

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

May 2022 – Potting Shed Mid-Month Update

SPOTLIGHT ON . . . VOLUNTEER SITES

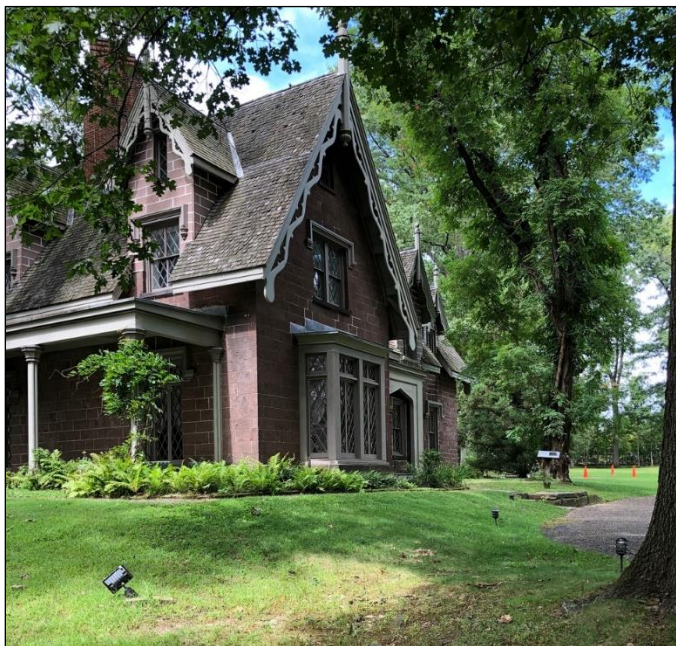


Photo by Liz Gil

The Hermitage: A house and gardens surrounded by 250 years of history

Volunteer days and hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:30 am-noon. The Hermitage is located at 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus. Visit the [website](#).

What's unique about your volunteer site? The Hermitage is a National Historic Landmark celebrating more than 250 years of local and national history and tells the story of an exciting period during the birth of our nation. The restored house sits as a jewel in the center of the property with gardens surrounding the house. The site hosts varied events throughout the year including Civil War encampments, food and music festivals, craft shows, book readings, and historical lectures. Check the Hermitage [website](#) for event information.

In a sentence or two what would you say to encourage an MG or MG student to volunteer at your site? The grounds of the Hermitage are beautiful and mostly tree canopied with the herb and vegetable

(Volunteer sites, continued on page 2)

Contents	Page
Spotlight on . . . Volunteer Sites (continued)	2-3
Webinars	4
Horticulture	4
Five Questions for . . . Tammy Laverty	5
Things to Do	5
Plant Sales	6
Horticulture Grapevine	6

Links are clickable and are noted in [blue](#).

Virtual meeting – May 24

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow.

Click [here](#) to join the meeting at 7:15 pm.

Meeting ID: 926 9258 8641; password: 692429

David Robinson: New Jersey's Changing Climate

Within the past decade, New Jersey has experienced its wettest and warmest years in more than a century of observations. Extreme events — including Ida, Sandy, and Irene plus hot summers — suggest that something is happening to NJ's climate patterns. Natural variations alone cannot account for these New Jersey (and global) anomalies.

Dr. David Robinson is a distinguished professor of geography at Rutgers University and has been New Jersey's state climatologist for the past 30 years. Dave will explore the physical dimensions of the issue, both short and long term.



David Robinson

In his presentation, he will emphasize weather and climate impacts on agriculture and gardening and will provide information on how interested individuals can contribute to the monitoring of weather/climate conditions in the local region by participating in the Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network and how they may follow current weather conditions via the [Rutgers New Jersey Weather Network](#).

(Volunteer sites, continued from page 1)

gardens sitting in the prime, sunny spots. The site offers you the opportunity to work with a vegetable garden, flower gardens, and woodland gardens. It is a peaceful setting with a hint of how life might have felt centuries ago in Bergen County.

What do you do during a typical volunteer shift?

How many MGs show up? One of the pleasures of working at the Hermitage is that the tasks can vary depending in which garden you choose to work. The vegetable garden is a relatively new addition that's still a work in progress. We've had success with tomatoes, potatoes, kohlrabi, and beans plus a few others. We're hoping to increase its viability so if you have a particular skill or interest in growing vegetables, come lend a hand.

