



# MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK SYSTEM GREEN HERITAGE

The Newsletter of Monmouth County's Open Space, Parks & Recreation Agency

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## Winter Is Coming HOW TO STAY ACTIVE IN (Y)OUR PARKS

Zack Karvelas, Assistant Public Information Officer

**D**uring the winter, some people are like bears and run inside and throw the blankets over themselves counting down the days until the first spring flower sprouts from the ground. Whether you'd rather stay inside somewhere warm or experience the exhilaration and beauty of our winter landscapes, the Monmouth County Park System offers endless options for staying active. Let's take a look at just a few...

### OUTDOORS:

Looking to spend time outdoors with a guide or instructor? Learn how to experience some of your favorite trails in the snow with **Cross-Country Ski Experience** at Thompson Park, Lincroft.

Explore the nature of winter with a Naturalist during our free winter nature walks: **Casual Birder** and **Wondrous Winter Walks**. Or take a short hike with your little one with fun activities along the way during **Hiking Adventures – A Toddlers Perspective**.

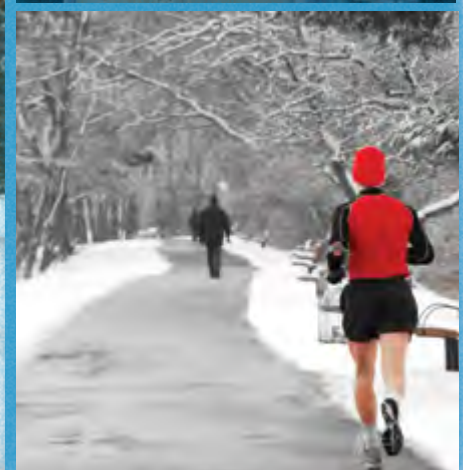
### TRAILS

From easy to challenging, fitness to nature, there are currently over 140 miles of trails in your Monmouth County Park System. Trails offer a place to take a leisurely walk, go for a run or bike with friends or family. Walking just 20 minutes a day can cut your risk of heart disease by 30% and can also reduce your risk of diabetes and cancer. It's also less stressful on the joints and offers up a more relaxing activity.

Running offers a more cardiovascular workout, burning more calories than a typical walk in the park. This makes running a great way to not only stay fit, like walking does, but also to maintain a healthy weight. When running the trails in winter, be sure to remember to bring water. Though it may be cold outdoors, it's still very important to keep your body hydrated.

Bicycling is very similar when it comes to health benefits. Like walking and running, bicycling increases cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, and prevention of disease. It also improves joint mobility and coordination. The Park System's trails are great for bicycling whether you're looking for an easy, slow-paced ride on a paved trail, such as at Thompson Park, or a more challenging ride through a park like Hartshorne Woods Park.

*Continues next page...*





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## CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

The perfect way to mix cardiovascular outdoor activity with the snow winter can bring with it! Cross-country skiing offers a high-caliber, full body workout that burns calories and builds muscle. The Park System makes it easy to get in on this sport without investing in costly equipment. From December 15 through March 15 when snow conditions are permitting, cross-country ski equipment is available for rent at the Thompson Park Ski Hut. Rental costs are \$20 per set, with children 8 & under for \$15.00 per set; cash, check or credit card are accepted. (Snowshoe rentals are also available.)

It's important to note that trails are not cleared of snow during the winter. So, when there is snow cover, consider your ability level and your gear before trekking out to the parks. Proper footwear on winter surfaces is a must.



At Thompson Park, cross-country ski trails are groomed when there is enough snow and conditions are favorable. The Park System also offers marked, ungroomed trails for both cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at Clayton Park, Hartshorne Woods Park, Holmdel Park, Huber Woods Park, Shark River Park, Tatum Park, and Turkey Swamp Park. For the most up-to-date information on winter activity conditions, visit us at [www.MonmouthCountyParks.com](http://www.MonmouthCountyParks.com).

## ICE SKATING

Get ready to lace up your skates when the "Skating Today" signs are posted at Holmdel Park, Shark River Park or Turkey Swamp Park. Ice skating is a terrific way to build and tone leg muscles while also providing a great aerobic workout. Depending on how hard you skate, ice skating can also burn between 300-650 calories per hour.

