



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

www.crossestategardens.org

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2024

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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Thursday, September 19, 2024, 1-3 p.m., Cross Estate Library

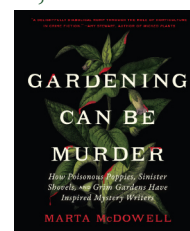
Register early: Members \$30; Non-Members \$35

Mail check to NJHGF, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

“Gardening Can Be Murder”

Talk & Tea with

*Author Marta McDowell and
Illustrator Yolanda Fundora*



The pen and the trowel come together in frightening and exciting ways in the garden-themed murder mystery, a relationship that is brilliantly examined in *Gardening Can Be Murder* (Timber Press), Marta McDowell's latest book masterfully illustrated by Yolanda Fundora.

Join us at the Cross Estate mansion for tea, coffee, and savory and sweet treats prepared by the wonderful CEG Volunteers followed by a thrilling tour of gardening sleuths and garden-savvy murderers. You'll also have the opportunity to buy a copy of the book, signed by author and illustrator, a must have for fans of murder mysteries, whether or not they wield a trowel.

Marta McDowell shares her love of horticulture and garden history through the written and spoken word. More at martamcdowell.com.

Yolanda V. Fundora has been making art in the digital realm since 1985. Besides her fine art, Yolanda designs textiles, illustrates children's books and works with local businesses to create their own unique branding. More at www.towardadigitalaesthetic.com.



Illustration by
Yolanda V. Fundora



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>.

News and reminders from Morristown National Historical Park (MNHP) Cross Estate Gardens

2024 NJHGF Plant Sale: Thank you, shoppers!

Our plant sale in May was another grand success, bringing in over \$5700! And how could it not have been a success with lovely weather and shoppers like Dr. Tom Conroy and John Oakley Higgins, pictured here with two of their purchases, *Zizia aurea* Golden Alexander and *Aurinia saxatilis* basket-of-gold.



Plant Profile: Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)

by Marta McDowell

How do I love Zizia? Let me count the ways:

Its names. “Golden Alexander” reminds me of the ancient Mediterranean world. Indeed it acquired the moniker because of its similarity to another plant, a medicinal herb called Alexander, *Symrnum olustratum*, used by the Romans and named after Alexandria in Egypt where it was thought to originate. The word *Zizia* (honoring German botanist Johann Baptist Ziz) rolls off the tongue. And *aurea* means “gold” in Latin.

Its range. It is native to New Jersey, and its range extends throughout eastern North America from Quebec through Florida and west to Texas and Montana.

Its role in the environment. *Zizia* is a larval host plant for the black swallowtail butterfly (*papilio polyxenes*) and provides accessible pollen and nectar for many beneficial insects.

Its flowers. To me, its blooms look like Fourth of July fireworks. The flowering period lasts for weeks, and the developing seed heads add more interest.

Its ease. A hardy plant that can thrive in sun or part shade, *Zizia* grows in a rounded green clump. It does require some moisture. It blends nicely with other native plants like coneflower (*Echinacea*) and wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*). The only problem you might find with *Zizia* is its tendency to self sow. Remember to remove the seed heads if you don’t want volunteers populating your garden.

More at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ZIAU.



Grants: Thank you, GCSH!

In April we received from the Garden Club of Somerset Hills a \$750 grant to partially fund the cost of 10 yards of 3/8” river stone gravel for the circular driveway.

After the initial machine spreading by MNHP maintenance staff, our volunteers and some from Groundwork Elizabeth (see next page) finished the manual spreading.



Benefits of Membership

Most important: funding horticultural and landscape improvements to the Cross Estate Gardens that you and so many others enjoy.

Besides that, you’ll get discounts at NHHGF events like the upcoming Talk & Tea and early entry to the Annual Plant Sale.

You can join online by following the directions on the “Membership” page of the CEG website crossestategardens.org or by mailing in the form on page 4.