The area adjacent to the parking lot is being converted from hard-packed turf to a dry woodland garden where adding plants or keeping down the number of invasive ones is an ongoing task. The herb gardens need restoring to bring order to the overgrown patches. The flower gardens are beginning their succession of blooms, but the bullies need taming, and the weeds need to be wrestled out of the garden beds. There are many tasks to choose from depending on how energetic you are feeling that day.

From one to six volunteers have been typical, but special events such as maple sugaring have brought in a crowd of a dozen or more. Our numbers are down since Covid, but we hope our friends will be back to volunteer in this safe, outdoor space.

Do volunteers work as a group? Individually? Please describe.

That depends on the project or task for the day, but it's always pleasant to work with a friend. Simple tasks such as weeding go faster when done together and allow for conversation. Pruning of shrubs or bushes may need to be done solo as focus will help prevent unwanted cuts and keep the plant from being over-pruned. Most projects can be done together as a team but if someone prefers to spend their time alone with nature, there is space to spread out on the property.

Are any special skills needed at your site? Any skill set, energy level, or contribution is welcome. Work up a sweat or just soak in the peaceful setting while doing what you are capable of. It's up to you.

Is the work physically demanding? It can be, when loading mulch or digging, but you can choose a less strenuous activity.

What, if anything, should volunteers bring with them? There are tools in the shed but bring your favorites. Water and tick repellent are always smart.

Where do you park? Parking is plentiful and near to the activity, tool shed, and the new bathrooms.



Photo by Liz Gil

There's plenty to do in the multiple gardens at the Hermitage.

Are there any volunteer opportunities at your site that are not strictly "gardening"? The maple sugaring event is the most popular non-gardening activity. One can learn the art and science of collecting the sap and turning it into golden maple syrup. There's also an active season of events and lectures held on the property throughout the year with some requiring help from our MGs.

What projects are planned at your site in 2022? For the master plan, we'd like to develop environmental programs such as a butterfly release, etc., for schools and scout groups. Ideally, most new programs will harken back to the Colonial and Victorian eras of the museum. We'd also like to dry more of our herbs and flowers for sale in the new gift shop to support the Hermitage.

Site coordinators: Liz Gil, text to 908-456-5245, liz14gil@gmail.com and Nancy Moses, 201-445-2532, nawmoses@yahoo.com

- Information from Liz Gil, Class of 2019

(Volunteer sites, continued on page 3)

(Volunteer sites, continued from page 2)



Photos courtesy of Don Torino, Bergen Audubon

Native honeysuckle blooms profusely on the arbor at the entrance to the Butterfly and Native Garden.

Butterfly and Native Garden: The focus is on butterflies, moths, and birds

Volunteer days and hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 am-1 pm until November, weather permitting. The Butterfly and Native Garden is located in Overpeck Park, 40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia. There is no website.

What's unique about your site? This site started as a small milkweed patch among non-native invasive plants and has been developed into an oasis of ecological balance with native plants focusing on the needs of butterflies, moths, and birds. If you have an interest in working and learning about native plants and their role in the environment, come join us.

What do you do during a typical volunteer shift?

How many MGs show up? Our work involves controlling invasive plants, weeding, digging, planting, and watering. Each session a walkabout survey is done, and tasks are prioritized. Two MGs show up and one to three other volunteers. For special planting projects, 10-20 people show up.

Do volunteers work as a group? Individually? Please describe. Much of the work can be done individually or with a partner. It depends on the task and how comfortable the volunteer is working independently.

Are any special skills needed at your site? A

knowledge of native plants is not necessary but wanting to learn and embrace a naturalist vision will be great.

Is the work physically demanding? There isn't a lot of heavy lifting but plenty of weeding and digging in clay soil.

What, if anything, should volunteers bring with them? We have some larger hand tools, such as shovels, and a few smaller hand tools. Volunteers should wear long trousers tucked into socks, long-sleeve shirts, sturdy shoes, and a hat. Bring bug spray, sunscreen, gloves, and the hand tools you're comfortable with. It's a good idea to bring water and snacks.

Where do you park? Parking is within walking distance of the garden in a non-paved area. Finding the parking area is a little tricky the first time so contact us for directions.

What projects are planned at your site in 2022? Our projects are more like events and field trips.

