



GREEN HERITAGE



Newsletter of Monmouth County's Open Space, Parks & Recreation Agency Vol. 42 No. 3 Fall 2008

Free Fall Activities In The County Parks

With the rising price of food and fuel, who isn't looking for new and inexpensive entertainment options close to home? Admission to all the parks (except the beach at Seven Presidents in the summer) is free. Visit the county parks to explore nature or attend one of many free fall events. You can get out, relax and have fun without spending a cent.

monmouthcountyparks.com

BEFORE YOU GO...

Visit our re-designed website and read about the park and download a free map, so you can navigate when you arrive. Or, call (732) 842-4000 (TTY/TDD 711), M - F, 8:00-4:30 to request your free copy of:

- any park brochure
- a Visitor Guide (an overview of all the parks)
- an Activity Directory (a listing of all programs and events)
- this newsletter (to keep abreast of what's going on)

Park brochures and maps are also available for free in kiosks near any park parking lot.



FREE ACTIVITIES & EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

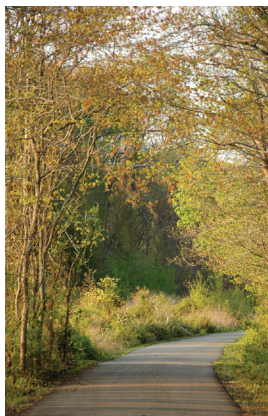
September

• Test your frog finding skills. Look for the colorful Pickerel Frog on Doctor's Creek Trail in Clayton Park.



• More frogs! Look for the Wood Frog in the wooded trails of Turkey Swamp Park. (Hint: They "quack" like a duck.)

• Are you in good shape after an active summer? Try a long-distance bike ride on the Henry Hudson Trail. This former railroad right-of-way was recently added to the National Rail-Trail Network.



Henry Hudson Trail

• Remember September 11 by visiting the memorial at Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook in Atlantic Highlands. The site offers spectacular views of the NY skyline and beautiful vistas of Sandy Hook.

• Tired of your same old houseplants? Trade in your old ones for new on Saturday, September 20th. Visit Deep Cut Gardens in Middletown (Exit 114) for the Great Fall Perennial Plant Swap. Can't make it? Not to worry, this event is held twice a year and you'll get another chance in the spring.

• Spend the whole weekend at Deep Cut Gardens by returning on Sunday, September 21st for Bonsai Day.

• Search the September woods for the strangely haunting Indian Pipe or Ghost Plant. It looks mushroomy, like a fungus, but is really a member of the blueberry family. It grows at night!



Indian Pipe



• Visit the Manasquan Reservoir in Howell, or Hartshorne Woods Park in Middletown, to bird watch for Ospreys, or fish watch for hawks as they are sometimes called. One of this area's most well-known endangered species, they will soon migrate south for the winter.

• Celebrate autumn in a historic way at Longstreet Farm's annual Harvest Home Festival on Sunday, September 28, from 11 am to 5pm. Enjoy turn-of-the-century games.



Historic games at Harvest Home Festival

Free, Continues next page

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Free, Continued

OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS, WITHOUT A PRICE TAG

October



Virginia Creeper



Poison Ivy

• Get to know your poison ivy! Though hard to identify in the warm weather months (it blends so well with surrounding foliage) this plant turns crimson red in the fall! Be careful not to confuse the 3-leafed Poison Ivy with the 5-leaf Virginia Creeper, which also turns bright red in the fall.

• Celebrate Walford Day on Sunday, October 5th, 11 am - 5pm.



Walford Day

- It's Mushroom Madness! Look for mushrooms on the forest floor or growing attached to trees. Please! Do not touch or pick these growths!
- Go acorn/nut hunting in the parks. This is the time of year when the majestic oaks let loose a sea of acorns. It's one sure-fire way to identify an oak, if you don't already know the leaves or bark.
- Wildflowers bloom in fall as well as well as spring. Look for woodland asters (tiny, white daisy-like flowers) on the forest floor at Huber Woods, or visit the meadows at Tatum Park to see bold, blue autumn field asters.



Harp Seal

- October is when the Harbor seal arrives at Bayshore Waterfront Park to over-winter in New Jersey's warmer waters. Harp seals have also been spotted (mostly juveniles), but are far less common.
- October is striper season! Drop a line at these saltwater parks-no fishing license needed. Visit the piers at Bayshore Waterfront Park and Hartshorne Woods Park. Cast from shore at Fisherman's Cove or Seven Presidents.

