



André Michaux International Society

www.michaux.org

AMIS, the André Michaux International Society, has independent chapters in North America and France. Purposes of the society

- Increase the visibility of André Michaux and other botanical pioneers in North America.
- Promote the study of André Michaux and his plant discoveries.
- Provide a network for interested scholars to exchange information and ideas.
- Present opportunities for the public to discover André Michaux.
- Advocate improved relations between citizens of France and the US.

to fulfillment. There near the historic Chateau of Rambouillet, North American AMIS representatives joined their French counterparts in the planting of a symbolic tree, one of a number of species sent long ago to Rambouillet by Michaux himself.

The tree was one of 40 hardwood seedlings sent to Rambouillet by AMIS in early 2004 following our first package of bald cypress seeds in the preceding year. Although Michaux's magnificent bald cypresses at Rambouillet had weathered war and disease for two centuries, the trees fell to a rare hurricane that swept the town in 1999 and prompted the AMIS in North America to begin to replace them. Twelve weeks after sending the first bald cypress seed, AMIS shipped 40 hardwood seedlings. The town responded to our gift with an invitation to jointly celebrate the re-plantings in ceremonies at Rambouillet.

Assembling on Bastille Day, July 13, 2004, twelve AMIS representatives from the United States joined the Rambouillet AMIS to remember two significant periods in the historic friendship of both nations -- the contributions of Rambouillet citizens, when the French Resistance fought for liberation alongside the allies during World War II, and the contributions of Michaux, who provided tree seedlings from America to enrich the Rambouillet gardens in the 18th century.

This day of American and French national flags and tent-covered tables of festive food first began with a somber gathering in late afternoon. In the presence of hundreds of French citizens on the town square, AMIS chairman and U.S. Navy veteran Williams and AMIS board member de la Motte, placed flowers at the town's main war memorial, a monument inscribed with the name each of the hundreds of soldiers from Rambouillet who gave their lives in the two World Wars. The next day, Williams, assisted by Rambouillet AMIS and French Army veteran, Colonel François Besson, would place flowers at Rambouillet's American eagle monument which honors the American GI's who gave their lives liberating the town from the Nazis in 1944.

The large crowd followed the flag-bearers as they marched from the square to the garden where the honors continued. Mayor of Rambouillet Jean-Frederic Poisson warmly welcomed the assemblage. Then Major Raymond Guérin of Rambouillet was presented with the Legion of Honor for his meritorious military service to France. Deputy Minister of Labor and former Mayor of Rambouillet, Gerard Larcher, traced the long history of friendship between the U.S. and France. Then representatives from the AMIS of both nations spoke to the crowd. Gérard Clerc, president of the Rambouillet AMIS, began with a warm welcome for his American counterparts. Williams and de la Motte, then spoke to the gathering and recognized the legacy of Michaux. Williams, de la Motte, Marlene Ward of Middleton Place and Ronny West of the Jackson County Tennessee Historical Society

also presented gifts to the people of Rambouillet. Among the gifts was a letter of greeting from Governor Mike Easley of North Carolina to Minister Larcher accompanying a photograph of the Michaux lily (*Lilium michauxii*) the state wildflower of North Carolina. Also presented was a plaque inscribed with the name of each AMIS contributor to the Rambouillet trees, a photograph of Michaux's *Queen of Flowers* camellia, still blooming in Middleton Place Gardens, and a handsome gavel made from the wood of the Yellowwood tree. Michaux discovered the Yellowwood in Tennessee in 1796. This historic gavel was first used to open the bicentennial session of the Tennessee Legislature in 1996.

The next act of this day of ceremonies was the planting of one of the 40 hardwood seedlings sent to Rambouillet. All 40 will eventually be planted, but on this day, under the approving eye of Minister Larcher and the American ambassador's representative, Williams and Clerc gingerly embedded in the rich French soil a Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*), a three-year-old sapling to grow and prosper under the Rambouillet sun.

It was the joint wish of Williams and Clerc, and of all members of the AMIS chapters on both sides of the Atlantic, that the friendship between America and France would grow and prosper as well. Afterwards, the happy sounds floating through the garden of champagne glasses ringing, toasts, and lively conversations in both languages, all demonstrated that the legacy of André Michaux brings French and Americans together in friendship.



Gerard Clerc, President of the Rambouillet AMIS, flanked by the former and present Mayors of Rambouillet welcomes the American AMIS. About 400 citizens of the town are present.



Medal of Rambouillet



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AMIS Gathering at Rambouillet

In a dramatic gathering of Americans and French at a picturesque village south of Paris, the spirit of Andre Michaux imbued a celebration of remembrance that once again joined the hands of Old and New World friends.

At Rambouillet, a town of 25,000 embracing a majestic 16th-century castle, a solemn war memorial and a vibrant garden long ago touched by the botanical genius of Michaux, the generous contributions of the American AMIS came



American representatives of AMIS at the Chateau of Rambouillet

The Memorial Marker at the Michaux Garden near Charleston

by Dr. George Williams

In spite of sporadic efforts by various local groups in Charleston, no long-lasting action had been undertaken to identify and mark the site of the "French Garden" of André Michaux until the Garden Club of Charleston, inspired by Mrs. E. A. Williams (Elizabeth D. Williams). Then President of the Club, and Mrs. F. H. Horlbeck (Elizabeth M. Horlbeck), then "unofficial Historian," succeeded in erecting a granite marker near the site of the garden in 1954. Mrs. Williams confessed that they were not quite sure where the garden had actually been, but they placed it near a grove of old live oaks that looked as though they had been planted in a pattern. They had chosen—by guess and by good taste—the right spot.

