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, but not funded by, the National Park Service, U. S. Department of Interior, to preserve the Cross Estate Gardens.

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Fall 2010

A Fall Flurry in a Country Garden
Thursday, September 23, from 1 - 4 p.m.

Please join us for our third annual Fall Flurry in a Country Garden. Our event will feature container garden designer Kent Russell who will entertain and enlighten us with Dazzling Fall/Winter Containers.

Kent grew up in Bucks County, PA, helping out at his family’s nursery Russell Gardens. By age nineteen, he left the family business to establish Renny-Hortulus Farm Nursery. This now renowned property has been featured in numerous lifestyle and horticulture magazines nationwide. Before long he was asked to give his first garden lecture to a local herb society. Eventually he found his name listed as a preferred speaker by the Garden Club of America. This proud moment was quickly followed by lecture engagements to numerous garden clubs and horticultural organizations throughout the East Coast. He currently averages over 60 lectures per season.

Kent’s latest passion is designing container gardens for clients in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Examples of his containers can be seen daily on WPVI, Channel 6 in Philadelphia. His dealings with television are certainly not a first, as he spent 2½ years as The Garden Guru on Lehigh Valley PBS. The past two years he was honored to serve as a judge for the window box and large urn categories at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

After Kent’s presentation at our Fall Flurry, he will auction off four of his creations, with the proceeds going to NJHGF. Following will be a sale of plants for your own containers, including plants from the Cross Estate Gardens. A Country Afternoon Tea will be served.

Registration is requested. Admission is $25 for members and $30 for nonmembers. Please register by sending your check, payable to NJHGF, to NJ Historical Garden Foundation, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924.
Walled Garden Brick Pathways Restored

Come and walk the restored walled garden pathways. Through the generosity of S. Dillard and Adrienne Kirby, Kirke Bent, The Prudential Foundation and other NJHGF donors, the brickwork in the walled garden was lifted, cleaned and relaid this past spring. We laud the meticulous work of Green Path Landcare from Chatham, who also searched out matching antique brick to replace the pieces that had broken over time. In addition to the walks, the project also reset the “soldiered” edging for the beds, adding reinforcement and new soil behind the edging to maintain it into the future. Mrs. Cross would have been pleased with the job.

Replanting of Two Beds in Walled Garden

Thanks to a generous grant from The Garden Club of Somerset Hills, and the hard work of many volunteers, the two beds at the bottom of the Lower Walled Garden are in the process of being replanted. Both beds had become overgrown, with daylilies and goose-neck loosestrife predominant. Digging these out revealed an extremely poor soil of heavy, compacted clay. Our horticultural advisor decided the best solution would be the removal of nearly all plants from these beds, allowing volunteers to completely turn the soil. A rich compost could then be dug in, ensuring that new and salvaged plants would have a better chance of success. The first bed in was dug out in the fall of 2009. Volunteers carefully saved all plants of value, heeling them in to other areas of the garden. With the help of hardworking corporate volunteers from UPS, sent by The Land Conservancy of NJ, the soil in this bed was completely amended late November. Early in the spring of 2010, new plants were installed. Our visitors can now enjoy lovely new varieties of Achillea, Hyssop, Columbine, Nepeta, Japanese Painted Fern, Bleeding Heart, Cranesbill Geranium, Salvia, and several varieties of Phlox and Jacob’s Ladder. A new ‘Shoal Creek’ Vitex complements an existing Vitex in the second bed. Besides providing for the purchase of new plants, the grant from The Garden Club of Somerset Hills allowed for the purchased of two green metal, four-foot-tall, tuteurs. They provide height and focus, thus becoming a centerpiece for each bed. They can be seen from the top of the Walled Garden, reflecting the paired tuteurs, and the paired urns in the Upper Walled Garden.

