

The Polly Hill Arboretum

The Polly Hill Arboretum is a Martha's Vineyard horticultural and botanical landmark, developed over the past forty years by the legendary horticulturist, Polly Hill. It is here that Polly brought twenty acres under cultivation while preserving forty additional acres as native woodland. Crisscrossed by old stone walls surrounding open, wildflower-filled meadows and characterized by vernacular Vineyard architecture, the Arboretum is preserved as a not-for-profit institution established in 1996 and is devoted to the cultivation and study of plants. Its primary goals are to determine those plants that can be successfully cultivated on Martha's Vineyard, to develop and introduce outstanding plants of ornamental merit into American horticulture, and to serve as a sanctuary for plants that are threatened by extinction in their native habitats. A further but equally significant endeavor is to preserve the character and magic of this tranquil and enchanting Vineyard landscape.

The Arboretum also offers a variety of educational opportunities ranging from the practical to the theoretical for students of all ages and a lecture series featuring noted horticulturists, botanists, landscape architects and garden designers from around the world. Research initiatives focus on the floras of eastern Asia and the close relationships shared by the plants of that vast region with those of eastern North America.

Originally a sheep farm that was acquired by Polly's family in 1926, the Arboretum's administrative offices are housed in the Homestead, a building dating from the 1670's but completely renovated in 1998. Other historic structures on the property include the Far Barn, (circa 1750) with its attached Slaughterhouse, the Cow Barn (a private residence), and the adjacent "Gym." The Far Barn is now used for classes, lectures, exhibits, and special events. The new Visitors' Center, constructed in 1998, consists of two post-and-beam buildings designed by the award-winning and nationally recognized architectural firm of Thompson & Rose of Cambridge, Massachusetts. A new master plan for the Arboretum, including the design and layout of the parking area, was developed by the well-known, award winning landscape architect and Martha's Vineyard resident, Michael Van Valkenburgh of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, also of Cambridge.

For more information about the Polly Hill Arboretum [click here](#).