

# The Castle CHRONICLES

www.yewdellgardens.org

## A Lifetime LABOR OF LOVE



Theodore and Martha Lee Klein

Yew Dell Gardens is the fanciful creation of Theodore Klein, an internationally known and respected nurseryman and plant expert who devoted much of his life to horticulture. Klein's estate, located in Crestwood, Ky., represented the culmination of his private passions for trees and plants.

Klein and his wife, Martha Lee, bought Yew Dell in 1940 and poured their creativity into a 33-acre natural jewel, assembling an outstanding private horticultural collection of over 1,137 individual specimens. Through his research, Klein developed new versions of holly, yew, redbud, dogwood, sugar maple, weeping katsura and witchhazel, among others. He also devoted part of the Yew Dell grounds to a repository of historic trees.

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### A NOBLE VISIT BY THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

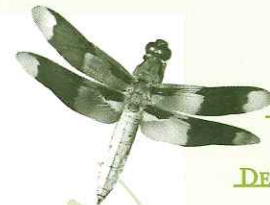
The Garden Conservancy, which is the international gardening and horticultural community's leading force in preserving wonderful old gardens, is considering the recommendations of its Preservation Screening Committee that Yew Dell become one of the organization's "Preservation Projects and Partnerships" gardens.

The recognition reflects the Conservancy's assessment of Yew Dell's value as a regional resource, and will give us access to its incredible resources of knowledge on preserving and funding the restoration of historically important gardens.

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Weezie Hickox, Bill Noble and Mary Rounsavall greeted guests at a recent cocktail reception at the River Valley Club.



mission

THE MISSION OF YEW  
DELL GARDENS IS TO  
CONTINUE THE  
HORTICULTURAL LEGACY  
OF THEODORE KLEIN;  
TO ENCOURAGE  
EXPLORATION OF  
THE ARBORETUM,  
GARDENS AND  
THE EXTRAORDINARY  
ARCHITECTURAL SETTING;  
AND TO PROVIDE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
EDUCATION, ENRICHMENT  
AND ENJOYMENT.

**YEW DELL, INC.**  
P.O. Box 1334  
Crestwood, KY 40014  
tel: (502) 241-4788  
www.yewdellgardens.org



## What a Difference a Year Makes!

I visited Yew Dell for the first time in summer 1999 with my garden club, the year after Theodore Klein died, when there were grave questions about its future. Fortunately, in October 2000, Theodore's daughter, Marian Klein Koehler, and Karen Whitty pulled a small group together and with Paul Clinton, formed the "Friends of Yew Dell" Committee, under the umbrella of the Oldham County Historical Society. Sue Brown joined their little group, and drew me in.

We were a tiny group of people stumbling forward toward an unimaginable task. We were passionate, but uninformed (and if we had known more...would we have pressed on?). All we knew was that there was a little jewel in Crestwood that we couldn't allow to slip away.

As we celebrated Yew Dell's purchase in February 2002 with members of two generations of the Klein family and other close supporters, we couldn't digest all that has happened in the 18 months! Now, as Yew Dell, Inc., a nonprofit organization on our own, we own the 33-acre Yew Dell Farm. We have our nonprofit status. We have an office and a part-time office administrator.

We alone are responsible for Yew Dell's maintenance and upkeep, and also for its future. We are the ones who must not only lock the doors and secure its new gate, but also provide the vision and the funding for what lies ahead. A daunting task, but made easier by the large number of supporters we have gained in the last year, including the talented and dedicated board members and advisors who are listed on the following page. We owe hearty thanks to many, many people.

This coming year will be spent continuing the fundraising we will need to secure a sound future for Yew Dell. This must be the highest priority for us. In addition, we will complete and then fine tune our strategic plans, including undertaking archival and stabilization planning, prioritizing renovation for buildings and the arboretum, investigating educational initiatives, and timing the addition of staff members. All of this will be a slow but steady movement toward reopening Yew Dell.

In the meantime, we can offer ways through which you can enjoy the beauty of Yew Dell and participate in its rebirth. Although we don't yet have enough hands to offer tours at all times, your visit can be arranged by calling the office. We will have additional volunteer cleanup days and events to bring you, as special friends, to enjoy Yew Dell. As always, we invite your participation in any way you feel you would like to help. Come join us!

