



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

www.crossestategardens.org

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2025

Talk & Tea

Tuesday, September 9, 2025, 1-3 p.m., Cross Estate Library

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

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

“New Ideas from English Gardens”

A discussion with Marta McDowell

Our Talk & Tea is on a Tuesday this year!

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 Marta’s garden and how they might influence yours.

Join us at the Cross Estate mansion for tea, coffee, and savory and sweet treats prepared by the wonderful CEG Volunteers followed by this inspiring talk.



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

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>.

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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News and reminders from Morristown National Historical Park, Cross Estate Gardens and the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation (NJHGF)

In Memoriam: Mary Sambrook, 1941 - 2025



We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of long-time volunteer and NJHGF Trustee, Mary Sambrook (Mrs. Rodney) in June at the age of 83. As Board Horticulturist for 20 years, Mary greatly added to the Walled Garden and also designed the serpentine walkway through the Wild Garden.

Mary left the Cross Estate Gardens Volunteers in 2004 to return to England. As you can see in the article below, she was dearly loved by her fellow volunteers.

Next time you're strolling through the Wild Garden, stop by the Twisted Weeping Redbud in the Wild Garden, which was planted in Mary's honor on April 13, 2005.

Cross Estate Gardens Newsletter Spring 2005

New Tree in the Native Garden

On April 13, the volunteers at the Cross Estate gathered in the Native Plant Area to plant a tree in honor of Mary Sambrook.

It was the best location for it because Mary worked so hard to develop that area. As Steve Palmer dug the hole, we all enjoyed the beautiful weather and remembered the good times we had when Mary was with us.

The tree had to be special, so Joan Ryder chose a Twisted Weeping Redbud *Cercis canadensis* "Covey" (Mary Sambrookii, as far as we are concerned).

After the planting, Steve blessed the event as follows: "We plant this tree in honor of Mary Sambrook for her years of dedicated service and care for the Cross Estate Gardens. Also for her passion for gardening. We plant this tree with our love for Mary and her love for us."

Using Deer Park bottled water and a break-time paper coffee cup, Steve blessed the tree: "In the name of God our Creator; In the name of all that is great and wonderful; In the name of the Holy Spirit, we bless this tree."

Somehow it seemed appropriate to all of us that a weeping tree was planted because we will always miss Mary.

The event was a nice tribute to her but also a sincere expression of the spirit among the volunteers—something that was started from the very beginning with Jean Pope.



Cercis canadensis 'Covey'
April 13, 2005

'Covey' is a very small weeping cultivar [...]. Clusters of tiny, lavender-pink, pea-like flowers bloom [...] in early spring [...] before the foliage emerges. Heart-shaped foliage [...] with red tinting, matures to a dull, dark blue-green and finally turns yellow in fall. This weeping redbud was discovered growing at the private residence of Connie Covey in Westfield, New York, in 1991.

Excerpt from Missouri Botanical Garden website.



Cercis canadensis 'Covey'
July 16, 2025

Membership Benefits

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 NJHGF 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.



Call for Volunteers

The NJHGF Cross Estate Gardens Volunteers always welcomes 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.

Contact:
info@crossestategardens.org



To This Year's
Plant Sale
Shoppers,

Thank you for
making this sale
another grand
success!
We raised \$6,000
for the gardens
we all love.

Celebrating 20+ years of volunteerism: Fred Aufschlager

As the Volunteer Coordinator, I want to thank Fred for being such a valuable member of our team at the Cross Estate Gardens! Fred has been a shining example of what it means to be a dedicated volunteer, sharing his many expertises over the years to improve the Gardens. Fred will be greatly missed!
~ Janet DiMauro

Fred's Story: A son of immigrants, born in Manhattan, raised in Brooklyn and Queens (summers in Noyac/Sag Harbor), and a graduate of Brooklyn Tech. H.S., I made it into what is now called SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, determined to become a forest ranger. Soon finding that there were very few jobs (and very low pay) in this profession, I switched lanes into Landscape Architecture (an amalgam of engineering, architecture, art, dendrology and horticulture).

After receiving a B.S. in Forestry, L.A. major, and unable to land a job during a national recession, I entered U.S. Navy OCS and was commissioned an Ensign, subsequently spending four years in the air Navy as an Air Controller/ Bombardier Officer in the AWACS aircraft of that time, based in Newfoundland.



Doris and I were married (OLPH Church in Bernardsville) during most of that time, she having become a "Navy Wife".

I then went on to Syracuse University for a Master of Regional Planning degree, and then, while working full time, completed all but dissertation toward a Doctor of Social Science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship (SU). The latter quest was cut short when the University was shut down by student protests and our need to support a growing family.

After a 34-year career as a professional planner in Maryland with state and county planning agencies, I retired moved to Doris's childhood home in Bernardsville, with time on my hands. There, I responded to Board member Phil Pitney's request in the *Bernardsville News* for volunteers and started working at NJHGF in 2002. My educational background provided me with skills that would be useful in the gardens.

Over 20+ years, I have done a variety of tasks: building benches and improving drainageways; laying pavers, bluestone and bricks, and weeding and spreading woodchips to maintain and rejuvenate paths; composting beds; nurturing Dawn Redwood seedlings from the garden for the next year's plant sale; building rock walls and replacing fencing; planting, transplanting and pruning—and identifying and mapping—trees and shrubs; researching and preparing a report for the redesign of the dying Mountain Laurel Allee; training other volunteers; and (with a lot of help) doing the annual end-to-end pruning of the wisteria pergola. I also volunteered for 20 years at Somerset County's Buck Garden assisting the professional gardeners in maintaining the seven acre rock garden.

Many (too many) other interests have claimed my time. These include bonsai Artistry, attending RVCC to learn to make ceramic bonsai pots, constructing stone patio, walls, walkways and steps, landscaping, gardening, paper and glass collage making, firing our kilns to produce Doris's sculptures and my pots, and remaining a part of our three children's lives.

It has been quite a ride.

A decorative border made of holly leaves and red berries, framing the text in the lower half of the page.

It's never too early to start your holiday shopping!

And what could be easier than giving a donation in someone's honor to the NJHGF?

Holiday cheer and year-round enjoyment; beautiful spring, summer, autumn and winter!

Donations by check payable to NJHGF can be mailed to
NJHGF, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

Or click on the **Donate** button on our website www.crossestategardens.org



The Cross Estate Gardens

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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.