



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2007

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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Cross Estate Garden Plant Sale

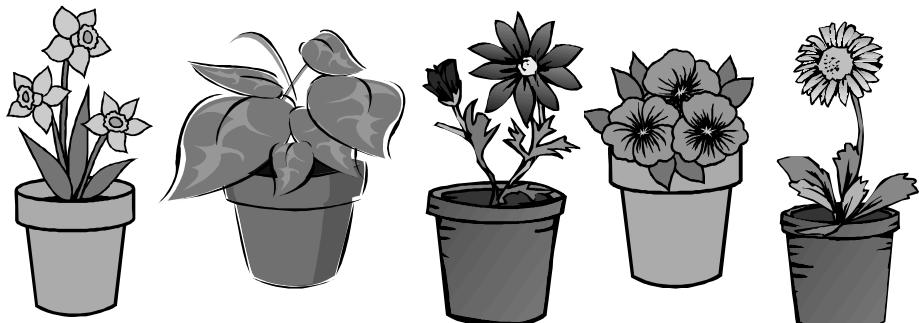
**Saturday, June 2
9:30 a.m. to Noon**

Please join in the fun at our annual Plant Sale on the first Saturday in June under the pergola in the Cross Estate Gardens.

After a too warm January and the bitter cold and biting winds of February, topped by the devastating sleet storm of March 16, most of our home gardens need repair and replacements. Our Plant Sale is a great opportunity for you to buy much needed replacement plants for your gardens, while at the same time providing financial help for the caring of the Cross Estate Gardens by local volunteers of NJHGF.

Our Plant Sale in 2006 did very well despite the drenching rains that morning. We are expanding the number and variety of plants offered this year. Our Plant Sale will be filled with divisions from our shady Native Garden and our sunny/part shady Walled Garden, plus donated plants from our volunteers' gardens.

All funds raised at this sale will aid in the maintenance of the Cross Estate Gardens. Your support of our Plant Sale is greatly appreciated!



Cross Estate Gardens Anniversary Celebration

30th Year of the Gardens 20th Year of NJHGF

It's hard to believe its been 30 years since Jean Pope discovered what she called "a secret garden" on the Cross Estate property. It was planted by Julia Cross in the 1930s with the help of her friend Martha Brookes Hutcheson. Jean started on her own clearing brush, pruning and cleaning up the formal beds. Gradually, she attracted volunteers and various garden-related organizations to help her with major renovations. The estate is located on National Park Service land, so she also enlisted the Morristown National Historical Park superintendent and rangers to help out whenever they could.

She had been working at the Cross Estate for about 10 years when Jim Spiniello came to visit one summer day and asked her if "the ladies needed any help." Needless to say, Jean was excited—to establish a foundation would mean the garden restoration would continue for years to come. Jim said he was going to have a heart operation but would come back in the fall. And he did. In November 1987, he sponsored the Foundation's beginning. His generous spirit affected all of us. He often remarked

that this should not be about money—what mattered was the people who volunteered—they made the difference. It's inevitable, however, that raising money is a practical matter and will always be very important.

In addition to Jim, there were five of us who were the original members of NJHGF. We decided it was important to attract more people to visit the gardens and become members of the NJHGF. We gradually established an executive board. Jean took charge of planning our Spring Symposia and our Country Garden Celebrations, in addition to being the horticulturist. We published a brochure, got a newsletter started and prepared a slide presentation on the history of

the Cross Estate. We showed it to anyone who was interested. Marge Van Ryzin managed the paper work, and Madeleine Huebner became the volunteer chairman. Grace Steneck and Virginia Truax, who were in their 70s, were an inspiration to all of us. As Grace often said, "We're dirt gardeners, Marge," and they were proud of it. Their work is still evident today. The volunteers not only kept the gardens in good shape but also worked together in many different roles to sponsor events that would raise money, bring people to visit the Cross Estate Gardens and attract new members of the foundation and more garden volunteers.