Mary F. Rounsavall  
President



*Mary Rounsavall,  
hard at work on a  
volunteer cleanup day.*



**YEW DELL, INC.  
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Robert L. Brown  
Paul Clinton  
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**SPECIAL THANKS—**

Jim Hannah

**YEW DELL, INC.  
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR—**

Windi Burdette

*The board of directors wishes to convey its deep gratitude to all the members of the Klein family. Their cooperation and generous support have made this a successful and joyous transition. The future is bright and we will all share in it.*

Yew Dell, Inc Board of Directors

Mary Broecker	Jo Ann Luecke
Sue Brown	Robert R. Nunnelley
Holly Cooper	Mary Rounsavall- President
June Ezman- Secretary	Roy K. Snell
Mike Hayman	Suzette White
Louise Hickox	David Whitty- Treasurer
Rosemary Kirkwood- Vice President	Karen Whitty
Frank Luecke	



Welcome Our New Board Members

*Holly Cooper*

Holly Cooper is the daughter of Marian Klein Koehler, and the granddaughter of Theodore and Martha Lee. Holly has many fond memories of Yew Dell, of spending summers and weekends playing among the trees. Theodore was proud of her ability and eagerness to learn the botanical names of his trees and plants, and passed along a tremendous amount of botanical knowledge to her. Holly and her husband, Robin Cooper, were married in the walled Rose Garden. Robin is a great support and partner to Holly in helping maintain their own gardens and Yew Dell. They have two sons, Robbie, 10, and Duncan, 7.

*Mike Hayman*

Mike Hayman describes himself as a "volunteer arborist." His "day job" since 1983 has been as a photographer for *The Courier-Journal*. After a 1988 storm destroyed trees in Seneca Gardens, Mike began replacing them, first with common varieties and eventually more exotic ones. His growing interest in trees predictably led him to Theodore, who was delighted to share his vast knowledge and friendship. Mike's work in Seneca Gardens eventually spread to Seneca Park, and the neighboring Kingsley and Crescent Hill area, where he was responsible for planting and caring for more than 1,500 trees. Mike Hayman's influence can also be seen at Historic Whitehall and will soon be seen at The Home of the Innocents.

*Suzette White*

Suzette White is no stranger to hard work and the joy of seeing things grow after being raised on a 200-acre family farm. She considers Theodore to be her mentor, an interest that has been manifested in her degree in horticulture from the University of Kentucky and in the decision nine years ago to start her own landscape company, Nature by Design. She is intensely interested in being part of the further development of Yew Dell. Suzette is married to David White and they have one dog, Calypso.



*Susan Coe, Holly Cooper and Bruce Coe gathered at Yew Dell Gardens last October for a donor reception.*

Meet Our Board and Advisors



A NOBLE VISIT BY THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

*continued from cover*

As a result, Yew Dell has been receiving much attention from the Conservancy. The Conservancy's Fall 2001 newsletter featured Yew Dell Gardens and we have since been honored by the visit of a member of the Preservation Screening Committee as we explore a continuing relationship.

We were thrilled to have a return visit in March from Bill Noble, the Conservancy's Director of Preservation Projects. Noble participated in discussions with Yew Dell Inc. board members and enjoyed a cocktail reception at the River Valley Club hosted by Weezie Hickox. He was also interviewed in the Yew Dell gardens for a video case for support the board is producing for its fundraising efforts. Noble reiterated how unusual and remarkable Theodore Klein's creation is, and how worthy it is of preservation and rehabilitation. "I came away with an admiration for his horticultural legacy," Noble wrote after an earlier visit. "Treasures of this sort can only be saved when a community recognizes that genius lives next door."

Later in the spring, Mary Rounsavall escorted Kristian Fenderson, a member of the Garden Conservancy's Preservation Screening Committee, in a tour of Yew Dell. Rounsavall reported that Fenderson was very impressed, both by the collection and by the intimate personal nature of Theodore Klein's creation. Describing Yew Dell as "an exceptional collection of mature specimens of frequently rare or unusual woody ornamental plants," Fenderson compared it to "several delightful late 19th or early 20th century nurserymen's gardens in Belgium and Holland. I can see Yew Dell attracting a wide and dedicated following," he concluded.