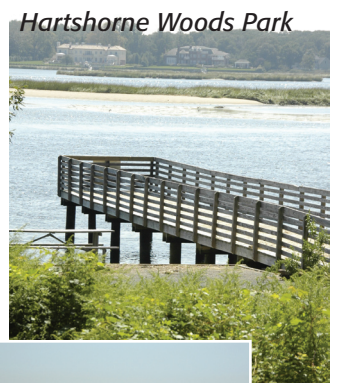


Mushroom at Turkey Swamp Park

- Visit the Stone Bridge Trail at Charleston Springs Golf Course (yes, there's a trail at this golf course) in mid- October. Make sure to look for the lush carpet of unusual pink grass that grows trailside this time of year.
- Celebrate Thompson Park Day on Sunday, October 19th, 11 am - 5pm.



Thompson Park Day



Hartshorne Woods Park



Bayshore Waterfront Park



Tatum Park

Free, continues next page

NO-COST THINGS TO DO IN NOVEMBER



- Want to really relax before the hectic holidays? Early November-with its crisp chill in the air-is a wonderful time to take a drive to visit our beautiful parks in western Monmouth County.



Walk the two new trails at Perrineville Lake Park in Millstone. Then, look for the giant leaves by the sycamore trees, and see the gristmill operate (*demos available weekends through the end of November*) at Historic Walnford. Make a day trip of it, visit nearby Historic Allentown, with its shops and sights.

- Get great gardening tips from the experts at the Garden State Daylily's "Favorite Overlooked Daylilies" event at Deep Cut Gardens on Sunday, November 9 from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

- Check out new exhibits at the Huber Woods Environmental Center. Designed by park naturalists and planners, and completed just this past spring, they feature local flora and fauna, Lenape Indian history, and hands-on nature activities.

- Spend an afternoon contemplating your spring garden as you unwind. Read a book at the Deep Cut Gardens Library, it contains one of NJ's largest horticultural collections. You can also get garden advice for free from park staff. While you are there, step outside for a walk and see what's still in bloom.



- Striking sunsets can be seen throughout November and December at all the parks.



THINGS TO DO IN DECEMBER, AT NO CHARGE

- Don't wait for New Year's Eve to make a resolution, become a volunteer! Get that good feeling inside, knowing your time and energy will benefit the parks, and all who use them. Help clear trails, prune shrubs, and plant flowers (you'll receive free training!) or staff our events. Call (732) 842-4000 ext. 4283 for more information.



- Get to know one of this area's most common birds of prey. Visit Dorbrook Recreation Area or nearby Thompson Park and look up to see the Red Tailed Hawk soaring over the fields or perched atop a tree branch or flagpole. Note the Red Tail Hawk's reddish tail as it flies overhead, and black hash marks on its chest.

- The Larch trees on the front lawn of the Visitor Center in Thompson Park are deciduous evergreens-which is very unusual. Normally, evergreens (think pine trees, spruces, etc) keep their leaves/needles all winter, that's why they are called ever-greens. But the needles on these Larch trees turn brown and drop.



Four Seasons - Four Reasons Open Space Is Important

A as summer turns to fall, and outdoor activities tail off with the drop in temperature and increased pace of life, it's a good time to reflect on why open space is important to our personal well-being and to the community.

1. OPEN SPACE IS A SMART INVESTMENT.

Parks are a catalyst for tourism, New Jersey's second largest industry. By protecting and providing resources to support popular outdoor activities such as fishing, swimming, boating, birding, biking, hiking, camping, and horseback riding, open space serves as an economic stimulant for the region. And, these same activities benefit county residents looking for inexpensive, close-to-home recreation. Preservation of open space also helps communities avoid some of the future costs of development, including municipal services, infrastructure maintenance, and schools. It can also boost property values by enhancing the desirability of the area to families and businesses.

2. OPEN SPACE IS NATURALLY GOOD.

In a densely developed region like New Jersey, preserving habitat is critical to the survival of native plants and animals. Ecological diversity not only enriches human life and our understanding of the natural environment, but has a value to the community. Mature trees filter harmful pollutants, carbon dioxide, and other greenhouse gasses from the air, and reduce air temperatures an average of 5-10°F. Undisturbed land helps maintain the potable (drinkable) water supply by recharging groundwater supplies. Wetlands and floodplains are natural storm-water retention areas that reduce flooding in streets, homes, and businesses. They also prevent soil erosion that can degrade the quality of our drinking supply as well as damage the health of fish, birds, and other creatures.



