



GREEN HERITAGE

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

Vol. 43 No. 1 Spring 2009

In The Pink: A Study Of Spring In One Color

If asked to name the most common color associated with nature, most people would probably say, "green." Yet during spring especially, there's a whole spectrum of other colors to seek out and enjoy when the weather begins to turn warm. Yellow (think daffodils and forsythia) and blue (imagine bluebells and violets) are each on special display, while pink in particular is a true spring favorite. It seems to be everywhere, from rabbit ears to flower petals.

Hues range from the palest of pale to vibrant shades of bright magenta. Look around and you'll see that pink can be found in abundance at many sites throughout the parks and near the ocean.

One of the area's most well-known pink displays can be found at the pond's edge at **Holmdel Park** with the bloom of the cherry blossoms in April.



Above: One of the area's most well-known pink displays and first signs of spring can be found at the pond's edge at Holmdel Park with the bloom of cherry blossoms in early April. (NOTE: It may be difficult to tell the light pink cherry trees apart from the other flowering fruit trees that bloom in similar colors, like the crab apple or pear)

Far Left: Some cherry blossoms, up close

Left: Trees aren't the only pink display at Holmdel—look along side the trails for wildflower blooms, like these pink hyacinths

I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers.

~ Claude Monet

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*April hath put a spirit
of youth in everything.*

~ William Shakespeare

There are many more pinks to see in nearby **Longstreet Farm** (located in Holmdel Park) but they have nothing to do with flowers or trees.



Above right: New lambs are usually born in spring, and their noses and ears are an iconic pink sight of early spring. Visit the farm during the weekend of April 25 & 26 for the Annual Sheep Shearing Demonstration, noon – 3pm
Above: For some pigs at the farm, their whole body is pink but the brightest shades often appear 'round the nose and ears

Beautiful specimen trees flower in shades of pink at **Thompson Park** in Lincroft as well. If you visit, they're near the new Visitor Center, in the Estate Grounds Parking Lot.



This Magnolia tree on the Thompson Park Visitor Center front lawn puts on another spectacular pink display in April.



Perhaps the best park to visit during spring for a concentrated view of pink flowering foliage is **Deep Cut Gardens**, Middletown. There are flowers, shrubs and trees all within a fairly contained area. Many plants are labeled and staff are available to answer questions.



A rainy April day provides the perfect misty backdrop for this flowering cherry near the pergola.

Creeping phlox, a groundcover, blooms in early April.

June, of course, is the month of roses. Now that the new Rose Garden is complete, you can view many beautiful specimens on display, in pink and many other colors.

There are a few pink flowers that people will make a special trip out to the parks to see because they are so vibrant, rare, or just fun to look at.



*Above Left: Hunting for spring wildflowers is a favorite pastime for many hikers and walkers. You could spot this wild azalea—and many other trailside delights—if you walk the Marshy Trail at **Thompson Park** in early May.*

Above Right: A few Park System sites can boast a little grove of the rare and delicate Pink Lady's Slipper Orchid. The veins, puffy structure and bright color make spotting this elusive early June flower a real treat.

*Left: Since no park story about spring (or any season, really) is complete without a bird for good measure, here's a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak seen in early May at **Huber Woods Park**, Middletown.*

Finally, park fields and meadows grow a variety beautiful pink blooms to scout for on your next visit.



*This stunning photo demonstrates that even a simple thistle can put on quite a display. This photo was taken in May at **Perrineville Lake Park** in Millstone, which now boasts two new trails.*



*These Mountain Laurels arrive in early June and can be found trailside at **Hartshorne Woods Park** in Middletown. They bloom in an unusual, geometric-like design.*

Listen...

can you hear it? Spring's sweet cantata. The strains of grass pushing through the snow:

The song of buds swelling on the vine. The tender timpani of a baby robin's heart. Spring.

~ Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, from the TV series Northern Exposure, episode: "Wake Up Call" (1992)

Freeholders Award Open Space Grants To 14 Towns

The Board of Chosen Freeholders announced on December 22 that 14 Monmouth County municipalities would receive 2008 Monmouth County Open Space Grant Awards. To date, 40 of the County's 53 municipalities have been awarded over \$12 million for 77 local park acquisition and development projects since the program started in 2003.