It normally takes approximately one week to 10 days of subfreezing temperatures to produce safe skating conditions. When the ice is considered safe, skating hours are from 8:00 AM-7:00 PM Sunday-Thursday, and from 8:00 AM-9:00 PM Friday and Saturday. For the most up-to-date information on winter activity conditions, visit us at [www.MonmouthCountyParks.com](http://www.MonmouthCountyParks.com).







## INDOORS:

Would you prefer to be indoors during the cold weather? Go on a **Deep Cut Gardens Greenhouse Tour** to get the inside scoop on the unique plants from our horticulturist.



Whether you're looking to lose a few pounds, stay active or get healthier this winter, the Monmouth County Park System has plenty of fitness programs to help you achieve your goals. Get some exercise with one of our many fitness programs, such as **Barre Connect**, **Pilates Mat Workout**, **Yoga for Baby Boomers** or **Total Body**. Discover new recipes through culinary art classes like **Chocolate Making Basics** or **Custom Cookie Decorating with Fondant**. And if you're ready to get crafty, be sure to check out instructional



classes such as **Beginner Drawing for Adults**, **Beginner Soap Making** or **Beginner Sewing and Beyond** that are sure to give you the inspiration and foundations of experiencing something new.



No matter what you're looking for, be sure to check out the current issue of our **Parks & Programs Guide**. Registration is currently available online 24/7 at [www.MonmouthCountyParks.com](http://www.MonmouthCountyParks.com) or by phone at 732-842-4000, ext. 1, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Don't let the winter weather bring you down and keep you hostage indoors. Go out in your parks, have some fun and stay healthy. We'll see you there!



# Historic Sites Inventory

Kristen Hohn, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist

Once described as “a garden by the sea,” Monmouth County has a rich historical legacy shaped by its bountiful farmland, scenic coastline and proximity to two major metropolitan areas. But exactly what are Monmouth County’s historical qualities? More precisely, what buildings, structures, and places signify the county’s historical identity? As the county changes and grows, what historic features are worth preserving and why?

The Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory, the first comprehensive survey of the county’s architectural and historic resources, is an important first step in answering these questions. The purpose of the project was to identify and to document buildings and structures which are significant to and/or representative of the county’s history, culture, and architecture.

*-Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Summary Report, 2020*



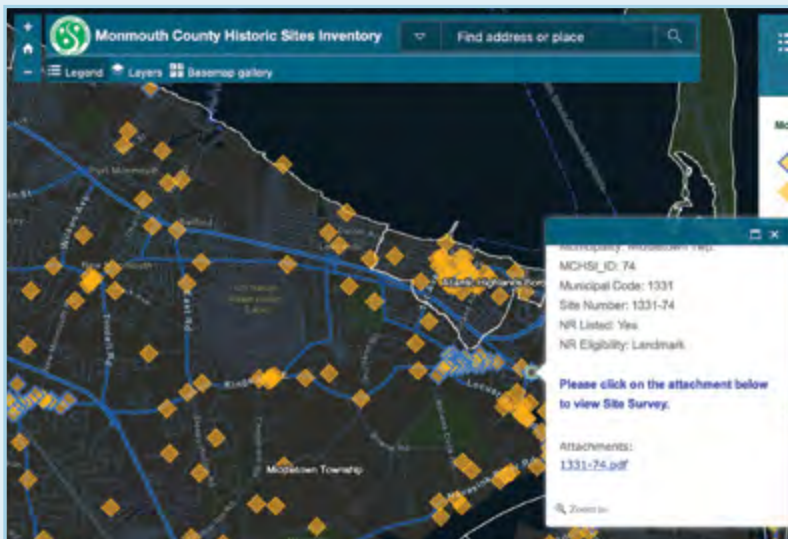
Each site has a unique internal ID tied to County and Township Codes. For example, the ID of this beautiful Victorian Italianate house in Freehold is 1315-43, although you don’t need to know these numbers to use the inventory! You can search the interactive map using an address or by simply zooming to a specific area.

## History Right in Your Backyard

While most people in Monmouth County have undoubtedly paused to admire a beautiful historic home in their neighborhood, few may be aware that the Park System has a website documenting most of the county’s historic houses, structures and historic districts. The site can be accessed through the Park System or County websites, or by typing “Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory” into your search engine on your computer, tablet or mobile device.

