



# The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

## NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

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.

### *The New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation Board of Trustees*

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Jean Pope

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James Spiniello

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Newsletter/Website: Ann Campbell

## *Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale*

**Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

“Come one — come all” to our spring Plant Sale, held under the pergola in the Cross Estate Gardens. Our Plant Sale will be filled with divisions from our shady native plant garden and from our sunny walled garden, plus donated plants from our volunteers’ and members’ gardens. In addition to perennials, we will have a selection of small trees and shrubs. All funds raised at this sale will help the volunteers of the NJHGF care for the Cross Estate Gardens. Your support of our Plant Sale is greatly appreciated!



*Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale in 2011*

## *Drew University Class at Cross Estate on July 14*

Drew University will hold an all-day class on *Historic Landscape Preservation: Propagating Historic Plants* at the Cross Estate on Saturday, July 14, from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., led by popular instructor Marta McDowell. During this indoor/outdoor class, students will learn a variety of methods on how to “make more plants” from seed, cuttings and division. Students will take home a tray of seeds and flat of cuttings. For more information and registration, visit the Drew website at [www.Drew.edu](http://www.Drew.edu) or call the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies - Lifelong Learning (Pat Tagg), Monday through Friday, 9-5, at 973-408-3185, or e-mail: [ptagg@drew.edu](mailto:ptagg@drew.edu).

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In 2012 we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the beginning of the restoration of the Cross Estate Gardens. The Cross Estate was owned by the Cross family from 1929 to 1972, when Julia Cross died. The National Park Service acquired the Cross home and the surrounding 162 acres in 1975 as an extension of their Revolutionary War

## Jean Pope



In 1977 Chester resident Jean Pope, with a degree from Cornell University in floriculture and ornamental horticulture, was director of the herb garden at the nearby Wick farm, site of a Revolutionary War encampment. She was asked by a NPS ranger to look at the much deteriorated Cross Estate Gardens and give her advice on what to

plant in the garden. What she saw were beds of crabgrass, a few potentillas and some scattered plantings of lamb's ears. The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), which wanted to clean up the walled garden as a summer project, spent the whole summer pulling the weeds.

In September Jean Pope and a few of her friends from the Herb Society of Northern NJ planted a collection of dwarf English boxwood, bought by the YCC, to line the beds of the upper walled garden. Jean spent the next several years talking to local garden clubs about the deterioration of the Cross Estate Gardens and their possible future magnificence. Within five years, with donations from local garden clubs and plant donations and cuttings from her friends, she and her band of hardy volunteers were able to fill in all of the 28 perennial beds with plants.

The upper level of the walled garden was planted in blue, white and yellow flowering plants. The lower level was devoted to mass plantings in the English style, with all shades of pink added to the color scheme. The two levels are separated by stone steps and a row of fragrant *Viburnum carlesii*. English ivy was planted on the stone walls surrounding the garden. In the shade of the stone wall, epimedium and European ginger were planted along

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brigade area. In 1977 Jean Pope visited the Cross Estate Gardens, fell in love with the "bones" of the gardens, and organized fellow gardeners to work on restoring the historic walled garden. In 1987 neighbor Jim Spiniello set up the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation to support the volunteers' efforts. Here are their stories.

## Jim Spiniello

In 1986, James Spiniello took a walk on the Cross Estate property. He had recently retired following a heart attack, and was awaiting a scheduled operation. He had worked as head of his own international heavy construction business, and was particularly



drawn to the Cross' old wind-powered water tower. While there Jim saw a group hard at work in the garden. They told him: "We are all volunteers," and asked if he'd like to help. They added: "Our biggest problem is that as fast as we can plant, the deer come through and eat everything." Jim told them if he made it safely through his operation, he would come back and help them get deer fencing. As Jim tells it, with an ever-present twinkle in his eye, "Now I knew I'd have all these fine people praying for me."

After his recovery, Jim made good on his promise, and returned to assist the volunteers' endeavors. He said that the first challenge he faced was to get the National Park staff to agree to a fence. The second was that the volunteers were providing all their own tools and equipment, and were paying out of pocket for any plants they wanted to add to the garden. Jim saw the need for a non-profit organization to support the work of the Cross Estate volunteers. He used his business expertise to set up the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation in 1987. He was also instrumental in planning the first fundraiser that provided major donations toward the foundation's continued work.

