



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

www.crossestategardens.org

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale



Saturday, May 7, 2022

NJHGF Members only: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

All guests: 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Plants, plants, and more plants!

Like Mary Lennox in *The Secret Garden*, I love watching plants “working in the earth now—pushing up pale green points because the spring is coming.” She goes on to define spring, “It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine, and things pushing up and working under the earth.”

Many of those “things” will have pushed up and been dug and potted for you to buy at this year’s Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale.

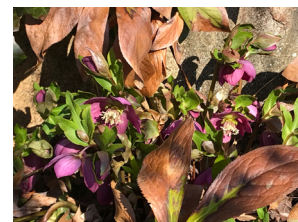
If you’re not already a member, join NJHGF now to take advantage of the members-only, early shopping hours.



Pulmonaria saccharata lungwort



Sanguinaia canadensis
Bloodroot



Helleborus x 'Royal Heritage Strain' hellebore

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

Founder of Volunteers

Jean Pope (1931-2017)

NJHGF Founder

V. James Spiniello (1928 - 2013)

President

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Ethan Hogan

Treasurer

Caroline Ford

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Horticulture: Carolyn Lydon

Membership: Marta McDowell

Newsletter: Linda O’Gorman

Publicity: (vacant)

Volunteers: Janet DiMauro

Members at Large

Fred Aufschlager

Joanne Brenckle

Steve Fogle

Ron Herold

George Nixon

Beverly Saadeh

Honorary Board

Mary Sambrook

Judy Spiniello

Nancy Strong (1927-2018)

Non-Board Chairs

Website: Letitia Clark

Facebook: Kay Compton

PLEASE NOTE: The Cross Estate Gardens is part of the Morristown National Historical Park (MNHP) of the National Park Service (NPS).

Before visiting, please check the NPS website for current park status and alerts:

<https://www.nps.gov/morr/index.htm>

NJHGF News

A summary of the recent changes within the NJHGF.

Getting to know the newest member of the NJHGF Board, Joanne Brenckle, Member at Large:

Editor: We asked Joanne to tell us a bit about herself and her gardening pursuits.

JB: I've been gardening (floral and vegetable) for about 18 years, mainly at my house. Nowadays I plant a container herb and tomato garden but still end up sacrificing a lot to wildlife. I guess they have to eat too.

I started volunteering at Cross in 2020 when I retired after a career in IT. I mainly work in the walled garden but have helped out in Grace's garden a few times.

I'm an avid reader and always have either a book or my Kindle with me. I also love to travel and am trying to visit all 50 states and 7 continents. I have about 16 states and 2 continents left.

While I'm not a fan of winter and the cold I am trying to be more adventurous during the long cold days of winter and went skiing for the first time in February. I'm looking forward to getting back in the gardens as soon as it warms up.

Other Board News: Linda O'Gorman, Newsletter, and George Nixon, Member at Large, were extended for another term. And, Marta McDowell was elected to serve as Membership Chair.



Reclaiming the Water Tower

One of the first things you see as you drive up the road to the Cross Estate Mansion is the top of the five-story stone water tower. And, without the efforts of dedicated New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation volunteers, that might be all you'd see even after you'd parked your car!

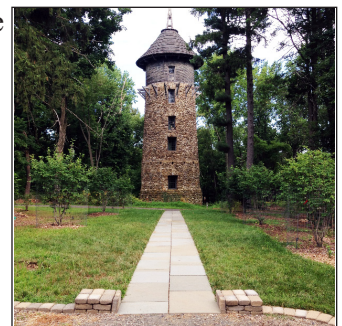
Reclaiming the Water Tower seems often to have been a two-steps-forward-one-step-back process. Here's a brief history of the past two decades of cleanup efforts with a focus on the most recent that is going on now.

In the early 2000s, the view to the tower was opened up slightly by cutting down some of the invasive trees and shrubbery. In 2014, with grant funding from several sources, the volunteers cut down more invasive trees and shrubs, laid a 95-foot bluestone path to the tower, and planted 21 trees and shrubs, completing the work in July 2015.