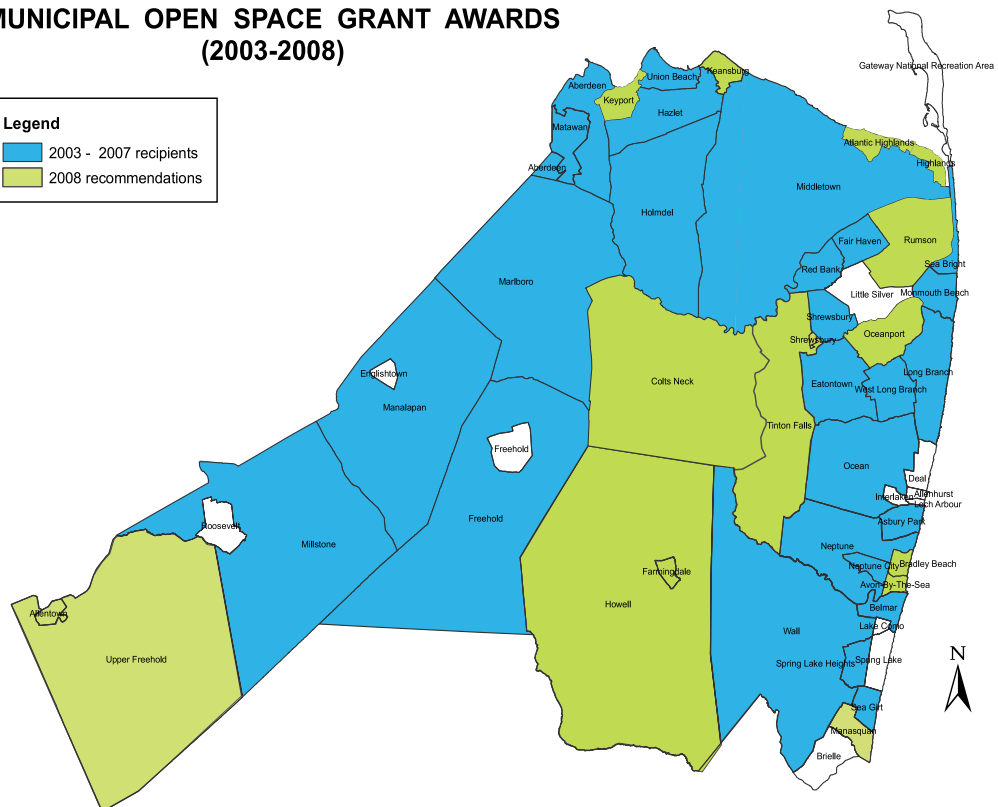
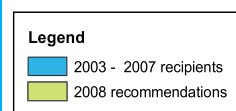
"The Monmouth County Open Space Grant Program has allowed the Borough of Tinton Falls to expand our recreation facilities and preserve vital pieces of land."
 -Bryan Dempsey
 Tinton Falls Administrator

This annual competitive matching grant program is funded by the County Open Space Trust Fund. Each municipality may file one application a year and is eligible for up to \$250,000. State-designated Urban Aid Communities must pay a minimum of 25% of project costs; all other municipalities must pay minimum of 50%.

Applications for the 2009 round of County grants for municipal open space projects will be mailed to each Mayor, Clerk and Administrator in May. A September deadline is anticipated. For more information, visit www.monmouthcountyparks.com, click "About Us" then "Municipal Open Space Program." If you have questions or would like a hard copy of the Manual, please call the Program Administrator at 732-842-4000, ext. 4472.

2008 OPEN SPACE GRANT AWARD WINNERS		
Allentown	Breza Road Acquisition Phase 2	\$250,000
Atlantic Highlands	Harbor Skate Park Development	\$85,000
Avon-by-the-Sea	Riverfront Park and Marina Acquisition	\$250,000
Bradley Beach	Lake Terrace Park Improvements	\$20,000
Colts Neck	Block 2 Lot 1 Acquisition	\$100,000
Highlands	Acquisition of #2 Private Road	\$220,000
Howell	Tornopsky Property Acquisition	\$150,000
Keansburg	Improvements to Various Parks	\$80,000
Keyport	Keyport Waterfront Park Development	\$250,000
Manasquan	Manasquan Community Center Development	\$250,000
Oceanport	Charles Park Renovation	\$159,000
Rumson	Victory Park Expansion Acquisition	\$250,000
Tinton Falls	DeLisa Property Acquisition	\$200,000
Upper Freehold	Breza Road Acquisition Phase 2	\$250,000

MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE GRANT AWARDS (2003-2008)



Most towns in Monmouth County have received Open Space Grant awards from the county.

