

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Rowe Arboretum's Centennial Year

A Village treasure, the Rowe Arboretum at 4600 Muchmore Road is celebrating 100 years in 2026. It began when Stanley and Dorothy Rowe purchased 40 acres of land in what was known as *Hardscrabble* between Muchmore and Walton Creek Roads. Eventually they owned 200 acres and built their family home, Annesdale. The couple decided to reforest the ridge that had been pastureland and ordered 4700 seedlings from the State of Ohio. Chosen for the purpose of holding hills, the seeds included Red Oaks, European Larches, White Pines, Tulip Trees, and Scotch Pines. Some of these are still alive. This marked the founding of the arboretum in 1926.

After a trip to Knoxville to visit their friend, Alfred Sanford (who had a 175-acre arboretum), the Rowes determined that they would create a similar collection of woody plants, trees and shrubs on their property. They began accumulating all types of horticultural specimens. It started as a hobby garden. They traveled to other arboreta and nurseries in the US, and traded plants with some of them. Some additions were chosen for their shape or exotic variety. They tried each plant 3 times, and if it did not survive, they never planted it again. They documented each species with labels: common name, botanical name, source, code number, and date of planting. Meticulous records were kept in looseleaf notebooks. Though a trial-and-error method was used, valuable information was saved about what could and could not grow in the alkaline soil of Zone V (Indian Hill).



Rowe Arboretum Kiosk



***Sassafras Tree - oldest tree
at Rowe Arboretum!***

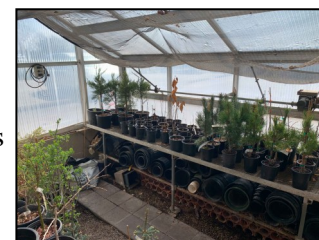
The Rowes made their plantings look as if they were naturally occurring. So, they did not plant in rows. Instead, various collections were grouped together, and a grid was established – with conifers in one section, crabapples in another, and so forth. Mrs. Rowe learned the Latin name of every plant, and Mr. Rowe cleared trails for exercise. At first, they opened their arboretum to college professors, students, and horticultural enthusiasts. They acquired thousands of trees and shrubs over the decades, as well as two unusual artifacts: a petrified log from the Triassic Period, and an ancient slice of a giant Redwood Tree. To preserve the arboretum, the Rowes donated 9 acres to Indian Hill Village in 1979 and arranged to sell their residence (Annesdale) and its surrounding acreage to provide an endowment, continue upkeep, and construct a building on the site. The Rowe Arboretum opened to the public in 1987, and the Arboretum Center was completed in 1990.

Owned by the Village of Indian Hill, it is a non-profit organization funded by the endowment and support of members and visitors. The 9.75-acre site features paths winding through the amazing horticultural specimens and companion plantings. It is open every day and admission is free. Over the years, there have been changes including an irrigation system, an updated 8-foot-tall deer fence, paved paths for handicap access, a spring-loaded gate for automobile entry, improved signage, and 2 pedestrian gates.

Additional plants are added annually. A kiosk at the entry has guidelines and a map. The archives contain horticultural periodicals dating back to the 1930s. The arboretum is available to school groups, Scout troops, garden clubs, and other organizations. Members receive discounts at the plant sale, invitations to special events, and reciprocity with other groups belonging to the American Horticulture Society.

To commemorate its centennial the Rowe Arboretum is engaged in several projects. There will be two special tours. A \$400,000 renovation of the current office is being planned. Wentz Designs is preparing site plans so the current garage will become an educational/meeting space with seating for 35, and a new garage will be built adjacent. Private donations have been received to support this improvement.

The Rowe Arboretum includes plants no longer available in nurseries, and its cultivars are stunningly displayed. Conifers are the primary focus with companion plants such as dogwoods and lilacs. Visitors can learn and savor Nature's endless beauty in this world-renowned collection which began 100 years ago.



Greenhouse