college, and introduced so many people, as part of her work for the Arboretum's recertification, to the vibrant and diverse tree species on the campus. Without question, Dr. Cappellato's devotion to the environmental program was integral to its now thriving presence on campus.



Her marvelous spirit—as a source of sagacious wit, sincere encouragement, and exceptional compassion—will be remembered fondly and terribly missed. Leaving behind a legacy with tremendous dignity, Dr. Cappellato should be celebrated with a resonating recognition of the many contributions she has made to the environment and education throughout her lifetime.

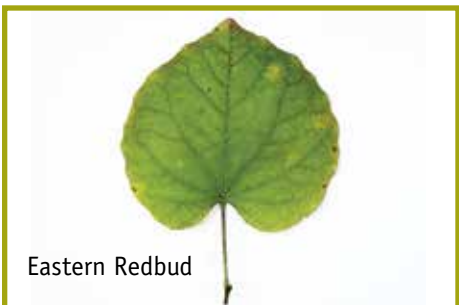
Favorite Trees (cont. from page 1)

Traditionally found along riverbanks and valleys in Eastern China and the



Korean peninsula, the Zelkova Sinica has found a home near the Mississippi River at Rhodes. With its intricate branches and orange and gray jigsaw bark, the Zelkova species is a popular choice for American urban areas due to the presence of tyloses, which make the trees excellent hardwood and resistant to fungal disease.

The Eastern redbud brings a rich cultural history to the campus. Secondary metabolites found in Eastern redbuds, like anthocyanins and proanthociani-



dins, give the flowers their distinctive pink-lavender coloration and also act as powerful antioxidants in humans. Native Americans who once passed through Tennessee used the tree's bark to treat whooping cough, dysentery and other illnesses.

The Eastern Hemlock is an evergreen pine tree that showers the campus with its falling needles. It is capable of living for 500 years. The Eastern Hemlock has several interesting uses in the com-



mercial world. Its wood is commonly used to make newsprint and wrapping papers, and its needles are used to make tea.

Characterized by leaves of dark green, blue-green, and a hint of pink, the Kentucky Coffeetree brings color to Rhodes' campus. The Coffeetree's flowers are dioecious, having separate male and female plants. Because the tree's seeds have a strong seed coat, the seeds have historically been dispersed by animals,



like the mastodon, which was known to roam Rhodes' campus in prehistoric times.

Rhodes is also home to the Styphnolobium Japonicum, which has its roots in China—not Japan. It is widely valued for its berries, which contain a substantial amount of rutin. Rutin protects the



tree from herbivores and insects, while defending against fungi and bacteria. The Chinese and Vietnamese have traditionally used the Japonicum's flower buds, which also contain rutin, for an "imperial yellow dye" to color silk and thread.

With their distinct history and ecology, the trees of Rhodes' campus add more than just beauty. They contribute to the intricacy of the campus and all that lies within its gates.

Research by Adam Alsamadisi '12, Brianna Hoge '12 and Kelsey Jones '13

A special thanks to Adam Alsamadisi for his assistance finalizing this edition of the Arboretum Newsletter.