Home Gardener



Gardening, The Future Of Bird Conservation

Randy McHaney, Senior Gardener

As you may or may not know, many local bird populations are in decline. The loss of their living and breeding grounds to home construction, parking lots, highways, and modern day infrastructure can be sublimated in a dramatic way by planting gardens that help replace these habitats. In addition to its beauty, a garden that attracts birds can be an incredible source of enjoyment.

TREES & SHRUBS FOR A BIRD FRIENDLY GARDEN

Attract a wide variety of birds by planting many different types of plants including trees, shrubs, grasses, perennials, annuals, fruits and vegetables. A sunny, open space for bird feeders and a water source is ideal for attracting birds. Plant this area with sun-loving perennials and annuals. A portion of your garden should also include a woody thicket which will provide cover and nesting. Plant this thicket with a combination of trees and shrubs.

Common Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) is an excellent native tree and a favorite of gardeners because of its beautiful fall color, nice bark, and interesting bright green leaves. This tree is usually dioecious, which means the male and female flowers are borne on different trees. The female tree produces fruit which is eaten by songbirds. Sassafras trees are also important as nesting sites and for protection from the elements.



Common Sassafras



Songbirds feed on Sassafras berries.

Sassafras can grow to about 30 feet and has an irregular shape. These fast-growing plants prefer an evenly moist, loamy, acidic soil that is well drained. They can grow in either full sun or partial shade; more light will create better fall color.

On the east and west sides of your garden plant native **Dwarf White Pines** or **Dwarf White Spruce**.

There are some very nice, compact varieties on the market. **American Holly** (*Ilex opaca*) would also be a nice choice for this area; cedar waxwing or mockingbirds and other birds are attracted to holly berries, and the evergreen leaves provide shelter for many bird species.



Evergreens provide shelter for many bird species.

Rhododendrons, which include azaleas, are an ideal choice in the shadier areas of your garden. There are several extremely beautiful deciduous azaleas that will do nicely here.

DEEP CUT SPRING EVENTS

April 17th, 2009

VOLUNTEER DROP-INS BEGINS!

Tues, Thurs, and Saturdays, 9am -12pm. Join the staff and become involved in various gardening projects.

April 25th, 2009

SPRING PERENNIAL PLANT SWAP

10am – 2pm
This is a great opportunity



to share extras from your garden! Exchange 1 qt, and 1 or 2 gallon perennial plants with other gardeners in the area. It's a lot of fun! Please call Deep Cut Gardens for more information 732-651-6050.

Saturday, June 27, 2009

DAYLILY DAY

10am – 2pm

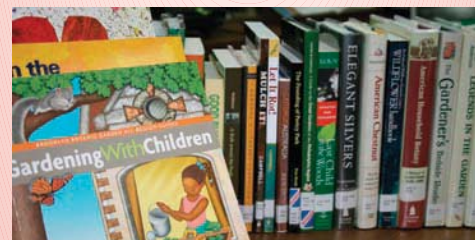
Learn all about this hardy perennial. See displays and meet the experts.

NEW! DEEP CUT LIBRARY HAS OVER 40 NEW BOOKS

Stop By Mon – Sat, 9am – 3:30pm

Learn about about potager, insects, composting, green and organic gardening, garden writing and so much more!

Plus, enjoy great new children's books!



The family of retiree Mae Fischer donated funds towards the acquisition of these books.

OMISSION: Park System Gardener Randy McHaney's name was accidentally omitted from two articles in the previous, Winter 2008-2009 issue of the Home Gardener. He was author and photographer for both "Gardening Basics for a Green Tomorrow" and "Bark, By Nature's Design."

The Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) with its loose, bright orange trusses is native to the Piedmont in Delaware. This species can have variable flower color in shades of yellow, pink and gold so care should be taken when selecting your plant at the garden center. Flame Azaleas flower in May/June just in time to attract male hummingbird scouts, which travel north during this time in search of nesting areas.