We met with several superintendents of the MNHP to discuss our role on the grounds of the former estate. We were told their resources were limited, but they would cooperate with us as much as they could. We were given permission to install an automatic watering system. They have helped with several projects and were always generous with our use of the mansion. The rangers have been great on many occasions. The Youth Conservation Corps volunteer several



Jean Pope, Richard James Cross, Mary Bartow, Mary Sambrook and Nelson Opitz stand by this original garden gate, which Nelson restored in 2001.

hours in the garden during the summer.

Over the years, the deer problem got worse, old fencing in the pergola area came down and new fencing was installed as the garden continued to expand. In 1990, a deer got into the garden and broke one of the antique pots located in the formal garden. Fortunately, Jean found someone to repair it, and her husband built covers to protect them in winter.

When Jean retired, Mary Sambrook took over as the horticulturist. She, too, had a great deal of knowledge about plants and a creative eye for design, and she continued for 10 years to maintain and develop what Jean had started. The Native Garden was finished and paths were installed. Mary also developed a brochure called *A Patriot's Trees* as a self-guided tour of the many old trees on the property. She supervised the volunteers to work for 2003 Mansion in May, a

fundraiser sponsored by the Women's Association of Morristown Memorial Hospital. The gardens were in great shape and volunteers worked every day. We received lots of compliments. Mary moved to England when she retired in 2004.

It has been a pleasant task to look over all of the newsletters we've published since 1987. It's evident that our enthusiasm matched our willingness to do whatever was necessary to make the NJHGF a reality.

When you visit the Cross Estate today you will see a much bigger garden than when Jean first started clearing brush and restoring the garden beds 30 years ago. Over the years, many volunteers have done an excellent job—I hesitate to print names for fear of leaving someone out—but as we celebrate our anniversaries, it's obvious this project is one worthy of all the energy we have invested in it.

— Marge Van Ryzin

*My garden is slow work,
pursued with love, and I do
not deny that I am proud of it.*

— Claude Monet

Sharing Encouraged

Please share this newsletter about the Gardens with friends who don't know who and where we are. Encourage them to come to the Gardens in April and May when they are at their spring-time loveliest. Then, perhaps, you and they may want to come on Wednesday mornings to join the volunteers and enjoy the fellowship of those who keep the Gardens looking their best. We are a happy group and will welcome new garden friends. (Right, 2006 volunteers)

— Ruth Dittmann



Anniversary Celebration

**September 23
1-5 p.m.**

Please join us on Sunday, Sept. 23 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the beginnings of the restoration of the Cross Estate Gardens by Jean Pope and her loyal group of volunteers and the 20th anniversary of the founding of the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation under the sponsorship of James Spiniello. Our Anniversary Celebration will feature a silent auction of plants and garden ornaments, an artists' competition of paintings and photographs of the gardens at the Cross Estate, tours of the gardens and light refreshments. In late August, we will mail our members more information about this event.

— Joan Ryder

Visit Us Online

Be sure to check out the Cross Estate Garden Web site at www.crossestategardens.org. It was redesigned in 2006 by our webmaster Ann Campbell and funded by a grant from the NJ Committee of the Garden Club of America. Our sponsor for the grant was the Garden Club of Somerset Hills. We thank all for their generosity.

Ann continues to periodically expand and update the site. If you have any suggestions for more improvements, please use the "contact us" tab on the site.

Come to the Plant Sale

June 2, 9:30-Noon

"The early bird catches the worm!"

Membership

The Cross Estate Gardens receives no funding from the National Park Service and relies on your support. Last year, we were able to install deer fencing around Grace's garden. This costly project included rental of a posthole digger, purchase and delivery of the fencing and posts and removal of the old fencing.

Our loyal volunteers weed, prune and plant. But we rely on memberships for funding supplies and capital projects. This year, we hope to build more deer fencing (ah yes) to open the "croquet lawn" and the end of the pergola to forest vistas.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2007 or were thinking of joining, please use the enclosed remittance envelope.

— Hollace Bowers



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