



The Cross Estate Gardens

New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation

www.crossestategardens.org

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

Talk & Tea

Thursday, September 17, 2026, 1-3 p.m., Cross Estate Library

Register early: Members \$30; Non-Members \$35
Mail check to NJHGF, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, NJ 07924

Beatrix Potter's Botanical: The Art of Flowers and Fungi

by Marta McDowell

Please note the scheduling change.

This event will now take place on September 17, 2026

Marta is looking forward to sharing with you the plant connections of one of her favorite subjects: Beatrix Potter.

An independent woman ahead of her time, Potter earned her own income in spite of her privileged upbringing.

She was a botanical artist from an early age and developed her own unique style. She might have been a scientific illustrator. But combined with her imaginative animal character, Potter became one of the most beloved children's author-illustrators in the world.

Beatrix Potter's Botanical is a stunning volume of Potter's drawings accompanied by Marta's superb essays. All that and a traditional afternoon tea as well! Don't miss this event.

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



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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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)

Two Important Capital Improvement Projects

Gate Replacement

The pergola wasn't the only thing destroyed when the 90-year-old Silver Maple split and came crashing down; the west gate into the Walled Garden was crushed as well.

Thanks to dedicated volunteers Steve Fogle and Mike Kurek, that gate has been replaced.

Their next project is to replace the wooden gate at the eastern end of the pergola, which they found to be beyond repair.



The Historic Mountain Laurel Allée

The first garden behind the wall has long been called the Mountain Laurel Allée. This is because Mrs. Cross and her gardener, Mr. Sailer, planted the entrance garden with *Kalmia latifolia* underplanted with white periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) circa 1950 for the wedding of her youngest daughter Mary in 1951.

Since then, with New Jersey's growing deer population and the maturing shade trees, conditions changed and the *Kalmia* have declined. Their new growth is often browsed by the deer, and invasive plants have taken over much of the space.

With a generous grant from the New Jersey Committee of the Garden Club of America, we are reworking the garden with a plant palette of at least 70 percent native species and cultivars. Shrubs were planted this spring with the help of Hall's Nursery in Berkeley Heights. Volunteers have planted many perennials including ferns, golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*), heartleaf foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), striped cream violet (*Viola striata*), and ginger (*Asarum canadense*).

Come see our progress on the restoration of this lovely space!



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

At a loss for the perfect holiday gift for someone in your life?

Consider a donation to NJHGF in their honor.

Click on the **DONATE** button on our website.



Pergola Project: An Update from NJHGF President Joan Ryder

NJHGF has entered into a contract with John Cortese Masons, incorporating the 4-page Repair Specifications from Morristown National Historical Park. The rebuilding of at least eight stone pillars and the repair of the stone wall along the pergola will be done by Cortese Masons in September, for a cost of \$27,800, which NJHGF will pay. The historic hundred-year old pergola will then be safe for visitors to walk through and enjoy.



Through generous grants from local garden clubs of Somerset Hills, Madison, Watnong, and Friends of Jockey Hollow, plus generous donations from individuals and many of our NJHGF members, we are close to reaching our financial goal. If you would like to help us finally reach that goal, please use the QR code to make a PayPal donation. Thank you.



Eagle Scout Project at Cross Estate Gardens

by Will Gingrich

As part of my Eagle Scout service project with Troop 34, I had the privilege of leading a habitat restoration effort at Cross Estate Gardens. The goal of the project was to improve a section of the property by removing invasive plant species, preparing the area for future native plantings, and creating a cleaner and safer environment for visitors and wildlife.

Before any work began, I met with the Cross Estate Gardens staff to review the project plan. Together, we confirmed the exact 20,000-square-foot restoration area and selected the locations for two stump benches that will provide future visitors with places to rest and enjoy the gardens. We then marked the restoration boundaries and bench locations using flags and natural markers so that all volunteers clearly understood the work area.

On the day of the project, Troop 34 volunteers began by clearing debris and removing surface-level hazards throughout the restoration site. Before using any tools, everyone participated in a safety briefing that covered poison ivy identification, tick prevention, and proper tool safety. We also established hydration, first aid, and supply stations to ensure the health and safety of every volunteer throughout the day.

Once preparations were complete, our team focused on removing invasive plant species. Volunteers carefully identified target plants and worked to remove as much of the root systems as possible to reduce the chance of regrowth. The removed vegetation was collected in lawn bags and transported to the designated disposal location. Throughout the project, Scouts worked together efficiently while taking care to protect the surrounding native environment.

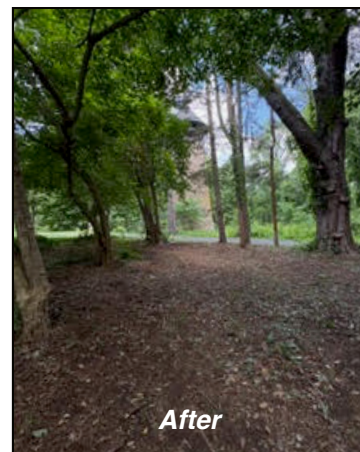
This project was an outstanding example of the values of Scouting in action. Troop 34 demonstrated teamwork, leadership, and a commitment to conservation while contributing meaningful service to the community. I am incredibly grateful to the Scouts, adult leaders, family members, and the staff at Cross Estate Gardens for their hard work and support. Their dedication made this project a success, and I hope the restored area will benefit visitors and local wildlife for many years to come.



Before



*Eagle Scout Project Team
led by Will Gingrich (center in red hard hat)*



After



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.