Flame Azaleas flower just in time to attract male hummingbird scouts in search of nesting areas.

These deciduous types can be grown in full sun but probably should be protected from hot, west, summer exposure that can shorten the flowering period. They prefer good garden soil, so be sure to add plenty of compost when planting. This area should be kept evenly moist, and a good layer of mulch should help, but the area should also be well drained with no standing water.

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia 'Brilliantissima'*) is another native shrub that is easy to grow and provides food in the form of nectar in the spring, great leaf color, berries in the fall/winter and shelter for birds. Growing from 6-10 feet tall, it should be sited near the back of the garden. When planted *en masse*, Aronia makes an excellent show of berries that persist well into winter. I would suggest growing these in a good garden soil and in full sun for the most spectacular berry set.

MIX ANNUALS & PERENNIALS TO PLEASE THE BIRDS

In the garden areas of your yard, plant about half perennials and half annuals. This can vary, of course, depending on your interest.

Short-toothed Mountain-mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*) is an herbaceous perennial that is both disease-free and deer-resistant. It's a sun-loving plant that will flower for many weeks starting in July. Silvery bracts that last for months surround the purple-speckled small white flowers. This aromatic plant is also drought-tolerant, once



Short-toothed Mountain-mint



1. *Amaranthus cruentus 'Autumn's Touch'* 2. *Black-Eyed Susan* 3. *Flame Azalea*

established. This can be accomplished by mulching all your perennials well when planting.

Mountain mints have beautiful gray foliage and grow 1-3 feet tall. They attract many very small insects that are not pests or bothersome to humans/pets, but are good sources of protein for the birds. Hummingbirds, especially, supplement their diet of nectar with very small insects that they catch on the wing. Some perennials provide important bird nutrients—Mountain Mint attracts insects, Black-eyed Susan provides seeds.

Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) is a native plant and is extremely popular with the gardening community. They flower for a long period of time starting in July and are easy to grow, as long as they have full sun and are kept evenly moist. Bright yellow petals adorn a central purplish-brown disk. Goldfinches are attracted to the ripening seed head at the end of the season and a feeding frenzy often ensues. Black Eyed Susan grows about 2 feet tall.

Annuals are plants that complete their life cycle in one year. There are many bird-friendly varieties to choose from, including petunias, penta, zinnia, morning glories, impatiens and many more. *Amaranthus cruentus 'Autumn's Touch'* is a beautiful new variety. It can grow to four feet tall with beautiful two-foot plumes in light green to light brown; the tips are bronze color. This is an absolute favorite of songbirds, and before the season's over they will flock to its goodness.

Springs Presents

Randy McHaney, Senior Gardener

Tulips are bulbous plants of the lily family. The large hybrids have been bred for flower size, color, and habit, for over 100 years. They were the first ornamental plants to become an international rage. Fortunes were spent in order to acquire particular varieties of tulips, which were bought and sold by kings and wealthy merchants, creating what came to be known as 'Tulip mania' in the 1800s.

During the 'Tulip Mania' of the 1800s, fortunes were spent by kings and merchants to acquire particular varieties.



Hybridized Tulips

Columbine (*Aquilegia*) is a clump-forming herbaceous perennial. There are many different species and all are glorious and easy to grow. The showy, spurred flowers come in many different colors including blue, white, yellow, pink, red and bicolor. The photo right shows our native columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), which will reseed itself around the yard but never become invasive. It looks especially nice when grown in a woodland setting and can be grown in full sun to light shade.



Native Columbine



Cut leaf Japanese Maple

Cut leaf weeping **Japanese Maples** (*Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum') are true royalty in the landscape. Unfortunately, it takes a lifetime for them to attain this level of grandeur. If you have the space, plant one. After 40 years it might help you to sell your home. Grow this tree in an area that receives some shade, especially in the afternoon when the sun is most intense.



Pieris 'Bert Chandler'

Pieris is a popular evergreen shrub that is known for its shiny, dark green foliage and attractive, bell-shaped flowers in white or shades of pink. The photo shows Pieris 'Bert Chandler', a favorite and one of the most beautiful. Unlike most of this genus, this variety is grown for its bright pink and creamy white new growth, which last for several weeks. This particular cultivar is a little on the tender side and will need some protection, especially if grown west of Deep Cut Gardens/Middletown. It can grow to 6 feet.