The digging out and replanting of the second bed is our major volunteer special project for this summer. We hope to have the second bed completed in time for our “Fall Flurry” event on September 23rd. Come visit the Cross Estate Gardens soon, and watch our work in progress. If you are free to join our volunteers any Wednesday morning between nine and noon, we’d love the extra help.
Volunteer Spotlight on Fred Aufschlager

Fred Aufschlager, a volunteer at the Cross Estate for the last ten years, has a passion for the Bonsai art-form. He has the requisite artistic design sensibility and solid understanding of plants to care for his 50 magnificent specimens. He makes the point that one doesn’t really own a bonsai but merely nurtures and eventually passes it along. Fred is also an accomplished ceramicist and developed a special glaze to give his handmade pots a distinctive Japanese style to enhance his Bonsais’ beauty. Fred has a B.S. in Forestry majoring in Landscape Architecture and a Master’s Degree in City Planning. He and his wife, Doris, moved to NJ in ’96. His fascination with Bonsai started long before, on a childhood trip he took to the nearby Brooklyn Botanical Garden. But it wasn’t until he turned 50 and took a beginners course that he got hooked. He went on to become a founding member of the Chesapeake Bonsai Society and nowadays enjoys teaching newcomers. He is a member of the local Great Swamp Bonsai Society.

Improved Plant Signage

We are so pleased to have received this past May a generous grant from the Watnong Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society to improve the signage in both the formal and native gardens. That enabled us to hang 22 metal accession tags on more of our interesting woody plants and install 159 new labels on the beautiful perennials in the gardens. We hope this will add to the enjoyment of the Cross Estate Gardens and help answer the “what is that” question we are always being asked.

Native Garden at Cross Estate

Drew University Class at Cross Estate in March 2011

Mark your calendars for next March! Drew University is offering *Historic Landscape Preservation: From Archives to Planning to Planting* at the Cross Estate. Over three Saturdays, board member Marta McDowell will teach this hands-on course. Students will use the archives and gardens as the basis for an exploration of landscape history, preservation and maintenance. The course will include organizing and studying archival records, documenting existing features, and installing and maintaining plants in this period gem. Students will learn the principles of preserving and restoring gardens that are appropriate setting for historic sites. For more information and registration, visit www.drew.edu/cue/preservation or call the Office of Continuing Education, Monday through Friday, 9–5, at 973-408-3185. Email: agill@drew.edu.
The Cross Estate Gardens

Tours of the Cross Estate Gardens

Tours of the gardens are available every Wednesday at 10 a.m. Tours take approximately one-half hour. If your group would like to schedule a tour of the gardens on another day or time, please contact Joan Ryder at 973-376-0348. There is a suggested donation of $5 per person for group tours.

Plant Sale a Success

Our Plant Sale last June 4-5 was very successful. It was a lot of hard work preparing for the Plant Sale — potting up and labeling hundreds of divisions of plants from our Native Garden and Walled Garden and setting up the sales area under our pergola — but the results were worth it. Our net profit for the event was $4,400! We could not have done it without all of the generous donations of plants from our volunteers, members and friends. We extend a sincere “Thank You” to all who donated and to all who bought our plants. All monies raised from the Plant Sale are used in the maintenance and development of the Cross Estate Gardens.

Become a Member

The NJHGF is always looking for new members to support its all-volunteer work in the Cross Estate Gardens. Every dollar donated goes into the gardens. Please become a member today, if you’re not already a supporter. Membership rates are as follows:

- Individual  $25
- Family  $40
- Friend  $100
- Sponsor  $250
- Patron  $500

Please mail your check, payable to NJHGF, to NJ Historical Garden Foundation, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924-0712. Thank you.

Join our Volunteers

From early April through the end of November, our hearty group of volunteers meets every Wednesday morning from 9 a.m. to noon to work in the historic Walled Garden, the Native Plant Garden, the wisteria-covered pergola, the Mountain Laurel allée and the other garden areas near the Cross Estate home. Tea/coffee/hot chocolate plus baked treats are provided during our 10:30 a.m. coffee break under the pergola. Please join us every Wednesday morning or whenever your schedule allows.