



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2006

The New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation was established under the auspices of Mr. James Spiniello. Its board is composed of volunteers interested in the preservation, maintenance, and development of public, historical gardens. The Foundation is working with the National Park Service, U. S. Department of Interior, to preserve the Cross Estate Gardens.

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Foundation Executive Board*

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Pat Gutwillig

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Gunner Berg

Rosalind Dujardin

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Mary Cross Spence

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Marion Trousoff

NJHGF Board Changes

Please help us introduce and welcome our new board members, who were elected last fall.

Joan Ryder is our new President. She is not new to the Cross Estate Gardens; she has worked on the board for several years and chaired many of the fundraising events. This year, she joins the volunteers who work on Wednesday. We all look forward to working with her.

Pat Gutwillig is our new Secretary. She, too, is not new to the gardens; she served as President before moving temporarily to Florida and is happy to be back in order to resume her interest in the NJHGF.

Hollace Bowers recently joined the NJHGF as Membership Chair. She worked in New York City for 32 years in various endeavors, including investment counseling, the resort industry and hospital patient access services. She learned about the Cross Estate Gardens 20 years ago and now welcomes the opportunity to serve on the board.

Special thanks to the following individuals for a job well done:

■ Phil Pitney, who energetically served as President since the fall of 2003. In addition to the time he spent on the board, he continues to work as a volunteer in the garden.

■ Rosalind Dujardin, who served as Membership Chair and who now serves as an Advisor. Rosalind did a wonderful job on the membership, redesigned our brochure and stationery and took on many other tasks.

■ Sonnie Reutelhuber, who served as President, Secretary and Hospitality Chair and did many other jobs that needed doing. She will stay on as a Member at Large.

■ Celia DeHuff, who served as a Member at Large since 2004 and helped with special events.

As always, we don't want to forget to thank all of the volunteers who continue to serve on the board and work in the garden. The NJHGF would not be possible without each and every one of you!

Don't Miss the June Plant Sale!

Saturday, June 3, 9:30-Noon

The Cross Estate Gardens' early June plant sale is a great opportunity to fill spaces, replace plants that have failed to thrive and add new plants to the garden.

The board and volunteers were so pleased with the results of last year's sale that we decided to expand our offerings of excellent plants again this year. Expect to find divisions of plants from our Native Garden that bloom in the shade and part shade, as well as a variety of plants suited to any garden.

Join us on Saturday, June 3, rain or shine. Your support is needed and appreciated. Funds raised at this sale will aid in the maintenance of the gardens.

— *Helen Mageau*



A May Walk in the Gardens

**Wednesday May 17,
10:30 and 11:30 a.m.**

All are welcome to enjoy a guided walk through the Cross Estate Gardens this May.

The importance of this 1930s walled garden, its plants and the adjacent native plant garden will be discussed as the tour moves through the formal and informal native areas. This is an excellent opportunity to see how the gardens have developed and matured. Refreshments will be served.

Meet our guide, Helen Mageau, NJHGF Horticultural Advisor, in front of the mansion.

A second tour will be offered in late summer to highlight the fall flowers. If you're interested, a sign-up sheet will be available so we can let you know the date.

Volunteer Report

I don't know what April 6 was like at your house, but the Cross Estate Gardens received a good amount of snow cover. It was our first meeting of the season. A good number of stalwart volunteers showed up. As we eyed the falling flakes, the decision was made that maybe next week might be better.

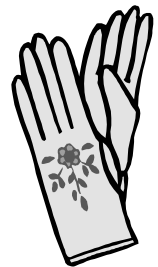
And it was. The weather was fine when rakes and pruning shears were put to good use. We all enjoyed the daffodils, grape hyacinths, hellebores, shy white bloodroots and all the buds that promised a good show for the following weeks. Tulips and forget-me-nots are adding their color now. Mary Sambrook's redbud tree is blooming, and the dogwoods are not far behind.

Working in the gardens is so good for the psyche and the soul. Won't you join us?