IT'S TIME TO

APRIL ✓

- Continue corrective pruning; remove crossing, damaged, and dead branches.
- Deep Cut Gardens is radiant with color. The cherry blossoms are real showstoppers, a centerpiece for April.
- Volunteer Drop-In begins at Deep Cut Gardens, April 17th
- Plant hardy shrubs and trees as soon as the soil can be worked, not too wet or too dry. Planting when soil is too wet destroys the structure of the soil. If a handful of soil can be molded into a hard ball that does not fall apart when dropped, the soil is too wet for planting.
- Amend heavy clay soils or light sandy soils with well-rotted compost. This will improve drainage in heavy soils and increase water-holding in sandy soils.

Last frost date:
April 15th

- Most plants prefer soil that is moist but well drained. Do not plant in areas that have a history of standing water.
- Set up a hummingbird feeder. Use one part sugar to four parts of water. Adding red dye is not recommended. The feeder should be hung in an open area of your garden, so that migrating birds can easily spot it. It's very important to keep your Hummingbird feeder free of mold. Clean it every few days, especially during hot periods. Use a bottlebrush, hot water, and a little vinegar; then rinse thoroughly.

MAY ✓

- Successful gardening starts with good soil. Compost is like "gold" to a gardener. Visit the many composting systems at Deep Cut Gardens' demonstration area. It's easy, it's fun.
- When spring flowering shrubs get too tall or out of shape, cut them back. The best time is right after they flower. Never remove more than 1/3 of the plant in any one year.
- Leave bulb foliage to ripen – it will turn brown and come up with a gentle tug – leaving this foliage is necessary for the development of next year's flower buds.
- On warm days, start moving houseplants and seedlings outside for a few hours. Bring them back inside at night to harden off plants (acclimate them to new environment, reduce leaf damage)
- Begin shearing and shaping evergreen or deciduous hedges, such as arborvitae and privet.
- Propagate favorite houseplants by division, cuttings, or air layering.

JUNE PLANTING TIPS!!!!

- Be sure to dig a nice generous hole for your new plants. Width should be at least twice the diameter of the root ball for woody plants, perennials, and annuals. Depth should be about the same as the root ball. Width is more important than depth, since most rooting occurs horizontally out from the root ball, not down.
- Never plant too deep. The top of the root ball or crown should be just above ground level. Planting too deep could encourage water accumulation in this crown area, causing it to rot.
- Rough-up the sides of the hole with your planting tool for easier root penetration.
- It's best to backfill with soil that is similar to surrounding soil. (Drag a little of the topsoil that is nearby into the hole, then mix with the backfill.)
- There are many reasons to mulch after planting:
 - 1) Mulch increases the amount of organic matter in the soil; this increases the soil's nutrient-holding abilities; nutrients are then available to the plant.
 - 2) It keeps the soil evenly moist and saves on water.
 - 3) Mulch controls soil temperature fluctuation, which helps maintain good root growth.
 - 4) It helps suppress weed growth, which robs the area of moisture and nutrients.
 - 5) Mulch encourages earthworms and beneficial bacteria to move in; they feed on organic material, freeing up additional nutrients for the plants.
- Now, tender plants can be set out for summer.
- Plant annuals early in the month to get them well established before the heat of summer. Plants establish quicker when the soil is a little on the cool side; the heat of summer usually slows down plant growth.
- Continue dead-heading perennials. This will encourage growth of new buds and more flowers.



Spring planting at Deep Cut Gardens



Avon-by-The Sea will preserve this view of Shark River.

“The Borough of Avon-by-the-Sea is completely developed and the only way we can increase the area open to the public for recreational use is through acquisitions such as this one.”

*-Mayor Robert Mahon,
Avon-by-the-Sea*

Making The Most Of The Coast

Monmouth County’s coastal waters are one of its greatest assets. Three of the 2008 Open Space grants awards will go toward acquisition of waterfront property, and a fourth will bring significant improvements to an existing waterfront park.

County grants will enhance public access to four area waterfronts.