If you plant it, they will come!

Planting “weeds” for butterflies
by Linda O’Gorman and Karen Moore

They may have “weed” in their common names, but these plants are by no means noxious invasives. *Asclepias incarnata* swamp milkweed, *Eutrochium fistulosum* Joe Pye weed, *Veronica noveboracensis* NY ironweed and *Asclepias syriaca* common milkweed are laval plant food for butterflies, and they attract songbirds and bees and other beneficial insects as well.

With an eye toward setting out a caterpillar smorgasbord, over the past several years, Karen Moore (pictured below) has been curating a variety of “weeds” in the meadow area in the middle of the Wild Garden with varying success.

Swamp (and other milkweeds) are known for attracting monarch and other butterflies. The swamp milkweed Karen planted three years ago grew for a couple of years and then disappeared.

Joe Pye weed attracts birds and pollinators. Hoping for short to medium to tall Joe Pye weeds, she selected “Baby Joe” and “Little Joe” to complement the 4-7’ Joe Pye weed that was already there. All grew well, maybe too well: they are all the same size!

NY Ironweed is host to American Lady and Crossline Skipper butterflies. Karen tried moving an ironweed from elsewhere in the Wild Garden as well as growing it from seed before buying three nursery plants last year.

Asclepias syriaca common milkweed is the only source of food for monarch butterfly larvae. Over the last three years, many common milkweed plants have been brought to this area of the Wild Garden. Transplanting milkweed is a little tricky, because it’s difficult to get enough of the taproot, and some of them didn’t make it. Those that did are now thriving and welcoming friends like the monarch caterpillar in the photo on the right. Eggs, chrysalis and emerging butterfly are anxiously awaited.



A green calendar icon with a white date window showing "2025", "May", "3", and "Saturday".

Save the Date!
2025 NJHGF
Cross Estate Gardens
Plant Sale

Groundwork Elizabeth

by Bob Masson (NPS)
and Janet DeMauro (NJHGF)

Groundwork Elizabeth was founded in 2003 and is part of a national network of 21 trusts that share a mission and common approach to work with local communities to educate, improve and enhance the environment. Groundwork Elizabeth has been working at Morristown National Historical Park for a number of years, assisting the park with the preservation and protection of its landscapes. Without Groundwork's assistance, it would be difficult for park staff to keep up with the tasks required to maintain park trails, gardens and the Wick Orchard.

The group that came to CEG on July 10th were a pleasure to work with: hardworking, polite and very interested in learning about the Cross Gardens and the family history.



Call for Volunteers

The NJHGF Cross Estate Gardens Volunteers will always welcome more helpers.

Besides weeding, planting, and pruning in the various gardens, there are planned invasive plant remediation, carpentry and hardscaping projects.

Contact:
info@crossestategardens.org



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

Post Office Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

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Search for Cross Estate Gardens

Become a Member

The Cross Estate Gardens, one of this area's treasures, receives volunteer help but no funding from the National Park Service (who manages the property). We rely upon membership support to pay for the plants and materials for the gardens. Please consider supporting the NJHGF's efforts by joining. Every dollar donated goes into the gardens.

To become a member:

1. Cut this form and send it in with your tax-deductible check, payable to NJHGF (New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation), PO Box 712, Bernardsville, New Jersey 07924. Or
2. Go to the Membership page on our website (<https://www.crossestategardens.org/join/>) and pay via PayPal.

Choose your Membership Category:

- ☐ Individual \$25
- ☐ Family \$50
- ☐ Friend \$100
- ☐ Sponsor \$250
- ☐ Patron \$500

Tell us about your preferences:

- ☐ I prefer to read this Newsletter online
- ☐ I like receiving a print copy of the Newsletter in the mail

Would you like to volunteer:

- ☐ I'd like to help with the gardening on a regular basis
- ☐ I'd like to help with a specific project in the gardens

Tell us who you are:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

email: _____

The NJHGF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.