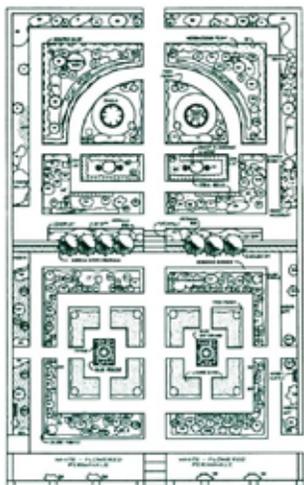
In the 25 years since, James Spiniello has served as Chairman of the NJHGF. Jim grew up in Orange, NJ, and attended the University of Missouri, Department of Engineering, School of Metallurgy. He is a Korean War

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## Grants Received This Spring for the Walled Garden

The Garden Club of Somerset Hills has once again given a generous grant to NJHGF which will enable us to renovate twelve perennial beds in the upper walled garden. During the last two years we were able to renovate ten perennial beds in the lower walled garden, thanks to prior grants from them. Renovation involves digging out the existing perennials, many of which have become invasive, amending the soil with many yards of compost and replanting the beds with new perennials selected for continuous bloom in the garden, plus replacing some of the prior perennials that are deemed worthy. Be



sure to visit the walled garden and watch our progress.

Goldman Sachs has donated sufficient funds to NJHGF which will enable our volunteers to complete the renovation of the eight perimeter perennial beds in the upper and lower walled gardens. In addition, in late April, twenty volunteers from Goldman Sachs will help our volunteers dig out the beds, amend the soil, and plant the new perennials or replant the saved plants. The two-leveled walled garden will look just spectacular this spring!

## Welcome to New Board Member Joe Oszust

Joe Oszust, of Morristown, is our newest member of the NJHGF Board of Trustees. Joe grew up in the Catskill Mountains region of New York State where his love for trees and the outdoors originated. He attended the State University of New York at Morrisville, a college located in central New York just East of Syracuse, where he studied Landscape Design. Joe completed an internship in Florida where he became familiar with many of the plants used in the southern part of the United States. He became a Certified Arborist in 2005 and worked for several nurseries and tree companies in New York State. Joe signed on with Bartlett Tree Experts in 2009 and currently takes care of many of the majestic trees of New Jersey, focusing on tree preservation, invasive species management and plant health care. He implements many new state of the art procedures that have been developed in the renowned Bartlett Tree Experts lab in North Carolina. With his extensive knowledge of trees and their proper care, Joe is a welcome addition to our Board.



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### Jean Pope, *continued from previous page*

with a collection of ferns. It was truly a labor of love, with magnificent results, for Jean and all of the volunteers. Jean started the practice of having her volunteers meet one morning a week in the gardens to plant and maintain the gardens — a practice that continues today, 35 years later. Although Jean and her husband Daniel have retired to their farm in Pennsylvania, the fabulous restoration/renovation of the Cross Estate Gardens that she started is being continued today by the ever-growing, dedicated group of NJHGF volunteers.

### Jim Spiniello, *continued from previous page*

veteran, a second lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. He lives in Bernardsville with his wife Judy, another valued member of the NJHGF, who serves as Treasurer. He has two grown daughters. He still hopes to someday see the full restoration of the Cross Estate water tower.

James Spiniello's constant support, his knowledge, his friendship, and his smile are something that all our garden volunteers value. Those who love the Cross Estate should appreciate that without him, the gardens probably would not have become the treasure that we cherish today.

## Fall Flurry: Thursday, October 4

**S**ave the date for our Fall Flurry on Thursday, October 4, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the library of the Cross Estate mansion. “Peony Queen” Kathleen Gagan, owner of Peony’s Envy in Bernardsville, will entertain us and enlighten us with her lecture on peony culture. Peonies will be available for sale, along with a selection of plants from the Cross Estate Gardens. Sweet and savory hors d’oeuvres, finger sandwiches, desserts, and tea will be served. Admission is \$25 for NJHGF members and \$30 for non-members.

## Tours of the Cross Estate Gardens

**T**ours 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.

## Visit Us Online

**B**e sure to check out the Cross Estate Gardens website at [www.crossestategardens.org](http://www.crossestategardens.org). You can also visit us on **Facebook**—search for Cross Estate Gardens or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cross-Estate-Gardens/146692902063110>.



## Become a Member

**T**he 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.

*The Cross Estate Gardens*  
New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation  
Post Office Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