1 For years, **downtown Keyport** has been separated from its **Raritan Bay** waterfront by a large and charmless public parking lot. While public access to the waterfront was always available, it was far from inviting. Recognizing that an attractive park in this location would not only benefit its residents, but would also draw people from throughout the region to the adjacent business district, Keyport officials acted to devote roughly

half of the parking lot to a public park. Landscaping, lighting, and comfortable seating areas will enhance the park’s daily use, and large open areas will support numerous special events year round. The Borough was awarded a \$250,000 County grant for this park improvement project.

2 At 0.40 square miles, **Avon-by-the-Sea** is the county’s sixth smallest municipality in area. Although its southerly border is contiguous with the **Shark River**, historically, there has been no public land on the riverfront. That will change with the Borough’s purchase of a 1/3 acre property prominently located at the northeast intersection of the Route 71 (Main Street) Bridge and the River. A \$250,000 County grant and anticipated funding from the State Green Acres Program will help the Borough provide public access to and permanently preserve beautiful views of the Shark River.

3 The **Borough of Highlands** was awarded \$250,000 toward its purchase of a 1/2-acre property on **Sandy Hook Bay**. Located between two municipally-owned lots, this acquisition almost doubles the bay frontage at this location to 215 linear feet and precludes incompatible private development between the two small parks.

4 Similarly, the **Borough of Rumson** was awarded \$250,000 for the expansion of its popular Victory Park on the **Navesink River**. The .59-acre addition will enable the Borough to supplement the activities and programs currently offered at the park, including accommodations for a new local crew program.

In addition to their waterfront locations, the Keyport, Avon-by-the-Sea, Highlands and Rumson project sites all have something else in common – they are all developed sites. Officials in these four municipalities saw the potential to convert developed property to public open space, demonstrating that a lack of vacant land does not mean a municipality cannot add to its open space inventory.



Keyport will convert half of this parking lot into a park overlooking Raritan Bay.



Horseshoe Crab landing on the beach

NATURE CORNER

Birds And Horseshoe Crabs Connect At The Jersey Shore

Joe Reynolds, Senior Park Naturalist

On a mid-May evening, as I walk along the edge of Sandy Hook Bay at the Bayshore Waterfront Park in Port Monmouth I can see that many people are out watching a full moon rise over the bay. Others are fishing along the water's edge for striped bass or the last of winter flounder. Yet, only a few notice the hard-shelled critters crawling up to the beach...

Take my advice, if you plan to spend time in May or June along beaches in Raritan or Sandy Hook Bay, or along the salty shores of the Navesink, Shrewsbury, Shark or Manasquan Rivers, please watch where you walk. You do not want to step on one of world's oldest sea creatures.

ANCIENT CREATURES OF THE BAY

American horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*) have a lineage that goes back more than 400 million years. They predate the present-day formation of the Atlantic Ocean by some 250 million years. They are even older than the dinosaurs, having developed about 100 million years before the first dinosaur. Yet, this extraordinary ancient animal is still with us today.

Horseshoe crabs are ancient... even older than dinosaurs.

They have been around so long that it is hard for most people to comprehend just what it means for an animal to be in existence for millions of years. It is no wonder why some naturalists call horseshoe crabs a living fossil. Furthermore, they have changed little in appearance in at least the last 350 million years.

While they may look menacing, horseshoe crabs have never been known to harm people. Their mouth does not even contain jaws or teeth and its long tail is very delicate; so much so, that if you pick up a horseshoe crab by its tail, it will break off. The tail is used only as a rudder while swimming and to help the crab turn over when stranded on the beach by a large wave.

HORSESHOE CRABS: PART OF AN IMPORTANT SHORE LIFE CYCLE

Soon after migratory striped bass appear in the bay to spawn, and just as the winter flounder depart for colder ocean waters, horseshoe crabs begin to mate and lay eggs in the sand. Peak times are around the full or new moon. Horseshoe crabs like to spawn on sandy beaches, protected from the turbulent waves in the Atlantic Ocean. Favorite sites include bays, coves, and lagoons.

Female horseshoe crabs are normally larger than males; up to 2 feet long. The females start the breeding cycle in May by producing a chemical pheromone to attract males. This chemical can attract between 5 to 10 males to cozy up to a single female, but only one male will be successful. The first male to latch onto the backside of a female with his two front claws, which resemble small boxing gloves, will become the female's mate.