Each spring, children from local school groups experience the beauty and tranquility of the outdoors at Deep Cut Gardens.

FOUR SEASONS, *continues page 9*



The naturalized dunes and clean white sand make Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park the ideal summer beach day destination.

Home Gardener



FERNS, A PART OF OUR ANCIENT DIVERSITY

Randy McHaney, Senior Gardener

Ferns have been discussed, collected and investigated for well over 250 years in New Jersey, by some of the country's leading biologists. These non-flowering, spore bearing herbaceous plants are both decorative and esthetically pleasing in the landscape. Of the approximately 11,000 fern species, most are terrestrial, a few are aquatic and, in the tropical rain forest, they are epiphytic-growing in the crotches or on the trunks of trees. They receive no nourishment from this arrangement, only a stable platform on which to grow.



Creeping Fern

in the spring, it is known as a fiddlehead because of its distinctive shape. In certain cultures, the fiddlehead is considered an edible delicacy.

Since ferns are non-flowering plants they do not produce seeds, but have evolved a unique way to reproduce via spores. Spores, located inside specialized structures known as sporangia, are found on the back of the leaves. The sporangia are grouped into clusters called sori, and their unique arrangement can be used to identify a particular species.

RECOMMENDED OUTDOOR FERNS FOR MONMOUTH COUNTY

In Monmouth County our

close proximity to the ocean plus our location on the coastal plain gives us a modified climate, which makes it ideal for particular ferns...and not so ideal for others. The following will grow well in the Monmouth County area:

Approximately 58 fern species are native to New Jersey.

In temperate regions such as Monmouth County, ferns grow in wet areas, woodlands, and along riverbanks. They seem to prefer evenly moist soil though certain more vigorous species can grow in relatively dry



Christmas Fern

situations. The sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), and hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) are two vigorous species that come to mind. However, the hay-scented fern can become invasive and is therefore probably not a good choice for the home landscape.



Climbing Fern

is found on the inner coastal plain of New Jersey and parts of Monmouth County. The long fronds creep along by wrapping themselves around nearby vegetation and each frond can grow to 6.5 feet. For best esthetic value, provide something for it to climb on. This plant prefers evenly moist to wet, acidic soil.

• **CLIMBING FERN** (*Lygodium palmatum*) is an interesting plant but probably hard to come by, except from specialty fern growers. It

FERN ANATOMY

Ferns grow from underground stems called rhizomes and are either erect or creeping.

Creeping ferns make excellent groundcovers, erect forms are nice as specimen plants.



Fiddlehead fern

The specialized leaves of ferns are called fronds. When the frond emerges

• **CHRISTMAS FERN** (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) is a very popular, easy to grow and extremely attractive fern. This evergreen plant has interesting upright fronds that reach 2.5 feet during the growing season. In winter, the fronds lay flat. These can be harvested **Ferns continues next page**

Ferns, *continued*

for winter decorations, but are also beautiful left in the garden as winter interest. On older specimens, the unfurling of fiddleheads in spring is extremely impressive.

• **Goldie's Wood Fern**

(*Dryopteris goldiana*) is more common to northwest New Jersey but will grow nicely in Monmouth County if sited properly. The particular plant I'm familiar with is growing very nicely on the north-facing side of a ravine. Considered one of New Jersey's most handsome ferns, it is also one of the largest, growing to about 4 feet.



Goldie's Wood Fern

• Extremely easy to identify because of its unique fronds,

Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*)



Royal Fern

is abundant in every county of New Jersey. This plant is most at home in swampy areas and marshes. I have seen it in dryer locations but it does best if grown in wet sites.

There are also several non-native ferns that are excellent growers in our area. One of the most beautiful is the Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium niponicum*). This low growing or creeping plant has highlights of silver gray fronds with red to purple midribs. It is extremely easy to grow and will flourish in many different soil types. I've seen it growing near pine trees, which can be extremely dry, as well as in wet situations. This fern can be easily divided in spring just as the fiddleheads are unfurling.



