



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015

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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Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale



Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“Come one — come all” to our spring Plant Sale, held in the Cross Estate Gardens. This is a great opportunity to find new plants or replace your plants that didn’t survive this past cold and snowy winter. 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!



The Silver Maple (1895-2014) at the Cross Estate

During the early morning hours of Saturday, October 18, 2014, the magnificent Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) behind the Cross Estate Mansion suffered its final injury: a north-facing massive limb broke apart from its rotted trunk. Bartlett Tree Experts were quickly hired to cut down what remained of the Silver Maple. Two years prior a south-facing massive limb had broken off. After that event the Morristown National Historical Park removed an east-facing large limb that was threatening to fall on the Cross Estate Mansion.

There were five Silver Maples planted on the Cross Estate grounds. Four of them are now gone, the results of Hurricane Sandy and other events. The one remaining tree abuts the pergola at the entrance to the historic walled garden.

The Silver Maple that came down last October was probably about 120 years old. One of our visitors even counted the tree rings to determine its age. It is said that the first homeowners of the property, the John Bensels, planted the Silver Maple in 1905 after their house, known as “Queen Anne Farm,” was completed. The tree was estimated to be 10 years old then.

Silver Maples were once the most widely planted native maple. The trees were fast growing and majestic. However, fast growing trees often have weak branch attachments, leading to frequent limb loss. One hundred to 125 years is about all you can expect from a Silver Maple, unlike a massive White Oak which can live to be 400-500 years old.

Visitors to the Cross Estate Gardens truly enjoyed the Silver Maple. It was a popular spot for taking family and event photos. The Silver Maple will be missed by all, but the beautifully cut base is a touching reminder of the historic tree.



Volunteers under the Silver Maple in 2011.



South-facing limb that came down in 2012.



North-facing limb that came down in 2014.



Base of Silver Maple in late 2014.

A warm welcome to Ron Bailey and Ethan Hogan, who were elected to the NJHGF Board of Trustees at our annual meeting last November.



Ron retired from the corporate world some 19 years ago on a February Friday. The next Monday he started courses to become a Master Gardener, which was completed in due time. The next few years he spent 300-400 hours a year doing Master Gardener activities, the major project being tending a large garden which raised plants, flowers, shrubs, etc. for the annual fund raising sale. Ron and Agnes, his life partner and wife of some 50 years, moved from Ocean Co. and settled in Basking Ridge. They were both busy for a few years remodeling and enlarging their new home and sprucing up lawn and gardens. A few years ago, with time on his hands and following Agnes' suggestion, Ron began volunteering at the Cross Estate Gardens. This experience has been very rewarding, not only because of the Gardens' history and beauty and the contribution he is making, but also because of the friends he makes and new skills he learns. He will be found there almost every Wednesday working as scheduled unless, of course, Princess Madison [12 yr. old granddaughter] thinks of a higher priority.

Ethan has been volunteering at the Cross Estate Gardens since the summer of 2010. He is a former civil engineer involved in residential and commercial site design and planning. As the economy declined during the recent recession he found himself unemployed. Looking for ways to keep himself busy in his forced retirement, he searched online for volunteering opportunities and found the Cross Estate. He discovered a friendly, hard working group, and as an amateur gardener and landscaper found a comfortable fit to fill some time. He is also a volunteer at Saint Clare's Hospital and Saint Clare's Book Barn, both in Denville.

Ethan is a widower with two adult daughters, Kristen and Kelly, and one grandson, Ryan. He is a lifetime resident of Morris County, living in Succasunna for the past 32 years.





The Cross Estate Gardens

*New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation
Post Office Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924*

Join our Volunteers

From early April through the middle of November, our hearty group of men and women volunteers meets every Wednesday morning from 9 a.m. to noon to work in the various gardens at the Cross Estate. Refreshments are provided during our 10:30 a.m. coffee break under the pergola. Please join us every Wednesday morning or whenever your schedule allows. All levels of expertise are



welcome. For more information, please call Janet DiMauro at (908) 223-1622 or Joan Ryder at (973) 376-0348, or email info@crossestategardens.org.

Tours of the Cross Estate Gardens

Tours of the gardens are available every Wednesday at 10 a.m., from mid-April through October. 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

Be sure to check out the Cross Estate Gardens website at www.CrossEstateGardens.org. You can also visit us on **Facebook**—search for Cross Estate Gardens or go to www.facebook.com/pages/Cross-Estate-Gardens/146692902063110.



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.