Each survey file contains information on the history of the structure, previous owners, and architectural descriptions. Any other previously documented sources or surveys, such as National Register Nominations, Historic American Building Surveys, and newspaper clippings are also included.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM		HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO. 1331-37
HISTORIC NAME:	Portland Place	COMMON NAME: Hartshorn House
LOCATION:	220 Hartshorn Road	BLOCK/LOT: 785/12, 786/17
MUNICIPALITY:	Middletown	COUNTY: Monmouth
USGS QUAD:	Sandy Hook	OWNER/ ADDRESS: Monmouth County Park System
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
Construction Date:	Original section early 18th c.; addition c.1788, 1896, 1910 (see below)	Source of Date: Ref. 1, 2
Style:	Traditional, Georgian elements	Architect:
Number of Stories:	2-1/2	Builder:
Foundation:	Fieldstone	Floor/Plan Type:
Exterior Wall Fabric:	Clapboard	
Penetration:	See description below	
Roof/Chimneys:	Gable, three interior ridge chimneys	
<b>Additional Architectural Description:</b>		
<p>The existing house is composed of a series of lateral expansions on both sides of the original 1-1/2 story dwelling, a Dutch-framed cottage (section A) that family tradition dates to c. 1693 but probably was built later, in the early 18th century. The large fieldstone chimney was originally a jambless fireplace; the second story was added before 1819 (appears in painting of that date). Section B, a one-story side-hall Georgian plan addition with a stair hall and two parlors, was added about 1788; the north parlor has a corner fireplace. A new kitchen and servants' quarters (section C) were added about 1896; this part of the house was converted in 1961 into a parking and kitchen, with an early 20th-century canopy black marble mantle from Portland (see 1331-108). The non-hay section at the west end of the house was added in 1910.</p>		
PHOTO Negative File No. 13-8, 9, 10, 11, 12		MAP (Indicate North)



The MCHSI Interactive Map is publicly available online. Anyone can explore survey files by selecting a point and clicking on the PDF attachment located at the bottom of each popup.

The individual survey files are available as downloadable PDFs.

## Origins of the Survey

In 1980, Joe Hammond, the Executive Director of the Monmouth County Historical Association, partnered with James Truncer, Director of the Monmouth County Park System, to obtain a grant to record an intensive survey of the remaining historic structures in the county. Although many houses and sites in the area were already listed on the National and State Registers, this project sought to identify those buildings and structures that were also of local historic significance, those that made Monmouth County special.

Most of these structures had never been documented in a formal way, which meant researchers Gail Hunton and James McCabe had to grab their road atlases and drive up and down every publicly accessible road in the county, evaluating houses, reviewing historic maps, taking photos, and documenting the stories of residents and property owners.

The Monmouth County Park System matched the State's initial one-year grant with cash, services and facilities and later applied for and received state matching grants in 1982, 1983 and 1984 to expand and complete the survey. When the survey



*(left to right) James Truncer, James McCabe and Gail Hunton presenting the Historic Sites Inventory to Judith Stanley of the Monmouth County Conservation Foundation in 1982.*

was completed in 1984, the Park System recognized that this resource could not remain a static document and periodic updates would need to occur every few years. The most recent batch of updates is currently underway and has covered about half the county over the past few years.

## Old Houses, New Threats

Monmouth County is a very desirable place to live. Unfortunately, this means that historic structures located here face many threats. Highest among these is demolition in advance of new construction. As agriculture waned, the region's prized farmland became an attractive lure for housing developers seeking open space to construct the many new communities that have grown in our area over the years. Talk to any resident who's lived here their whole life and they'll tell you how "that strip mall was once a peach orchard" or "those new townhomes were once rolling agricultural fields."

Another major threat is the neglect and abandonment of functionally obsolete structures like icehouses, smokehouses, mills and barns. Many of these ancillary structures vanished long before the 1980 survey began, and those that remained have dwindled in the ensuing 40 years, dramatically affecting the historic landscape of these early farm complexes.

Renovations and additions can also affect a structure's historic fabric and integrity, to the point that their original appearance and significance is lost. Since that original survey began in 1980, over 250 structures, roughly 15% of all the historic structures recorded, have been demolished or destroyed. However, there are positive changes as well. Over the same period, several structures which were once at risk have been wonderfully restored, adaptively reused, and preserved.