Fenderson suggested that Yew Dell could host a future meeting of the Garden Conservancy, and proposed integrating Kentucky gardens into the Conservancy's Open Days Program, in which the public

is invited to visit the nation's very best private and rarely seen gardens. In 2002, the Conservancy has 450 gardens in 27 states open for a day, and publishes a guide to those gardens. It is hoped that Kentucky gardens will join the program soon.

"TREASURES OF THIS SORT CAN ONLY BE SAVED  
WHEN A COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES THAT GENIUS  
LIVES NEXT DOOR."



*Numerous garden enthusiasts and supporters gathered recently for a cocktail reception honoring Bill Noble with The Garden Conservancy. Pictured clockwise top left are Beaver McMahan, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kulp and Andrew Gentile. Top right are Marea Gardner, Pete MacLean, Mary Rounsavall and hostess Weezie Hickox. Bottom right are Mrs. William H. Camp and Mr. and Mrs. Lee Squires.*





Paul Clinton

In awarding Yew Dell, Inc. two Urban and Community Forestry grants, the Kentucky Division of Forestry has endorsed Yew Dell Gardens as a place for current and future generations to learn about trees and horticulture. The 2001 grants began that process by funding the development of a strategic plan and beginning a plant inventory.

Our strategic planning efforts were led by Debbie Skaggs, who during several sessions helped our group clearly define Yew Dell's mission, core values and most important strategic issues. From these sessions, Skaggs drafted the strategic plan, objectives and tactics to accomplish the work that lies ahead. With the plan in place, every few months the board of directors and steering committee will meet with Skaggs to examine, revise, refine and prioritize our efforts.

The other grant made it possible to fund the efforts of Paul Clinton of Beechwood Trees and Gardens to begin inventorying the vast number of specimens in Yew Dell's plant collection. Clinton enlisted Karl and Jules Klein, Marian Klein Koehler, John Swintosky and Tony Nold to identify specific plants and Ed Kinsey joined in the task via photos. The project has gained academic rigor with the services of Dr. William Fountain and Dr. Robert McNeil of the University of Kentucky.

**YEW DELL, INC. —**

is grateful to the Kentucky Division of Forestry for their continued support.

The inventory will help us develop a management and maintenance plan, and can be used to promote Yew Dell as a horticultural and educational resource for the area. It will tag each plant and identify its botanical name, common name, size, condition and origin, and assess the work that needs to be done to maintain the plant. Although the inventory will continue through next year, Clinton's preliminary compilation has determined that Yew Dell contains 114 genera of plants and at least 528 unique species and/or cultivars. There are also about 200 plants that have not been identified at the cultivar level.

The inventory has already yielded practical results in a bound guide, called the "Guide to Trees and Shrubs at Yew Dell." Visitors can use the guide's index to look up their favorite trees and shrubs, locate them on the map, and find them on the Yew Dell property. Visitors can call 502-241-4788 to make an appointment to use the guide, which is available in the Yew Dell office.



*The Castle at Yew Dell.*



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THE  
*Holly Grail*

You know the culprits: working-order lawn equipment and tools cluttering your garage, basement or shed that you don't use anymore. Why not put them to good use by donating them to help restore Yew Dell's beautiful gardens? Contact the office to coordinate their delivery and receive our thanks.

- farm tractor
- farm implements
  - rotary mower
  - front end loader
- lawn tools
  - pitchforks
  - hoes
  - rakes
  - shovels
- yard maintenance items
  - small lawn mower
  - garden cart
  - wheelbarrels
  - watering hoses with attachments
  - watering cans
  - Weedeater
  - hand tools
  - tarps

*Thanks!*

*We are deeply grateful for the support of all of our donors. The names listed are donors to Yew Dell as of June 10, 2002 and includes those who gave to the Oldham County Historical Society in our earliest days in order to obtain an option for Yew Dell. We are also grateful for the support of our inkind donors, who will be listed in our Fall newsletter.*



# *A Lifetime* LABOR OF LOVE

*continued from cover*

Theodore propagated seeds and cuttings from a tulip poplar planted by George Washington at Mount Vernon, a magnolia planted on the White House grounds by Andrew Jackson and other historically significant plants, then shared the offspring with schools and libraries around the world.