The marker remained at that location until 1961, when Mr. G. Marion Reid, the Manager of the Charleston Municipal Airport, noticing that it was in danger of being vandalized in its isolated and insecure site, had the marker moved and re-erected in front of the Terminal Building of the Airport (about one-half mile to the west of its original position at the garden). There it stood prominently displayed for over 25 years. When the airport was expanded in 1987, the "old terminal" was demolished, and the stone was moved to a position in front of the new (and present) commercial Terminal. Ten years later, in 1998, the stone was moved again, this time a mile and a half northward, to the General Aviation Terminal and Hangar under the protective eye of Mrs. W. D. Beaman (Becky Beaman). The 1954 stone was massive, about ten inches thick, with a scalloped top, standing erect about five feet high on a very substantial base. In its latest move, it was shortened in length, the lower portion of the marker was scalloped to match the top, the lettering of the text was renewed, and the stone was placed horizontally on the ground under a handsome live oak in the center of the cluster of administration buildings.

The inscription of the marker reads: "Site of the botanic garden established 1786 for the royal government of France by André Michaux, botanist. Erected by the Garden Club of Charleston 1954."

The marker, in the center of the parking area in a "non secured" location, may be visited by exiting I-26 at Exit 211 and proceeding westwardly along Aviation Avenue one third of a mile. Just beyond the railroad tracks at the old Ten Mile Station and across South Aviation Boulevard stand the General Aviation buildings and the solitary oak under which the marker rests.

Come to Gainesboro, Tennessee to Celebrate "Michaux's Discovery"

Friends of André Michaux are invited to the dedication of the first historical marker honoring André Michaux in 50 years. On Friday, April 22, 2005 the Jackson County Historical Society and local officials in Gainesboro, Tennessee will dedicate a historical marker on the courthouse square in Gainesboro that memorializes Michaux's 1796 discovery of the yellowwood tree in Jackson County. Charlie Williams will represent AMIS and present an interpretative program in costume as Michaux for the occasion. For more information please contact Ronny West at 931-268-9927 or 931-268-2161.

Michaux discovered and collected seeds of the rare and beautiful yellowwood during his stay at Fort Blount on March 1 & 2, 1796. In recent years the yellowwood has become known as the Bicentennial Tree of Tennessee, but when it was a new discovery, Michaux shared the seeds of the yellowwood with his botanist friend William Bartram. Today, a seed that Bartram planted has grown into the magnificent mature yellowwood found in Historic Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia.

Michaux Programs

Walter Taylor and Charlie Williams continue to present programs in 18th century costume as Michaux. In September 2004 as "André Michaux" Charlie opened the Highland's Biological Station's Native Plant Symposium and joined Bob Zahner on a field trip to see many of Michaux's mountain plants in the Zahner garden. No one who attended is likely to forget this magical field trip. Not only did Bob Zahner share his encyclopedic knowledge of Michaux's plants, but each plant was also marked with a tiny French flag!

Walter was active in Florida during January and February. He presented a program at Orange County Audubon Society in Orlando January 20th and another at the Sea Rocket Native Plant Society in Cocoa, FL on February 23rd.

Charlie appeared at the Kalmia Symposium at Kalmia Gardens of Coker College in Hartsville, SC on March 24th, the Piedmont Land Conservancy fundraiser for Emily Allen's garden in Winston-Salem, NC on April 3rd, and, at Tipton-Haynes Historic Site in Johnson City, TN for their second annual "André Michaux Day" on April 9th.

Upcoming programs in addition to the historical marker dedication in Gainesboro, TN April 22nd include: a sold-out Catawba Lands Conservancy fundraiser in Gaston County, NC May 7th and a special program at the University of the South, Seawee, TN on April 25th (contact herbarium director Jon Evans for details). If you want a program for your group, please contact Walter at phone: 407-671-7343 or Charlie at phone: 704-366-5969 or e-mail: michaux@bac.edu

MICHAUX SYMPOSIUM ISSUE OF CASTANEA

Michael Baranski, assigned Editor-in-Charge, reports that publication of the papers of the André Michaux International Symposium held May 17-18, 2002 at Belmont Abbey College has been delayed. The papers were scheduled for publication in December 2004 as "Occasional Papers in Eastern Botany, Number 2" of *Castanea*, the Journal of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society. Work continues on the papers. An unexpected, but positive result of this delay will be the inclusion of three additional studies with new information developed since 2002 symposium.

Those on the AMIS mailing list will either be sent a postcard announcing the publication, or the information will be in a subsequent issue of this newsletter. If you are not on the AMIS mailing list, but would like to be, write to us: AMIS, P.O. Box 220283, Charlotte, NC 28222. AMIS does not have dues, but donations are accepted and acknowledged. Checks should be made to Belmont Abbey College-AMIS



Eliane Norman at the American Eagle monument in Rambouillet. This granite monument honors the Americans who were killed during the liberation of Rambouillet from the Nazis in August 1944. The citizens of Rambouillet paid for the memorial with their contributions.



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