- June 26: Ongoing tours of the garden, 10 am-1 pm.
- July 9: Ongoing tours of the garden, 10 am-1 pm.
- First week of August (TBD): Hummingbird Day at the garden.



Describe what historical significance your site has.

Don't know if restoring native plants to create an ecological habitat is historically significant. We think it's satisfying and rewarding.

Anything else you want to mention? Restrooms are available within walking distance at the equestrian center.

Site coordinators: Pat Knight, 201-848-0069, gspmk@hotmail.com; Tammy Laverty, 201-449-9092, dwd12345@gmail.com; and Don Torino, Bergen County Audubon, greatauk4@gmail.com

- Information from Pat Knight, Class of 2009

WEBINARS

For your convenience, all times are Eastern.

May 18, 12:30-1:30 pm: University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension sponsors How to Grow Luffa Gourds. Free. Click [here](#) for a list of Season Three Horticulture Webinar Wednesdays and to register.

May 18, 7-8:30 pm: Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors Native Plants and the Invasive Plants They Replace. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 19, 10-11 am: North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Buncombe County Center sponsors Incredible Edible Landscaping. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 19, 1 pm: National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts about New Vegetable Varieties. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 25, 12:30-1:30 pm: University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension sponsors Drip Irrigation for Small Backyard Gardens. Free. Click [here](#) for a list of Season Three Horticulture Webinar Wednesdays and to register.

May 26, 1-2:30 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Introduction to Botanical Art and Illustration (virtual art class). Free. AARP membership not required. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Save the date for the RMG conference

Saturday, Oct. 15: The Rutgers Master Gardener annual conference will be a hybrid event. An in-person audience at the Cook Student Center in New Brunswick will be limited to 150 attendees. Others can attend virtually. Details to follow when available.

Philadelphia Flower Show

'In Full Bloom' June 11-19
outdoors at FDR Park
Click [here](#) for more information
and to buy tickets

HORTICULTURE



Photo courtesy of Bruce Crawford

Red stem and flowers of *Polygonatum odoratum* "Ruby Slippers."

Solomon's seal: Ground huggers to knee-deep varieties

Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, has chosen Solomon's seal as his May plant of the month.

By Bruce Crawford

As a gardener, I am always searching for interesting, low-growing plants to incorporate into designs. A garden will have more depth and visual interest if the lower levels, typically home to herbaceous plants, do not all mature to the same height. Rather, it is best if there is a variety, ranging from ground-hugging forms to those near knee height. As one might suspect, it is the ground-hugging forms that are the most challenging to find, especially plants that do not spread uncontrollably. . . Click [here](#) to read more.

May garden chores

Visit the Garden Club of New Jersey website for [Gardening Notes](#), a list of things to do in the garden in May. The tips come from Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission. Bruce's recommendations are to pinch back, prune, edge, and plant this month. And, for houseplants, it's time to repot, fertilize, and get your plants outdoors.

Soil savvy podcast

Click [here](#) for the "Soil Savvy Part 1" episode of the "Ask the Agent" podcast produced by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station. What's the best \$20 you'll ever spend on your garden? Listen and learn.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR . . .

Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015, answers five questions for The Potting Shed. Tammy is the site coordinator, along with Pat Knight, at the Butterfly and Native Garden in Leonia. Pre-Covid, she also volunteered occasionally at the Teaneck Creek Conservancy for the Bergen County Audubon Society.

1. What prompted you to become a Master Gardener?

I had attended a few Master Gardener lectures in Hackensack. The group was friendly and the information about gardening was interesting, so I took the next step and signed up for the Master Gardener program.



Tammy Laverty

2. What's the most important thing you've learned or been exposed to as a Master Gardener?

I've learned to appreciate the multi-tasking role that native plants play in our environment. It is very heartening to see traditional gardeners

incorporating some native plants into their established gardens. It does good and it looks great, too!

3. Have your interests in gardening changed over time? If so, how? I would say my gardening interests have expanded, from a few houseplants when I lived in an apartment, to now include doing veggie test trials in my [Ridgefield Park] Community Garden for Seed Savers, and my very favorite gardening — habitat building with native plants.

4. Briefly describe your own garden. Do you have a home garden project planned this season? If so, what is it? My small urban yard with close neighbors, was originally grass, privet hedges, and a nice old oak tree. Over the last ten-ish years, I've been shrinking the grass and adding planting beds. I have enjoyed stuffing the beds with native perennials and shrubs.