*The 19th century tenant house and corn crib shown here at the Smock Family Farm (1309-25) in Colts Neck in 1981 have been demolished; however, the remaining structures at this site have been adaptively reused by a local orchard and vineyard.*

## To Promote Preservation

Over the past four decades the MCHSI has largely served as a professional research tool for preservation. Today the Park System hopes to partner with the public. At the bottom of the website there is an email address to reach the historic preservation specialist who maintains the inventory. Anyone with information or photographs of a historic property is welcome for review and inclusion onto a site's inventory file after it is verified by a professional historian.

Since the survey launched in 2020, we've been fortunate to make connections with several Monmouth County families who've shared invaluable information, from high quality glass slide historic photos found in a family attic to property data helping to fill in the gaps of some deed traces. We look forward to offering even more historic resources on our MCHSI HUB site and to see the survey evolve with the public's help.

Explore the MCHSI HUB site at <https://historic-sites-inventory-mcps.opendata.arcgis.com/>.



*In addition to the Interactive Map, the online Historic Sites Inventory Website also hosts many other resources like the MCHSI Summary Report and GIS Story Maps of Historic Site Park Areas.*



# Deep Cut Gardens Home Gardener

152 Red Hill Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748

GS Parkway Exit 114, to Red Hill Road  
732-671-6050

## “WELLNESS” – The Importance Of Gardens In Our Life

Tanya Dinova, Horticulturist & Park Ranger

**“Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years.” – Unknown**

*“A contact with nature via urban gardening, sport activities and community gardens increase life satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, social inclusion and social cohesion, sense of community, and cognitive function (Wood et al. 2016). Engagement with nature activities (for example, urban gardening and farming) was defined as not only a cost-effective health intervention and a type of nature-based solution but also as a treatment for several physiological and mental health problems, so-called «therapeutic landscape and healing garden therapy». According to Cooper Marcus and Sachs (2013), the garden is intended to be a healing garden: a garden that, in different ways, influences the visitor in a positive way.”*

To have a garden is to have a never-ending source of happiness, discovery, comfort, inquiry and memorable adventures. Gardens are a direct source of healing. Having a garden contributes to your well-being by providing healthy food, daily physical activity, fresh air and direct contact with nature, as well as a healthy dose of brain stimulation and problem-solving challenges. It is a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, where you can slow down and let nature's beauty and powerful presence recharge your batteries. If “Vitamin N” comes from time spent in nature, then “Vitamin G” must come from time spent in the garden! Roving in your garden for as little as 20 minutes can make you feel better, calmer and less anxious than if you had stayed indoors and checked off one more chore.

**“There is no Wi-Fi in the garden, but I promise you will find a better connection.”**

Evidence shows that the soothing interaction with nature triggers a release of happy hormones – serotonin, dopamine, endorphins and oxytocin. These hormones in turn improve your mood, lower stress and anxiety, stabilize the heart rate and lower blood pressure, but most of all makes you feel happy. In numerous studies, gardeners report reduced stress, depression and anxiety compared to a control group. Many of us find peace and solace in the garden. The act of gardening, tending plants, and focusing on their care and growth, is a peaceful and mentally renewing activity. When we work with our hands, we experience an increased sense of control and our brains are focused, which prevents us from dwelling on negative thoughts. We see this transformation taking place firsthand during our Floral Design classes, where participants often arrive rushed, carrying the weight of their busy day, but leave far more relaxed. Perhaps you are one of them and know exactly how powerful the lift is.



Visitors of all ages soaking up that Vitamin N and G during Fairy Day Fest.



Floral Design brings smiles and joy to those who engage in it.



Staff and volunteers enjoying their time arranging flowers.



To garden, even if your garden is ornamental and not edible, is a multisensory experience, as we take in the sounds of the birds and the insects, the sight of bunnies and butterflies, the smell of earth or the potent fragrance of the flowers, we feel the texture of the leaves and our feet getting grounded. All these (and more) work together to soften our daily “edge.” Widen our perspective and relax our bodies. Such multisensory experiences remind us that the natural world of which we are part of is larger than ourselves and our troubles. Just ask any of our Volunteer Gardeners. Yes, Deep Cut Gardens offers volunteer opportunities, and you too can join and garden here with us.