The female will walk along a beach making circular tracks, with the male clinging to her rear shell. As the female walks, she will dig a hole about a foot deep into the sand to deposit up to 4,000 brightly colored pea green eggs. The job of the male is to then fertilize the eggs, and cover up the hole to keep the eggs moist and oxygenated. The pair will



Left: Male horseshoe crabs fighting over a female.

Below: Male (smaller) and female horseshoe crabs mating

Male and female horseshoe crab making circular tracks.



Horseshoe crab eggs

repeat this activity over a period of several weeks on the same beach.

It is estimated that a single female horseshoe crab will deposit over 80,000 eggs in the sand between May and June. Yet, only one in 130,000 eggs will hatch and develop into an adult.

Only 1 in 130,000 horseshoe crab eggs will hatch and develop.

These eggs do not go unnoticed by other animals, such as gulls, raccoons, turtles, and some shallow water fishes and crabs. Yet, the most dependent on horseshoe crab eggs for their survival are migratory shorebirds.

SHOREBIRDS RELY ON HORSESHOE CRAB EGGS TO SURVIVE

By the end of May, around a half-dozen species of birds, such as red knots, sanderlings, dunlins, ruddy turnstones, and sandpipers, will travel from the tropics to estuarine sites along the Jersey Shore to feed, and double their body weight. They have less than two weeks to put on enough fat to continue their lengthy migration to breeding grounds in northern Canada or the Arctic. They do this by feeding on Horseshoe Crab eggs.

One sanderling, for instance, may eat on an average of 9,000 eggs a day. These little shorebirds arrive just in time to feed on newly-laid horseshoe crab eggs, but don't stay long enough to eat up all the eggs during egg-laying season.

Red Knots depend on fatty horseshoe crab eggs to regain their strength for the long journey northward. This little bird travels thousands of miles from its South American wintering grounds in Patagonia to rest and feed in New Jersey. It will then continue migrating to its breeding ground, nearly half a world away in the thawing tundra of northern Canada. No doubt, this impressive journey is one of the great natural wonders in the world.

The endangered Red Knot relies on horseshoe crab eggs for sustenance during its staggering 2,000 mile migration.

Without horseshoe crab eggs to provide nourishment, many of these migrating birds will not have enough energy to travel. They might quickly become exhausted and disappear.



Red Knot/U.S. Fish & Wildlife

DECLINING HORSESHOE CRABS

The Jersey Shore once supported a large population of Horseshoe Crabs. Unfortunately, since 1991 the population has been declining in New Jersey. As a result, the Red Knot is classified as an endangered bird by the state.

Adult Horseshoe Crabs have few natural predators. Yet, people are proving to be the most daunting threat in nearly 300 million years of evolutionary history. While not harvested for food in the United States, they are an important source of bait for fisherman to catch eels and whelks, which are pricy sources of food for people in Asia and Europe. What's more, there has been a great decline in prime horseshoe crab breeding sites in the last 50 years due to increased shoreline development.

In response, on May 15, 2006, the State of New Jersey adopted a moratorium or ban on the harvesting of Horseshoe Crabs. This action has helped to let Horseshoe Crab populations slowly recover. Of course, more needs to be done, but this is a noteworthy first step to protect these ancient creatures of the bay.

It's important to have a large population of horseshoe crabs to satisfy both the future needs of the species and the migratory shorebirds that depend on their eggs for food and energy. Here is a clear example that "everything-is-connected-to-everything-else" in nature, and it is demonstrated right here on the estuarine beaches in Monmouth County each spring.



Migratory shorebirds: a Dunlin (brown back) among a flock of Semi-palmated Sandpipers.



GREEN HERITAGE

805 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738-1695

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PARK SYSTEM



A Dogwood Blooms in April at Thompson Park

PHOTO #1: Buds appear April 10

PHOTO #2: and start to open April 14

PHOTO #3: Petals unfurl April 23

PHOTO #4: and turn beautiful white, maturing by May 7

PHOTO #5: Petals fall off; just the leaves remain on May 27

Special thanks to County Park Manager Ken Thoman for charting one of Thompson Park's most wonderful spring displays

