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Two Weeks Remain to See Summer Exhibits at The North Carolina Arboretum

ASHEVILLE, NC – Two art exhibitions have taken center stage at the Arboretum this summer, both giving unique and awe-inspiring perspectives on how artists utilize plants in their work. Showing concurrently in the Baker Exhibit Center’s Exhibit Hall, the shows are open to the public through Tuesday, September 6.

Botanical Chords by Terry Ashley blurs the line between science and art. A former research scientist at Yale University School of Medicine, Ashley developed her technique while pursuing her hobby of photographing plant parts under the light microscope. Ashley termed her art “chords” because they connect two separate images, one traditional plant photograph and one image taken at a cellular level.

To create the microscopic image, Ashley carefully peels a single layer of cells from a plant leaf, stem, or petal and photographs it under high magnification. She then places a picture of the plant’s exterior on top of the picture of its cells, creating a textured, multi-layered piece of art. Aesthetically stunning and scientifically accurate, the images encourage an understanding of plants at a cellular level.

Also on display, *The Fine Art of Wood: An International Invitational Exhibition of Woodturning* features the work of more than 40 artists from across the country and around the world. The exhibit showcases a wide variety of style and presentation, from pedestal and tabletop pieces to wall hangings. The American Association of Woodturners, along with their local chapter, the Carolina Mountain Woodturners, helped facilitate this exhibit.

To broaden the visitor experience, an exhibit called *Into the Wood* is featured in the Baker Exhibit Center Greenhouse. Designed and produced by Arboretum staff, *Into the Wood* explores the differences between hardwoods and softwoods, as well as the many variables that can affect the appearance and health of a tree. Seven interactive stations provide visitors a closer look at a variety of woods and the similarities and differences that exist among them. The exhibit introduces basic concepts in wood, such as figure, growth rings, and rays through hands-on components that allow visitors to see and touch actual tree cookies. Microscope tables with various tree cells on slides offer students the opportunity to view and note different structures within cells and cell wall formations. Predators of wood, including microbes, bacteria, fungi, and insects are also featured in the exhibit. Support for *Into the Wood* is provided by a grant from the American Association of Woodturners, as well as Asheville Hardware, Community Partner of The North Carolina Arboretum.

The Fine Art of Wood is one of three shows this summer bringing the best of woodturning art and craft to the region. Blue Spiral 1, located on historic Biltmore Avenue in downtown Asheville, is hosting *Wood Moving Forward*, featuring the work of 14 premier Southern artists through September 30. Grovewood Gallery, located near the Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa, presents *A Wood Collector’s Home*, featuring work by 19 top wood artists from across North America through October 2.

The NC Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Visit www.ncarboretum.org/plan-a-visit for parking fees, property hours and building hours. For general information call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

Botanical Chords and *The Fine Art of Wood* are on display at The North Carolina Arboretum through September 6. Both exhibitions are open to the public during regular Baker Exhibit Center hours: 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. daily. There is no admission fee for these exhibits.

For information, call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org. The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, is to cultivate connections between people and plants.

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