Gardens and other green spaces extend life expectancy. Researchers at the University of New Brunswick in Canada released results of an 11 year long study involving 1.3 million adults which attested to the above. Living in urban areas characterized by increased amounts of greenness (gardens, golf courses, or parks) significantly lowered people’s risk of mortality by natural causes.



*Happy staff and volunteers at Deep Cut Gardens.*

## Did You Know?

The garden is a green gym: Mowing a lawn with a push mower for a half hour burns 243 calories in exertion – that is the equivalent to chopping wood for a half hour. Turning a compost pile for approximately 15 minutes can burn more than 100 calories. Lifting a one-gallon watering can, full of water in each hand, is equivalent to carrying eight-pound dumbbells. A 2014 Korean Study found that common activities like planting, raking, watering and weeding are demanding enough to count as moderate to high intensity exercise even for people in their 20s.

## Intimate yet SOCIAL

Gardening is often considered a solo pursuit, yet for us it has always been a social activity. You may garden alone with your thoughts and tranquility as a pursuit, but what you create is the perfect venue for a coffee morning, a Sunday barbeque, or an occasion to share with friends and family. We are lucky in this regard as our garden is often sought out for wedding ceremonies. And let’s be honest, people stop and talk to you when you are outside gardening. I frequently chat with curious visitors passing by. Sometimes they share stories and memories from their gardening life and sometimes they just want to express their love and appreciation of the colorful landscape. Whatever the topic, it is the garden that breaks down the walls and melts the ice to enable strangers to connect with each other and be part of the community.

There is a community amongst gardeners. We swap cuttings, seeds and knowledge, and are happy to converse for hours about the season, future, past successes, and failures. Gardening breaks down social barriers between neighbors, over the fence or in a community plot. Our “Gardening Book Club” is one such example – a social gathering of people interested in gardening and the likes.



*Program participants having fun inoculating the garden beds with mushroom spores.*



*Smiles are all over the faces of these program participants after completing a garden program.*

Gardeners visit other gardens, attend shows like the Philadelphia Flower Show or NJ Flower Show, and go to open days like the Rutgers Home and Garden School and Ag Field Day. There are many clubs and societies that organize talks, demonstrations, field trips and social nights. We even celebrate Bonsai Day with the Deep Cut Bosai Society during which we offer helpful demonstrations, useful care tips and information to those interested in the art of Bonsai. The bottom line is gardening brings people together. This is the case for our Park System’s Deep Cut Garden Volunteers every Wednesday as well as our many programs and workshops which unite people in a common cause, a pleasant activity and often a fun day.



We take pride in our work in providing people an opportunity to meet others, share concerns, impart skills, and even solve a few problems together. We have something for everybody: a Garden Book Club, Seed Exchange, Spring and Fall Plant Swaps, a horticulture themed library, walks, tours and demonstrations. And if you can't visit in person there is the Deep Cut Gardens Facebook page filled with great content; our "In the Garden" blog located on at [www.monmouthcountyparks.com](http://www.monmouthcountyparks.com) with its extensive archive, and for photography lovers be sure to use the hashtag #deepcutgardens.

Gardening is one special home remedy that has both science and instinctive intuition behind it. Join us and together, instead of going back to nature, let's go forward into the garden and find that life-sustaining connection that nourishes your mind, body and soul and fills your heart with joy!



*Visitors of all ages making connections during Fairy Day Fest.*



*Connecting with each other by the means of the garden also makes people happy during the Discover Shrubs – A Soft Drink program.*

#### References:

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## GARDENING BLOGS

If you're looking for some terrific blogs to follow for information on gardening, be sure to check these out.

### The Middle-Sized Garden

The Middle-Sized Garden Kent, England, UK

*Gardening ideas and inspiration for home gardeners and tips on how to save time, effort or money in your middle-sized garden. The Middle-sized Garden, authored by Alexandra Campbell, is about helping you to make your garden a reflection of your own personal style.*

[www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk](http://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk)

### Gardener's Path

*Welcome to Gardener's Path, your number one resource for gardening advice and troubleshooting tips, planting pointers, and in-depth reviews of our favorite products and must-haves, whether you're digging the soil in a small space, planting containers indoors, or tending to trees and rows of seasonal veggies on a larger plot of land.*

[www.gardenerspath.com](http://www.gardenerspath.com)

# Landscaping With Native Conifers

Kate B. Lepis, Ph.D., Horticulturist

## What Are Conifers?

Using native plants in the landscape has been widely discussed, but one particular group is often left out of the conversation: conifers.