With no active maintenance in the Water Tower area for a while after that, overgrowth was again a problem

In 2017, cleaning up the area in front of the Water Tower was once again on the minds of the volunteers. As part of the 2018 Work Plan, the Park Service removed the small pond in front of the Tower, leftover from "Mansions in May" in 2003. The volunteers cleared the barberry and invasive weeds, and established a better entrance pathway with wood chips. Four redbuds (two *Cercis canadensis* "Alley Cat" and two *Cercis canadensis* "Forest Pansy") along with four viburnums were planted on either side of the Tower.

After the death of former NJHGF President Phil Pitney in March 2018, the NJHGF Board decided to include signage in the Water Tower area as a memorial to him.



July 2015



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Postponed from 2020 & 2021

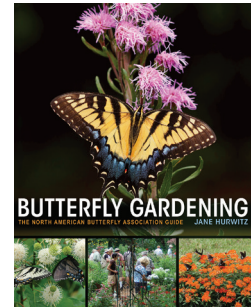
Cross Estate Gardens Annual Talk & Tea:
Jane Hurwitz

on

Butterfly Gardening and the Cross Estate
Thursday, September 22, 2022, 1-3 p.m.

Save the date for our annual talk, featuring Jane Hurwitz, author of *Butterfly Gardening: The North American Butterfly Association Guide*. With a special focus on the butterflies of Cross Estates Gardens, Jane Hurwitz will present a flower-filled slide show that will provide ideas on how to create a haven for butterflies in your yard.

Light refreshments, lovingly prepared by the volunteers of the Cross Estate Gardens, will be served. You'll be able to enjoy tea sandwiches and cookies, coffee and tea, in addition to a lively and informative talk.



Reclaiming the Water Tower (continued)

Problems arose in 2019 with rusted pipes in the valve pit located in front of the Water Tower. The excavation around the valve pit caused considerable disruption to the area. With delays in obtaining parts to repair the valves and piping system, the project was not completed until the winter of 2019/2020.

And then the world was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Park was shut down in March 2020.

May 20, 2020, Cross Estate Gardens was reopened to the public and volunteers. A reduced force of volunteers returned and began to play catch-up on all the work to be done. I found the Water Tower area in rough shape. The excavation around the valve pit and repairs to the piping system, resulted in considerable ruts and piles of dirt. Runoff from rainwater had eroded channels through the wood chips and water was running into the valve pit. So, I began a new restoration of the Water Tower area.

With my rake and shovel, and a vision, I began re-grading the area, creating water diversions to keep the rain runoff away from the valve pit and the pathways. I collected rocks from around the area to establish edging along the front entrance area and create a freestanding, stone, screening wall in an effort to hide the valve pit when looking at the front of the Tower. Another concern was that the wood chips on the sloping entrance were not stable enough to stay in place during heavy rain, and weeding was a constant issue.

Gravel was ordered and dumped to replace the wood chips. As the stone was spread, I expanded the restoration area to include the walkway circling the Tower.

My plan continued to evolve, and as other volunteers slowly returned, I found more help. Penny became a big help with her ideas and efforts to establish maintenance free ground cover wherever possible. She undertook more and more of the work, as I returned to some of my other work areas, such as trimming wisteria!!



~Ethan Hogan

NJHGF Recording Secretary and Volunteer Gardener



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. Please join us every Wednesday morning or whenever your schedule allows. All levels of expertise are welcome. For more information, email info@crossstategardens.org.



Tours of the Cross Estate Gardens

From mid-April through October, if the MNHP is open, tours of the Gardens are available Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Tours take approximately one-half hour. If your group would like to schedule a tour of the gardens, please email info@crossstategardens.org. There is a suggested donation of \$10 per person for group tours.

Please note: tours will be limited to 10 visitors.

Visit Us Online

Be sure to check out the Cross Estate Gardens website at www.crossstategardens.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	\$50
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.