



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

www.crossestategardens.org

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

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

Joan Ryder

Recording Secretary

Ethan Hogan

Treasurer

Caroline Ford

Committee Chairs

Horticulture: Carolyn Lydon

Membership: Rita Alzamora/David DePodwin

Newsletter: Linda O'Gorman

Publicity: (vacant)

Volunteers: Janet DiMauro

Members at Large

Penny Barnes

Joanne Brenckle

Steve Fogle

Ron Herold

Marta McDowell

George Nixon

Beverly Saadeh

Ex Officio

Acting MNHP Superintendent Jude Pfister

MNHP Management Specialist Anne DeGraaf

MNHP Volunteers Coordinator Eric Olsen

Non-Board Chairs

Website: Letitia Clark

Facebook: Kay Compton

21st Annual NJHGF Cross Estate Gardens Plant Sale

**Saturday, May 3, 2025
9-10am, Members only
10am-noon, All guests**

**Come for
the selection of
native and non-native
perennials,
trees and shrubs.**

**Stay for a visit to our
beautiful gardens.**

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, Cross Estate Gardens and the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation (NJHGF)

Won't you help us?

Excerpt from Membership Co-Chair Rita Alzamora's 2025 appeal

"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden." ~ Minnie Aumonier



Though there are many forms of gardens, one universal truth about them is that they are never static. They are living and breathing and there is always work to be done. Even as we are leaving Cross after finishing our Wednesday workday, we are making mental notes on what needs to be done the following week.

Won't you help us? If you are physically able to join the workgroup, we would love to have you. Else, please consider a membership or donation. As a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we receive no funding from the Federal, State or local governments. All donations received are used for the stewardship of the Cross Estate Gardens.

Membership or donations can be made by completing and mailing the form on page 4 or at www.crossestategardens.org

Safety First

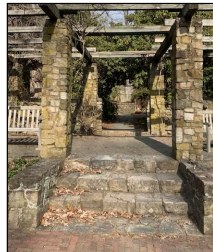
Grants enable installation of new railings

The granite boulder steps in the Walled Garden at the Cross Estate have always been beautiful to look at, adding a warm, natural element to the landscape design. Now, with the addition of railings fabricated and installed by White Iron Welding & Railing of Morris Plains, they are also safer.

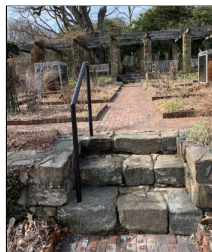
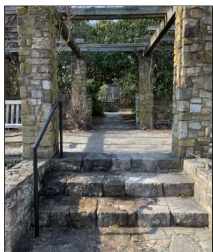
The NJHGF is very grateful to the Friends of Jockey Hollow and the Garden Club of Somerset Hills for their generous grants that funded this project.

Come see and use our new railings as you explore the Walled Garden. Then meander as you wish along the paths in the Wild Garden, around the mansion, and through Grace's Garden across the field next to the shed.

Before...



After!



Call for Volunteers

The NJHGF Cross Estate Gardens Volunteers will always welcome more helpers Wednesday mornings from April through mid-November.

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

And, sometimes, we go on fun outings together. See photo below of some of our volunteers at the Seward Johnson Sculpture Exhibit at Willowood Arboretum.



Join our fabulous group of Volunteers today!

Contact:
info@crossestategardens.org

Picola Japanese Umbrella Pine, *Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Picola'

A Dwarf neither Grumpy nor Dopey

A Plant Profile by Marta McDowell



If you visited the Cross Estate Gardens over the winter, you may have noticed some new evergreen interest. Last September, we planted a special dwarf umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Picola') behind the mansion and across the lawn. For this new specimen, we thank former Board member, volunteer, and plant wiz Hollace Bowers, now living in South Carolina. (We miss you, Hollace!)

The cultivar Hollace chose—'Picola'—is a dwarf selection. According to catalog descriptions, it should only grow 3-5" each year and keep its compact, conical shape. Introduced by G.D. Böhlje Nursery of Germany, it was given Conifer of the Year honors by the American Conifer Society in 2012. Deer resistant and a sun lover, it should like its spot along the stone wall at the Cross Estate.

In general, umbrella pines may be a tad lonely, as they are the only surviving member (genus) of an ancient plant family. It is no relation of the familiar pines of our northern forests, residential landscapes, and Christmas tree farms. Native to Japan, this tree has whorls of long, flat needles resembling the spines of an umbrella. Its mouthful of a scientific name (pronounced *sigh-uh-DOP-ih-tiss ver-ti-si-LAH-tuh*, according to the North Carolina USDA Extension Service) taken from the Greek also means (roughly) "umbrella pine with whorled leaves."

We welcome this new immigrant to its new home at the Cross Estate Gardens with its collection of native and introduced tree species.

An Interview with former CEG Board member and volunteer Hollace Bowers about 'Picola'

We asked Hollace to tell us more about her choice of 'Picola' and about some of her favorite features of this little beauty. Here's what she had to say:

"When I was living in NJ, I had a 'full sized' *sciadopitys verticillata* with its great bark and needle attributes – just a lovely, lovely tree. And then I read about the Picola selection in a gardening magazine.



"Well, I was running out of space and just had to have it. The article listed a nursery that I had dealt with before that was offering 'Picola'. The only catch was it was out of stock. So I signed up for 'notify me when product is available for shipping.' And, eight or nine years later, they did notify me.

"Even though I'd now moved to a southern location by then, I felt duty bound to buy it and donate it to my ol' stumping grounds, the Cross Estate Gardens, where I knew it would be taken care of and appreciated."

Save the Date!



NJHGF Cross Estate Gardens Talk & Tea

Featuring:

Marta McDowell
discussing

New Ideas from English Gardens



Wake up your beds and borders with fresh inspiration from across the pond. This lecture takes a peek at design techniques and plant combinations from contemporary gardens showcased at the Chelsea Flower Show as well as the designers and horticulturists responsible for breathing new life into historic gardens like Great Dixter and the Chelsea Physic Garden. You will see how those ideas have shaped my garden and how they might influence yours.

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

Please note that this year's Talk & Tea will take place on a Tuesday, rather than the usual Thursday, afternoon.



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

Post Office Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

www.crossestategardens.org



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.