Conifers represent an ancient group of plants that dominated forests of the Mesozoic Era and were a significant dietary component of herbivorous dinosaurs<sup>1</sup>. As part of a larger group, the gymnosperms (including ginkgo and cycad), they represent the oldest living seed plants; flowering plants, or angiosperms, are roughly 185 million years younger<sup>2</sup>. As the name implies, conifers reproduce using male and female cones.

Cone diversity is greater than one might think. In pines (*Pinus*) and spruce (*Picea*) seeds develop in large woody cones. In other conifers like Eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and yew (*Taxus sp.*), seed cones look more berry-like with fleshy scale(s) instead of woody ones. The needle-like or scaly leaves of conifers are usually evergreen, but there are exceptions. Tamarack (*Larix laricina*) and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) needles provide fall color before dropping.



*Seeds develop in the large woody cones of pines and spruce.*



*Eastern red cedar seed cones<sup>3</sup>.*



*Aril bonsai seed cones.*



*bald cypress needles in early November.*



*Golden tamarack needles<sup>3</sup>.*



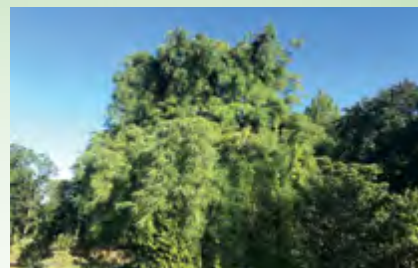
As definitions vary, species that existed in the mid-Atlantic Region prior to the colonial era are considered native here. Several species, American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), Canada hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*), and white spruce (*Picea glauca*) have long been valued in the landscaping trade. One can find ample information in traditional texts about these species. Worthy species, tamarack, red (*Picea rubens*) and black spruce (*P. mariana*), have their southern reach into Northern NJ. Their long-term fate in our state is questionable as our climate transitions from predominantly zone 7 to zone 8 by the end of this century<sup>4</sup>. Planting a tree is an investment for future generations and hopefully future centuries. The species addressed here function aesthetically and ecologically. As human land use dominates increasingly more area, the importance of our yards to function ecologically, as well as esthetically, becomes critical.



At Deep Cut Gardens, deer damage on the lower 1/3 of this American arborvitae demonstrates how their overpopulation decreases the utility of this species in the landscape.



"Coles Prostrate", a dwarf spreading variety growing in the Japanese Garden, is sprayed to control wooly adelgid – a pest that also threatens wild populations.



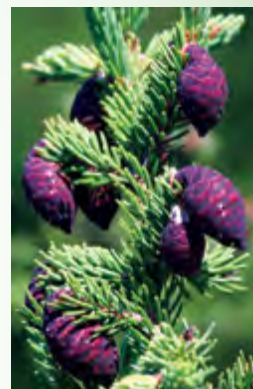
The asymmetrical crown of the weeping white pine variety 'Pendula' graces the lawn near the Meditation Garden.



Alberta spruce, a popular dwarf variety. Those growing in the Rockery were planted in 1936 and achieved a considerable size.



*Picea rubens*



*Picea mariana*



Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*)<sup>5,6,7</sup>: Up to 70' tall; full sun; can handle rocky, dry, infertile soil; tolerates salt spray.

Dominating the Pine Barrens and the highest ridges of North Jersey, this tough tree can grow just about anywhere. Unlike evergreens commonly used in the landscape this species has an open crown that allows one to appreciate the interesting architecture created by

the contorted, somewhat pendulous branches.

Cultivars/Varieties: 'Sherman Eddy' is a compact dwarf that grows 15' tall and wide. The Dawes Herbarium, OH has a large specimen.

Similar Species: Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*), mountain pine (*P. pungens*) and pond pine (*P. serotina*) which tolerate wet soils unlike most pines.

Suggested under-plantings: Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*), pinxter azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*).



Atlantic whitecedar (*Chamacyparis thyoides*)<sup>5,6,7</sup>: 50' tall; full sun preferred – can handle light shade; occurs in moist to wet organic soils. Documented to grow in drier average soils in NY state.