Japanese Painted Fern

Ferns grow all over the world in a variety of soil types and situations. Some are extremely fussy about soil pH and might prefer acidic or alkaline soil. Therefore, it is important to identify and site your new green friend accordingly. It's probably best to begin your fern garden with plants that grow locally, and then expand out to more exotic or harder to grow species. And, always be aware of ferns that might become invasive.

THE GREAT FALL PERENNIAL PLANT SWAP

Saturday,
September 20, 2008
10am-2pm

BONSAI DAY
Sunday,
September 21, 2008
1:30-4:00pm

FREE ADMISSION
FREE PARKING

Volunteers Staff Deep Cut Day



These dedicated volunteers joined Deep Cut staff last Spring to work the Plant Swap in April. (l to r) Tina Woodward, Terri Levy, Elsa Lin, Anne Galli, Carol Migrala (back), Helene Schroeder, Joanne O'Leary (back), Chervine Lamb, Jim Grech (back), Wanna Chin and Deep Cut staffer Diane Allen.

It's Time to....

October ✓

- Grass seed may still be planted the first two weeks of this month. Apply lawn fertilizer if not done this fall, deep-feed mature deciduous shade trees if in poor soil or otherwise stressed.
- Thoroughly clean houseplants and begin to acclimate them to indoor conditions.
- Plant new trees and shrubs now so they have a chance to develop some new roots before soil temperatures drop; mulch and water well.
- Lift corms and bulbs of begonia, caladium, calla and gladiola; let dry and store in a cool place for next year. Lift dahlia and canna after blackened by frost.
- Clean up gardens and remove any tattered/diseased foliage. Remove and discard foliage of any disease-prone perennials to help avoid re-infestation/re-infection next year, but leave some plants that will provide winter interest and seed heads for the birds. This is a good time to be sure plants are labeled.
- Plant pansies/ornamental cabbages for fall color, bulbs for next spring.
- A sheet will protect the last fruits in the garden from a light frost.
- Plant garlic this month about 4-6" apart in a rich sandy loam.
- Water lawns, beds, shrubs and trees only if needed to ensure they go into winter well hydrated.
- Many garden areas can be covered with mulch or leaf mold after the first frost.



December ✓

- Apply a winter mulch of shredded oak leaves around azaleas, rhododendrons, pieris and other acid-loving plants.
- Ventilate coldframes when the weather is mild.
- Start potting amaryllis bulbs successively every few weeks for continuous bloom through the winter.
- Keep houseplants dust-free by gently spraying with tepid water.
- Feed the birds, especially when the ground is snow-covered.

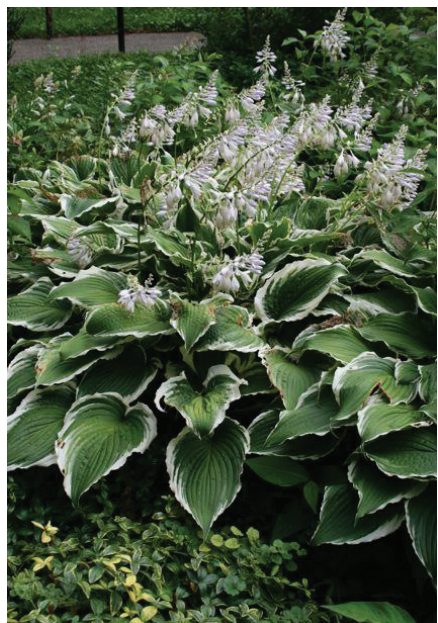
November ✓

- Turn your compost pile after frost hits to help dissuade over-wintering rodents.
- Do a final clean-up, removing dead/diseased foliage from beds, leaves from lawns.
- Get any remaining bulbs planted.
- Before you get busy with holiday preparations, clean and store tools until next spring. Store fertilizers and other materials where granulars will stay dry and liquids frost-free.

UNDERSTANDING VARIEGATED PLANTS

Variiegated plants are curiosities. They are preserved by the gardening public with their interest. These plants would not, in most cases, survive on their own in the wild. Though they are beautiful and make a great addition to the garden, most variegated plants are genetic misfits or mistakes.

For whatever reason, and there are several possibilities, variegated plants are unable to produce chlorophyll in all of their parts. (Chlorophyll-the green pigment used by plants to create sugars-is necessary for plant health and well-being.) As a result, these plants do not perform as well as an all green plant might, especially under low light situations. This is especially true with green and white variegated plants, since the white portion will create no nourishment for the organism.



