

MRS. JAMES DUDLEY
27 EAST GATE ROAD
HUNTINGTON, NEW YORK 11743

December 16, 1983

Mr. Peter S. Ashton, Director
The Arnold Arboretum
The Arborway
Jamaica Plain, Mass. 02130

Dear Mr. Ashton:

My husband and I are making preparations to build a house in Redding, Connecticut, and the land which surrounds it is so unique that we feel it just begs for something special to be done to keep it so. Consequently, we are thinking seriously of developing an arboretum. I should like to ask for any advice you might wish to give us at this stage. That, I realize, might be a rather large order and perhaps too time consuming for you, but, specifically, I thought you might have some suggestions regarding choice of a specialty.

We are collaborating on a plan with Lester Collins, who has had experience in this field and whom you may know. While the house is still in the planning stage and moving along rapidly, our eagerness to think ahead on the arboretum is what drives me to get in touch with you, in order that you might help point us off in a good direction. We are dealing with a total of about 150 acres of relatively unspoiled land, not all of which is intended for arboretum purposes. It includes a perfect example of a drumlin, which at a height of 810 feet has spectacular views to the north, west, and south, and drops down to a bog and wetland stream at 621 feet, lovely outcroppings of rock filled with laurel and companion plants, wildflowers, of course, beautiful fields which we mow for a hay crop, and a rather unspecial forest accompanied by a small orchard of fine apple trees with some nice old varieties. The soil for the most part

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2.

probably leaves something to be desired, but nothing is ever quite perfect.

Of course we are not contemplating an Arnold Arboretum, and not having been trained in this field, we are not experts. However, I think we can make something worthy come about, and we welcome the challenge. Our association with Arnold over the years makes it tops in the field in our estimation, and so we turn to you. At the suggestion of Miss Elizabeth Scholtz at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, we have requested membership in the Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta.

It is somewhat astonishing to me the number of people who have had the same idea, and certainly out of all of those some will succeed better than others. We're full of high hopes and expectations, and would greatly appreciate any pointers you might give us.

My husband joins me in sending the very best wishes at Christmastime and for 1984.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth C. Dudley

Mrs. James Dudley