Naturally occurring in swamps along the eastern seaboard, this species is threatened by sea level rise as saltwater intrudes into their freshwater habitat. With a narrower crown (10-20') this beautiful tree

could fit in smaller spaces. By incorporating this species into a rain garden or wetter spot in the yard one could ensure it remains a part of our natural heritage.

Suggested under-plantings: Winterberry (*Ilex verticillate*), Swamp Azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*), Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*).

#### References:

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# CORNER

## NATURE

### CLAYTON PARK ACTIVITY CENTER GARDEN

Paul Mandala, Park Naturalist

They say for change to occur it takes a moment of bravery from just one individual in order to bring like-minded people together to create lasting change. An email to one of our local naturalists sparked just that type of change recently. Skip Byrnes, a volunteer at Clayton Park, mentioned there was a Xerces Society grant available that provided native plant plugs for special projects. The Monmouth County Park System was awarded the large upland plants grant selection which consists of 1,200 native plant plugs grown at the Pinelands Nursery, a local nursery dedicated to growing a variety of native plants. Plug plants are very small, young plants in a small amount of soil, usually in a single cell of a tray. The benefit of plugs is that they are less expensive, but the downside is they are still young and need to be nurtured and protected.

The Clayton Park Activity Center is one of the more recent acquisitions to the Monmouth County parks, which was a former elementary school house in the Upper Freehold area near Imlaystown Lake. As it is not directly near the trail head parking lot of Clayton Park, it is often overlooked. Behind the building is an open field that mostly goes unused and is surrounded by a hedgerow of trees where kids once played at recess. A few years ago, a small native plant garden was installed by a Park System Naturalists to try to attract native pollinators. The goal was to educate the public about the benefits of native plants, pollinators, and their greater connection within the local food web.

In total, we received and used 18 species of plants from the grant, which allowed us to double the size of the existing garden and diversify the native species. Since the site gets great sun coverage and remains relatively dry, these species of upland plants, as seen in the list below, were chosen. The Pinelands Nursery provided three-inch plant plugs, which need time and a safe environment to mature. To ensure this was possible, the entire garden needs to be protected from herbivores such as deer, as well as constantly be watered for at least the first two years. Some plants like common milkweed and swamp milkweed are host plants for certain species of caterpillar like Monarchs, while other plants produce nectar for adult insects.

## Site preparation

In order to get the garden ready to almost double in size, Skip created a digital design. He created a numbered and color coordinated plant chart and a diagram of the garden to designate where each of the plants would be going on the day of our group planting. The original front garden would be given a center round garden. The back garden was expanded and



View of the first garden with extended bed for the entrance walkway and center planting circle edged by hand with shovels.

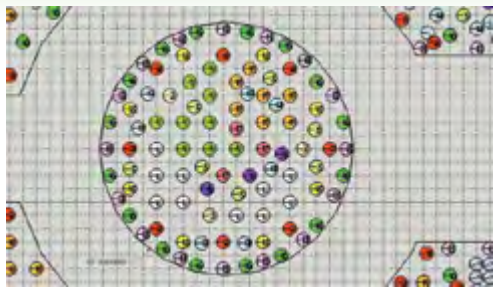
given a center garden to create a cohesive space. Plants were mostly being placed in the back garden and central ring gardens, but some were also being filled in the front garden as well. Originally the plan was to move some of the original plants to re-organize, but with time constraints this step was skipped.

To get the new garden design in place we initially marked out the outer edges of the new garden by taking up the grass by hand with a shovel. This process turned out to be very labor intensive, so we recruited Park Rangers to use the sod cutter to take up the rest of the grass, resulting in a neater and easier process. The rangers also put up a temporary section of snow fence around the garden to protect the new young plants from deer and other herbivores from eating the tender three-inch plugs. The last step of preparation for planting day was to label and pre-dig each hole. To avoid chaos, popsicle sticks were color-coded and numbered to assure plants were put in the right place.