Green and white variegated hosta

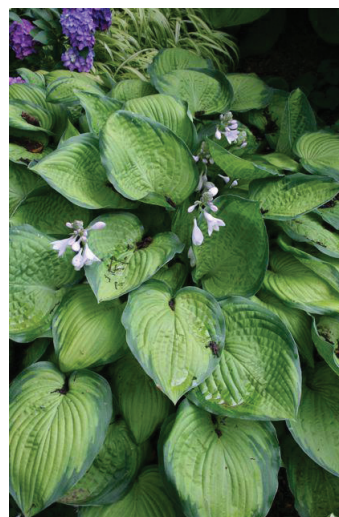


Peperomia

Variegated plants are sometimes unstable, which means they can revert back to the all green form. If this happens it will be necessary to prune out the all green parts.

Unlike normal plants, variegated types cannot be reproduced using seed. They will need to be propagated, asexually or by cuttings. These cuttings should be taken at the proper time of year for the particular species being propagated. For woody plants, July is usually a good time. Succulents, such as sedums can be rooted anytime during the summer.

Light colored variegation can 'lift' what would otherwise be a block of solid green foliage, and create an attractive focal point for the garden.



Green and light green variegated hosta



GARDEN STATE DAYLILY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

"Favorite Overlooked Daylilies"

Sunday, November 9, 2008

1:30-3:30pm

**Deep Cut Gardens
352 Red Hill Road
Middletown, NJ 07748**

Get inside information. President Terry Oates will share member insights on little-known daylilies that deserve a place in the garden for their prolific and lovely blooms. He will also share tips and tricks on making the most of these hardy plants.

3. OPEN SPACE MAKES OUR COMMUNITIES SPECIAL.

Parks provide much needed relief from the built environment in terms of visual overload, noise, traffic, and crowding. They support outdoor activities that encourage social bonding, reduce delinquency, and foster connected families. And parks are often a treasured source of community pride and identity.

4. OPEN SPACE PROMOTES HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER LIVING.

In his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods* (discussed in the previous issue of this newsletter), Richard Louv coined the term “nature deficit disorder” to describe the breaking of the bond between children and the natural world. Balancing work and play is critical to our total health and happiness, and parks and open spaces provide important opportunities for children and adults to reconnect with the outdoors. Parks are an accessible and affordable environment for physical activity. And, research has found that physical activity increases strength, flexibility and endurance; relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety; improves mood; and enhances psychological well-being.

Those are four great reasons for including parks and open space on your list of Thanksgiving blessings. The county parks are open 365 days a year, so come alone or with family and friends to enjoy the benefits of open space.

For generations, Monmouth County families have made snowmen and memories at Holmdel Park.



Forested land at Thompson Park serves as a natural buffer for the Swimming River Reservoir and the streams that feed it.



Track What's New And Exciting In The Parks?

One of the best ways to keep track of new land additions, trails, and other projects and improvements in the county parks is to read the Park System Annual Report. Request your free copy by calling (732) 842-4000, or read it online at www.monmouthcountyparks.com



CORNER

NATURE

Cooper's Hawk, Courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service

Lesser-Known Endangered Species Of Monmouth County

Do you know what the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle and the Bald Eagle have in common? Both are endangered species in New Jersey, and both are found in Monmouth County. While many people know that the eagle is on the rebound in sites throughout NJ, they may not know that the last refuge of the Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle is Gateway National Recreation Area in Sandy Hook. Here is a review of some other lesser known state endangered and threatened species, the habitats that support them and the threats to their survival.

COOPER'S HAWK

The Cooper's Hawk is one of three endangered forest hawk species. It feeds on small to medium sized birds, and occasionally other small animals. During breeding season it inhabits forested wetlands including riparian (river/stream) wetlands, and always favors large and remote tracts of land. When not breeding, the Cooper's Hawk visits similar areas but is willing to move closer to residential areas in search of food. The main limiting factor to its continued growth is habitat loss and fragmentation. Although research indicates they are willing to move into more fragmented forests to breed, such action puts the hawk into direct conflict with great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, and raccoons that they are unprepared to compete with.

It is interesting to note that the floodplain forest (riparian forest) is one of three endangered ecosystems in New Jersey. This is exactly the kind of location required by Cooper's Hawk, and also by the red-shouldered hawk and threatened barred owl. The loss of this forest type increases the risk to humans posed by river flooding, and degrades water quality, including

sources used for drinking such as the Manasquan and Metedeconk rivers.