Not content for his estate to be a museum of plants, Klein designed the gardens with a master's eye for landscaping. He laid out a covered alleé of holly trees, a sunken garden with a pond, a serpentine garden of evergreens and conifers, a terraced rose garden, topiaries, and formal gardens, framing a Cotswold-style fieldstone house and "the castle," a poolhouse designed as a miniature castle with turrets and stone carvings, and wrought iron chandeliers that Klein crafted himself.

Yew Dell Gardens continued to be Klein's passion until his death, at the age of 93, in 1998. Almost immediately, development pressures began to threaten the gardens. A group of local citizens were able to raise \$120,000 in "earnest money," with which they were able to stop the property's immediate sale.

The Friends of Yew Dell received a grant from the Kentucky Division of Forestry for strategic planning and to inventory the hundreds of trees, and another to develop a maintenance plan, then began the pursuit for Yew Dell to be named to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Friends, now a 501(c)(3) organization known as Yew Dell, Inc., developed a strategic plan to raise \$4.8 million, the first portion of which would purchase the Yew Dell property and obtain operating funds for three years. The remainder of the fundraising effort will restore the estate's buildings, gardens, arboretum and grounds, and will establish an endowment to ensure a stable revenue stream to underpin the project's financing and programming into the future.

After consultations with area leaders and nationally and internationally known horticultural experts, the Yew Dell board has developed a realistic vision for Yew Dell Gardens as a horticultural education center and a public garden and arboretum and has raised over \$1 million to date. When restored and opened to the public, the programming initiatives envisioned for Yew Dell Gardens will create innumerable cultural and learning opportunities throughout the seasons, activities that will enrich the lives of area citizens and visitors and provide a level of sustainable income to guarantee the survival of Yew Dell Gardens.

*Castle*

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*With your help, we can restore this horticultural gift to future generations. We invite you to read further about our activities in pursuit of this goal, and learn how you can be involved.*

# A B E D O F R O S E S

Thanks to a pair of dedicated volunteers, we are enjoying the rebirth of Theodore Klein's "Old Rose" garden at Yew Dell.

This garden was all but lost, but Bonnie and Harry Bounell decided to make it their mission to revive it. It has proved a very formidable task. The past two years the Bounells have worked tirelessly, nurturing the feeble and replacing the hopeless while they battled quack grass, Japanese beetles and other assorted pests.

The Bounells were not able to save some of Klein's original roses. In order to retain the integrity of Klein's creation, they researched "Old Rose" species, and now nine new plants grace the garden. We have enjoyed watching the ongoing progress of the beautiful garden, and want to express our sincere gratitude to these two wonderful friends.

Thanks, Harry and Bonnie, for your most generous contribution.

*Bonnie and Harry Bounell have worked tirelessly to restore the late Theodore Klein's rose garden, pictured at its peak above.*

## Got time?

On a beautiful April day in 2001 a group of volunteers enjoyed the spring beauty of Yew Dell and continued our work to make the gardens ready to share with the public. They pruned, pulled, chopped, chipped, swept, hauled, mulched and raked. A monumental amount of work was accomplished, and all had a good time. This cleanup effort was repeated in October, April and again in June of this year.

Now we're duplicating that cleanup effort every second Saturday of the month just in time for you to spend a day among the splendors of our gardens. Plan to join us with your garden tools. Please call Windi in the office at 502-241-4788 to let us know that you're willing to help. Hope to see you there!

### Special thanks to our underwriters—

Marian Klein Koehler- *Photographic Portraiture*  
Paul Clinton- *Beechwood Trees and Gardens*  
Suzette White- *Nature by Design*  
Matt Gardiner- *Boone Gardiner Garden Center, Family Owned and Operated since 1899*  
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## The Castle CHRONICLES

YEW DELL, INC.

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Fri, 10 am to 3:00 pm

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Marian Klein Koehler, **photography**  
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