## Plant List

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	Qty
1	Common Milkweed	Asclepias syriaca	100
2	Swamp Milkweed	Asclepias incarnata	50
3	Yellow False Indigo	Baptisia tinctoria	50
4	Blue Mistflower	Conoclinium coelestinum	50
5	Lanceleaf Coreopsis	Coreopsis lanceolata	100
6	Purple Coneflower	Echinacea purpurea	100
7	White Wood Aster	Eurybia divaricata	50
8	Oxeye Sunflower	Heliopsis helianthoides	50
9	Dense Blazingstar	Liatris spicata	50
10	Wild Bergamot	Monarda fistulosa	50
11	Spotted Horsemint	Monarda punctata	50
12	Foxglove Beardtongue	Penstemon digitalis	50
13	Hairy Beardtongue	Penstemon hirsutus	50
14	Black-Eyed Susan	Rudbeckia hirta	100
15	Little Bluestem	Schizachyrium scoparium	50
16	Aromatic Aster	Symphyotrichum oblongifolium	100
17	Narrow Leaf Mountain Mint	Pycnanthemum tenuifolium	50
18	Common Sneezeweed	Helenium autumnale	100





*Skip Byrnes digital layout of the zoomed in planting of the center circle gardens; this original layout was adjusted slightly to make same plant species cluster for ease of planting.*

## Planting

The morning of our planting, a few of our naturalists used battery powered drills with small augers attached to drill holes, which were then placed with the colored/numbered sticks. We were lucky to have so many volunteers come out from various organizations such as The Native Plant Society (Monmouth Chapter), The Master Gardeners, Wild Ones, and other local community members. Volunteers were broken into teams of three, each team consisting of a planter, waterer, and mulcher who would take their own section of the garden to plant. They retrieved the correct numbered plants from a row of plant plugs from the edge of the garden, water was then transported over to each section from one central water pool fed by a hose from the building, and mulch was taken in buckets from piles on either side of the garden. Each team worked on different



*Printed number sheets were left next to each tray to make matching of plant trays easy to identify to match with the color coded and numbered popsicle sticks.*



*Smiles all around as the new garden took shape. Seasonal Naturalist Julee Politano installing three-inch plant plugs.*



*The back center circle portion of the garden starting to take shape with plants going in.*



*Many hands make light work. This planting was a huge team effort by multiple people and multiple organizations.*

The last step was done the next morning, which was to install the irrigation system. In hindsight, this step should have been a priority and completed earlier in the process. Since the garden is so large the posts were tamped into the middle of each



*Plants have been planted using a color-coded popsicles stick system based on the planting plan.*

garden center and sprinkler heads that spray 360 degrees were installed, and a hose was run from the building spigot. The garden will be maintained by a collection of volunteers, naturalists and rangers responsible for mowing, weeding and watering the site so it can become a blooming native plant garden. Our hope is this will attract a plethora of native wildlife, especially some of our pollinators such as bees, butterflies,



moths, other insects and birds.

*Sprinkler heads installed on a post in the center of each center circle garden spray water in 360 degrees to water the entire garden.*

## Lessons Learned

Unfortunately, a few plants did not survive which was likely due to the human error of leaving young plants out in the open garden one day before planting on a day that was extremely hot and sunny. Due to this, a few of the young plant's roots were burned, regardless of being watered. Next time, we know that a second watering will be necessary along with a shade from the sun. However, overall, the planting was a huge success and only a handful of each species was lost. The other lesson learned for the garden was that due to the busyness of the summer season it is difficult to keep up with weeding and mowing. Fall is a hard time to play catch up and recruiting some extra volunteers early with regular meeting times would help to maintain the garden.



*Front center circle garden early summer; plants are starting grow and take more space*



*Front center circle garden late summer; plants are growing well and some are starting to bloom and the garden is really starting to take shape.*

The garden is open to the public and we hope people will come out for a visit from the local communities to enjoy the space and hopefully find a little inspiration to perhaps plant their own native gardens at home or in their communities.

*"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."  
– Ryunosuke Satoro*





## Tips for being Active Outdoors in Winter

- Insulate your body by dressing in layers. Layering provides warmth, but also allows you to remove a layer if you do become too hot during activity.
- Stay hydrated. Hydration is important no matter what season it is.
- Be cautious of snow or icy patches on trails, walkways and roads.
- Stay Warm. Stay Safe. Stay Active.

### ***In This Issue:***

Winter is Coming – How to Stay Active in Y(our) Parks,  
Historic Sites Inventory,  
“Wellness” – The Importance Of Gardens In Our Life,  
Landscaping With Native Conifers,  
Clayton Park Activity Center Garden.