UPLAND SANDPIPER

The upland sandpiper is a bird of grasslands, fallow fields, meadows, and even such unlikely breeding locations as major and minor airports. It requires on average 216 acres of breeding territory; in some cases much more. The sandpiper is a breeding resident only, and winters in South America. It feeds on many insects that farmers find disagreeable like grasshoppers, crickets, weevils, and locusts. The limiting factors on its growth are three-fold: a loss of breeding areas, a degradation of their stopover areas, and a degradation of their wintering habitat.

Of course, the problem in New Jersey is that the locations they prefer, fields and old farms, are also highly prized by developers. As with the Cooper's Hawk, the upland sandpiper is often forced into fragmented breeding areas where it faces competition from species it has no ability to cope with.

Upland Sandpiper, Courtesy of US Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

LEAST TERN

The least tern is the smallest tern found in New Jersey and breeds with piping plover on many of the Jersey shore's famous beaches-including Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park in Long Branch. It winters in Central and South America and feeds mainly on small fish. Its population is under threat from habitat loss, human disturbance, and coastal flooding. The process of coastal development is often known as "hardening" of the coast, which is a movement away from natural dune and coastal forests and toward homes and roadways. These structures lack the buffering ability found in natural ecosystems like sand dunes and dune woodlands and promote coastal flooding.



Least Tern, Courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service

ENDANGERED, *continued*



Wood Turtle, Courtesy of US Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

WOOD TURTLE

The wood turtle is unusual among other turtle species in NJ because it seeks out both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It hibernates, mates, and feeds (partly) in pristine rivers, streams, and wetlands; it lays eggs and feeds (partly) in upland environments. As with most turtles, it is omnivorous. Prior to the mid 20th century, this common turtle had enough suitable habitat, but over time the population declined due to habitat loss and illegal collection. This turtle's preference for remote riparian wetlands and uplands—both popular areas for development—and its sensitivity to pollution, put it in a very precarious position.

BOG TURTLE

This tiny and secretive bog turtle inhabits sphagnum bogs, fens, and wet pastures. It will cohabitate with livestock, provided their numbers are limited. Bog turtles generally seek out open areas with light shrub and herbaceous plant cover, so as succession occurs (fields convert to shrubs, then forests) they are forced to seek out new areas. The main threats to the bog turtle include pollution, habitat loss, and illegal collection. One additional threat is invasive plant species, like phragmites and purple loosestrife.



Bog Turtle

These plants are a scourge in many wetlands and their existence puts even more pressure on this already stressed species.

PINE BARRENS TREE FROG

The Pine Barrens tree frog is a striking creature with its bright green, purple, and yellow coloring, and its honking call. A memorable species, the tree frog has come to symbolize the NJ Pine Barrens. The frogs generally prefer areas with an open forest canopy and thick layers of shrub and other groundcover. They breed in ponds with sphagnum moss, sedge, and other aquatic plants ringed by shrubs. The most critical element needed for successful breeding is water with a very low pH, from 3.8 to 5.9. This highly acidic water deters other species, like the bull frog, from taking over the pond. Threats include habitat loss, non-point source pollution, overdevelopment and a general degradation of existing habitat. In many cases, development has the effect of increasing pH which allows species like the bull frog to encroach.



Tree Frog, Courtesy of US Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

Protecting these species is important because when we protect them, we protect ourselves. Species in decline are indicators, warning signs that our environment is not as healthy as it could be. So it is critical that we do our part by not adding to the problem. Non-point source pollution (widespread pollution that runs-off into our water from fertilizers/herbicides, by-products of construction and irrigation, pet waste, septic systems, etc.) is a problem we create, and therefore, we can reduce. Supporting initiatives that protect habitat and open space is critical--these animals now need our help to survive.

References:

Beans, Bruce E. & Niles, Larry. (Eds.). (2003). *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife of New Jersey*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey



GREEN HERITAGE

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Fall 2008

PRSR.T. STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MONMOUTH CO.
PARK SYSTEM

Autumn Scenes



*Inside a Japanese Maple,
Deep Cut Gardens*

Fall leaves at Holmdel Park



*Harlequin Glorybower
Deep Cut Gardens*

