2017 GIFFORD LECTURER ANNOUNCEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the 29th Annual John C. Gifford Arboretum Lecture will be given by Dr. William (Ned) Friedman, who is Harvard University’s Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology as well as the Director of its Arnold Arboretum. Dr. Friedman’s topic will be “Mutants in our Midst: Darwin, Horticulture, and Evolution.” Although often overlooked as such, many of the horticultural varieties that we grow in gardens are premier examples of the ongoing process of evolution: random mutations that lead, on the rarest of occasions, to novel and desirable biological characteristics. Throughout his life, Charles Darwin (as well as other nineteenth century evolutionists) looked to the world of horticulture and plant domestication to gain critical insights into the generation of variation and the process of natural selection that underlie evolutionary change. Come learn how horticulture played a central role in laying the foundations for discovering evidence of evolution itself, as well as understanding how evolution works. Professor William (Ned) Friedman, the eighth director of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, will argue that modern botanical gardens can and should become a leading force for the promotion of evolutionary thinking in society by highlighting the very kinds of mutations observed by Darwin, as well as new examples of monstrosities and mutants that continue to be found in botanical living collections around the world.

Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend this lecture on Monday, April 3, 2017 at 7 PM in Cox Science Center Room 126. Note that this is a change from our normally scheduled date of the first Thursday in April, but a scheduling conflict for Dr. Friedman required this change. The Lecture will be followed by a reception, and we will also have the Gifford Arboretum’s 2017 Plant of the Year available for distribution. Having Dr. Friedman as our Lecturer also continues a long term relation with the Arnold Arboretum. Former Arnold Arboretum Director Dr. Richard Howard was instrumental in helping the Gifford Arboretum’s advocates convince the University of Miami’s administration of the great value of its collection for education and research, and his advice was invaluable as the Gifford Arboretum forged ahead and improved after having been threatened with being turned into a parking lot in the late 1980s.