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**ARBNET AWARDS $5,000 TO ARBORETA TO SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION,
 TREE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION***-In celebration of its fifth anniversary, ArbNet provides funding to six institutions in the United States and Mexico-*

LISLE, Illinois (December, 2016)— ArbNet, the interactive community of arboreta and global network of tree-focused professionals, has awarded nearly $5,000 to fund work advancing tree science, conservation and public awareness at arboreta in the United States and Mexico through its 5th Anniversary Capacity Building Grant.

Six arboreta were the recipients of the new grant, developed to support ArbNet-accredited arboreta seeking to advance their professional capacity in arboretum management, education and public engagement, tree collections, or tree science and conservation.

“Grant recipients were selected largely because their projects were innovative, collaborative, and have a broad impact on the arboretum community,” said Nicole Cavender, vice president of science and conservation at The Morton Arboretum. “ArbNet is proud to support these projects that will not only educate visitors and advance tree conservation, but could also serve as blueprints for arboreta around the world.”

“This grant opportunity continues to build upon the core mission of ArbNet, which is to strengthen the network of arboreta worldwide and bring about a greater understanding of the important role trees play in our environment,” Cavender added.

The ArbNet 5th Anniversary Capacity Building Grant recipients include:

**The John Bartram Arboretum**, Oberlin, Ohio
Grant monies will help the John Bartram Arboretum fund a pilot test to remedy the issue of tree root suffocation. In collaboration with the Ohio Independent Arborists Association, the Arboretum will host a workshop for tree care professionals, and install tree labels along trails at the Arboretum as well as provide digital content.

**Welkinweir Arboretum**, Pottstown, Pennsylvania
The Welkinweir Arboretum will use ArbNet’s grant to create an interactive online map of its significant, historic and tribute trees so visitors can better understand and interact with tree and plant collections and more easily locate trees on the grounds.

**Vallarta Botanical Garden**, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
The grant will support Vallarta Botanical Garden with a collaborative research project focusing on native oaks in the Puerto Vallarta region, many of which are considered threatened. The garden will collaborate with the Universidad Nacional Autonomo de Mexico to survey, collect, and propagate native and threatened oak species.

**Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum,** Atlanta, Georgia
The Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum will use grant funds to support the creation of mobile education hubs that will travel along the Atlanta BeltLine, a former railway corridor that has been repurposed as a multi-use trail and green space. These docent-led mobile stations, in the form of custom-made tricycles, will be outfitted with interpretive maps, pamphlets and other educational resources and will greatly increase public engagement with the trees of the Arboretum.

**The Belton Memorial Park Arboretum**, Belton, Missouri
Funds will go to the development of a detailed walking tour map of The Belton Memorial Park Arboretum as well as a kiosk to display information for visitors. The walking trail map will include a list of the tree species, their locations and how to access digital information about the collections. The collaborative project will engage local boy scouts in creating the kiosks.

**Southern New Hampshire University Arboretum**, Manchester, New Hampshire
The Southern New Hampshire University Arboretum will use grant funds to produce a student-designed and developed augmented reality experience. Through custom tree signage, and accessed via smartphone or tablet, users will be able to explore interactive and informative content about each of the Arboretum’s tree species. Proposed content ranges from games to videos to interactive models and graphs.

To learn more about ArbNet, please visit [arbnet.org](http://arbnet.org/).

**About ArbNet**Established by The Morton Arboretum, ArbNet is an interactive, collaborative, international community of arboreta. ArbNet facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experience, and other resources to help arboreta meet their institutional goals and works to raise professional standards through the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program. Through ArbNet, arboreta from around the globe can work collaboratively as part of a broad network to help advance the planting and conservation of trees.

**About The Morton Arboretum**

The Morton Arboretum is an internationally recognized outdoor tree museum and tree research center located in Lisle, Illinois. As the champion of trees, the Arboretum is committed to scientifically-informed action, both locally and globally, and encouraging the planting and conservation of trees for a greener, healthier, more beautiful world. On 1,700 acres are 222,000 plant specimens representing 4,500different kinds of plants, along with specialty gardens, educational exhibits, the award-winning Children’s Garden, 16 miles of hiking trails and the Visitor Center, featuring The Arboretum Store and the Ginkgo Restaurant and Café. The Morton Arboretum is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization, welcoming more than 1 million visitors and serving 43,700 member households in 2015. Learn more at [mortonarb.org](http:///h).