Because my experiment with "winter sowing" seeds in jugs has been successful in the past, I got a little carried away this year and winter-sowed over 50 jugs of native plants. So now, in spring, the seedlings are just starting to emerge and my head is spinning with planting and gifting plans!

5. Describe how your volunteer work with Bergen Audubon and the MG of BC ties together. The idea that migrating birds see my little backyard as a way station on their trip sparked a "can do" spirit in me. As you know, Bergen Audubon not only cares for birds, but looks at the whole picture of nature and how all living things are interconnected. I enjoy learning more and being a habitat helper. Watching the behavior of birds, picking through leaves, finding seeds on their favorite trees, and using fluff and twigs for nests is wonderful.

THINGS TO DO

'Habitat Helpers' needed May 22, June 12, 19 at the NY-NJ Trail Conference HQ

Sign up to work as a "Habitat Helper" in the native plant landscape at the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference headquarters, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah. The Trail Conference headquarters is one of the MG of BC volunteer sites.

- Click [here](#) to sign up for the workday from 9 am-noon, May 22.
- Click [here](#) to sign up for the workday from 9 am-noon, June 12.
- Click [here](#) to sign up for the workday from 9 am-noon, June 19.

Bring work gloves, your favorite garden tools (if you have any), and dress for the weather. You'll be pruning, weeding, planting, and mulching.

Ridgefield Park 'green fair' May 21

The Ridgefield Park Environmental Commission hosts its Earth Day/Green Fair 2022 from 10 am-5 pm, May 21 at Riverside Park, 24 Industrial Ave., behind the Dept. of Public Works. MG of BC volunteers will have an information table so come by to say hello. Other activities include music, shows, face painting, canoe and boat rides, and refreshments.

MGs of Bergen and Passaic Counties

You're invited to a garden tour

Home of Janet Schulz, Class of 1988
16 Colonial Drive, Wyckoff
May 18, 10 am-4 pm
Park on the street

PLANT SALES

May 21, 8 am-noon, rain or shine: Allendale Garden Club, Lee Memorial Library grounds, 500 W. Crescent Ave., Allendale. Variety of plants from members' gardens and locally grown at nurseries.

May 21, approximately 12:30 pm: Tri-State Hosta Society, 93 Intervale Road, Boonton (home of Roberta and Dave Chopko of the Tri-State Hosta Society). Non-members can buy a \$10 one-year membership on site to attend. Click [here](#) to read the society's newsletter for a description of the plants for sale.

Through June 1 or while supplies last: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County. Order native plants online for pickup from 9:30 am-noon, June 4 at Davidson Mill Pond Park, 42 Riva Ave., South Brunswick. Click [here](#) for more information and to order "plug trays" (10 plants to cover 40 square feet) and "gardens" (eight plants to cover 32 square feet).

HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

May 19, 7 pm, Garden Club of Teaneck, Rodda Center, Room 1, 250 Colonial Court, Teaneck. Enter on Palisade Avenue and drive up the hill to the rear parking lot. Note: The room may have a "do not enter" sign; it's not for the garden club meeting. Speaker: Patrick Lee. Topic: All About Worms. Click [here](#) for more information.

Share your hobbies, talents, interests

Do you draw, make origami, or sculpt? How about run half-marathons, bake artisan bread, or collect model trains or thimbles? We'd like to see you in an environment other than a garden. Send a photo of yourself enjoying your hobby and a description to [Miriam Taub](#), Class of 2011. Photos will appear in a future issue of the *Potting Shed*.



Photos by Donna Faustini

Donna rocks those rocks!

Last issue, we asked readers to share what you do in addition to gardening. Donna Faustini, Class of 2012, provided a list of hobbies and interests: Cross-stitching, camping, crocheting, canning and preserving, and painting rocks, like the photos here.

"I saw various posts on Pinterest of rocks and decided to try it out. I found it to be extremely relaxing and almost meditative. I started doing this about five years ago and continue to do projects for my garden or [for] gifts. I am always on the hunt for new ideas! I use acrylic paints and a clear Rustoleum spray for protection. Sometimes I will buy either river rocks or Caribbean stone or use rocks I find."

