

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)



The Morris Arboretum frequently features sculptural exhibits, like the one sculptor Patrick Dougherty began working on yesterday. Although Dougherty doesn't know what the final product will look like, it will be approximately 22 feet tall and constructed exclusively of natural materials.

---

## Morris Arboretum to get all-natural sculpture

### World-renowned sculptor Patrick Dougherty's piece will be 22 feet tall

**By: Sneha Deshpande**

**Posted: 3/31/09**

Art is the latest subject of an ongoing trend to become more environmentally friendly at Penn.

For the next three weeks, world renowned sculptor Patrick Dougherty will work on an all-natural sculpture approximately 22-feet tall at the Morris Arboretum, Penn's historic public garden and educational center.

Members of the Penn community have volunteered to help Dougherty on the project, and the group began working yesterday.

Dougherty is known for his use of exclusively natural materials, such as twigs and saplings.

"There isn't a single nail in his work," said Susan Crane, Morris Arboretum spokeswoman.

For his current project, the sculptor will use materials such as maple, ash, oak and willow saplings.

"My favorite materials to work with are different colored saplings that bend easily," said Dougherty.

Kate Mandel, a volunteer and second-year architecture graduate student said, "It's really neat that he can use natural materials in an artistic way, especially since they are becoming less and less abundant these days."

Dougherty decided to use natural materials because he "wanted to take a stab at something new," he said.

"Historically, hunters and gatherers used natural materials," he added. "It is only over the last 100 years that we haven't relied on nature for our materials."

Originally working in administration, Dougherty said he decided to become a professional sculptor

because he always wanted to make things with his hands. He was inspired by others with similar interests and found sculpting easy.

The Morris Arboretum's fine arts committee, which meets quarterly and consists of internal staff members and outside volunteers, collectively decided to hire Dougherty.

"The way Dougherty strictly uses only natural materials in his artwork keeps with our vision at the Morris Arboretum," Crane said.

As far as the actual sculpture is concerned, no one - including the sculptor himself - knows what it will look like.

What Crane finds "exciting and transforming" about Dougherty's artwork is that he comes to the site of each sculpture without a clear idea of the end product.

"I like that he formulates ideas from his surroundings," Crane said.

Dougherty explained that he usually takes the first day of a project to explore the surroundings and materials - "since Morris Arboretum is responsible for gathering them," he said.

Janine Sutton, a second-year architecture graduate student who will also be volunteering for three days to work on the project, looks forward to "helping Dougherty assemble the sculpture."

"It's very fascinating," she said. "I've never done anything like it before."

"It's not so much fun slaving away at the sculpture," Dougherty said, "but after it's done, it's really, really nice."

---

© Copyright 2009 The Daily Pennsylvanian