— *Ruth Dittmann*

***We always
welcome more hands
in the gardens!***

If you can volunteer on Wednesday mornings between 9 a.m. and noon, please join us. You do not have to be there every week. Come and see how satisfying it can be!



Plant Profile: Geraniums

Perennial geraniums came into vogue several years ago. Garden catalogues touted their virtues and almost every gardener added some to their borders; “Wargrave Pink” and “Johnson’s Blue” being the favorites. The Cross Estate Gardens also introduced them into the formal garden beds.

Unfortunately, many of these hybrid geraniums usually are not long-lived. The growing site must meet specific requirements—part shade and well-drained moist soil, especially when there are hot summers such as we have in New Jersey. Unless these conditions are met, the plants tend to decline within a few years.

There are exceptions. The long-blooming native, *Geranium maculatum*, is adaptable to a variety of East Coast conditions. While not a repeat bloomer, it is an excellent addition to wildflower gardens and perennial gardens.

Of all the non-natives, I have found “Bigroot,” *G. macrorrhizum*, the easiest to grow. Its pinkish-white flowers are borne in clusters. Several planted together can grow into an effective ground cover. While not evergreen, the leaves turn red-orange in the fall, making it effective in more than one season.

Not all geraniums merit garden space. Herb Robert, *G. robertianum*, is native. Introduced into our native plant garden, it has become a persistent weed. It can

be identified by its strong, unpleasant scent and reddish, sprawling stems. The pink flowers are about one-half inch across and basically uninteresting. Do not purchase or accept this plant as a gift. It may have interest to herb growers, but it does not belong in the garden. One of our volunteers has named it “stinkling Bob,” an all too accurate description!

— Helen Mageau



Summer Intern

We are excited and glad to have Letitia Clark as our intern for 2006. She gave us an assist at the end of 2005 when our intern for the year, Elliot Bowen, left to return to college to finish up his degree work.



Before joining the Cross Estate Gardens, Letitia was a summer intern at Willowood, where she made the transition from the corporate world of law to follow her interest in gardening. She has proved to be a willing worker at any task because of her wonderful sense of curiosity and exploration.

This year, she will get to work from early spring clean-up through spring splendor and summer butterflies to the bedding down of the garden for the winter.

Welcome, Letitia!

— Stephen Palmer

Grant Money

Special thanks to the Marion Trousoff and the Garden Club of Somerset Hills for sponsoring our grant request to the New Jersey Committee of the Garden Club of America. We received a \$1,500 grant for renovating, expanding and periodically updating our website. Local resident Ann Campbell has been hard at work redesigning the site to make it more attractive and informative. Be sure to check it out at www.crossestategardens.org.

We also received a \$500 grant from the Garden Club of Somerset Hills for plant labels for the walled and native gardens. That is an addition our visitors will enjoy.

— Stephen Palmer

Do You Ever Wonder?

Do you ever wonder what the catalog is really saying? If it says:

Beautiful foliage ... it really means the flowers are pathetic.

Delicate flowers ... you need a magnifying glass to see them.

Dormant in hot weather ... looks dead most of the summer.

Excellent for cutting ... a single flower at the top of a spindly stalk.

Winter interest ... probably looks stunning under the snow.

Unusual ... one of the ugliest plants on the planet.

Heavy feeder ... yellowish foliage and puny flowers unless fed constantly.

Invasive ... will come up through a foot of concrete.

Tall ... lies on the ground most of the time.

Sow seed in situ ... say goodbye to those seeds. The weeds will germinate first.

— *From Horticulture Magazine, March/April 2002*

Become a Member

As you know, no garden is ever finished—it is an ongoing process of maintenance and changes. The Cross Estate Gardens need constant attention. If you haven't renewed your membership, please take the time to do so today. Your contribution is our only monetary support. And we thank you for that.

Membership Categories

Senior Citizen	\$15.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$40.00
Supporter	\$75.00
Sponsor	\$100.00
Life Member	\$500.00
Other Donations	\$____.00

Please send your check to:

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

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Bernardsville, NJ 07924-0712



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