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**ARBORETUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH AWARDED LEVEL III ACCREDITATION
BY ARBNET ACCREDITATION PROGRAM**

LISLE, Illinois (October XX, 2015) – The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum are pleased to announce the Arboretum at the University of Guelph has been awarded a Level III Accreditation. By achieving particular standards of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens, the Arboretum at the University of Guelph is now recognized as an accredited arboretum in the Morton Register of Arboretum.

Established in 1970, the Arboretum comprises more than 400 acres of tree and shrub collections, gardens, walking trails, natural woodlands, wetlands and meadows. Adjacent to the university, it is home to more than 1850 different taxa of woody plants and trees native to Ontario as well as those from around the world. The Arboretum's collections of oaks, beeches, maples, conifers and dwarf conifers is particularly noteworthy and plant records are shared through Botanic Garden Conservation International's global database PlantSearch as well as via the Arboretum's own website.

The Arboretum's maintains a strong focus on the conservation of woody plants native to the province of Ontario, leading long-running initiatives such as the Rare Woody Plants of Ontario program. Through the program, the institution archives a genetically diverse and geographically representative array of populations of rare and at-risk trees and shrubs in living gene banks. Its Elm Recovery Project is aimed at breeding a genetically diverse, Ontario-sourced American elm population that is tolerant of Dutch Elm Disease.

With a mandate to support teaching, research and outreach at the university, the Arboretum is integral to many undergraduate courses and acts as a living laboratory, providing support, expertise and a wide variety of plant species and environments for researchers at all levels. It also offer dozens of workshops each year aimed at educating the general public, and design and display interpretive signage and other materials help connect people with plants and nature.

"Accreditation under the ArbNet program means a great deal to us, as it represents a recognition of what we've worked hard to achieve over the past 45 years, and provides standards that we can continue to work towards in the next 45 years," said Shelley Hunt, Arboretum director. "We're also excited about the opportunities provided by the program to network and share knowledge with other Arboreta around the world."

About the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program

The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program is sponsored and coordinated by The Morton Arboretum in cooperation with American Public Gardens Association and Botanic Gardens Conservation

International. This international initiative offers four levels of accreditation, recognizing arboreta of various degrees of development, capacity and professionalism. Accreditation is based on self-assessment and documentation of an arboretum's level of achievement of accreditation standards. Standards include planning, governance, labeling of species, staff or volunteer support, public access and programming and tree science, planting and conservation. More information is available at www.arbnet.org.

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