

# DELAWARE BOTANIC GARDENS

Summer 2022



Executive Director Sheryl Swed and President Ray Sander

## Update Report

During these last several months DBG's Gardens and organization have reached new peaks. The magnificent blooms throughout the established gardens plus the additional planted areas have demonstrated the extraordinary horticultural talents of our great staff and dedicated volunteers.

Their hard work has been rewarded by record numbers of very happy visitors. Since we expanded our hours of operation to 7 hours a day for 4 days a week averaging 16 days per month, DBG has set new attendance records. We have experienced 19 days with over 100 visitors per day, with attendance for many of the remaining days averaging 60+ visitors.

Many of these visitors have participated in the array of tours and educational programs which have been offered by our growing number of knowledgeable staff and volunteers who enjoy sharing their love and insights about DBG's unique gardens, woodlands and shoreline.

In addition, our visitors have enjoyed the wide selection of new offerings in the DBG gift shop. They also have purchased hundreds of plants which have been grown by our talented staff. Our visitors also like that all the proceeds from the plant sales go toward our employees' end of year bonuses.

DBG has continued to have the support of our elected officials who have again included DBG in Delaware's annual Bond Bill grants. In June, DBG was awarded \$475,000 from the Delaware Reinvestment Fund for the all-weather pavilion. This grant moves us closer to the anticipated final cost of constructing this essential structure which will become the "center stage" of DBG's educational programs and events. We look forward to a groundbreaking ceremony in early 2023.

In June, we were presented with an unexpected opportunity to raise funds for DBG. The Schell Brothers, one of the region's leading home builders, selected DBG for their KUDOS program. This generous company awarded DBG \$1 for every KUDO that our guests, supporters and friends gave to DBG in June. Thanks to many of you rallying to our appeal, Schell Brothers gifted DBG with \$10,000 — a wonderful, unanticipated example of generosity from Schell Brothers and exceptional support from our great DBG community.

During these busy months, DBG has also expanded our outreach to the surrounding towns & communities through our cooperative program with Sussex County libraries. Delaware library card holders can "check out" a free

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DELAWARE  
BOTANIC  
GARDENS  
AT PEPPER CREEK

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Photos by Ray Bojarski, Brent Baker,  
and Stephen Pryce Lea

adult admission pass which will help all of our Delmarva neighbors to visit and enjoy the beauty of the gardens.

All of our recent activities & events have generated a steady stream of news coverage, including local, regional and national.

When we built the public restrooms, we wanted the structure to reflect DBG's commitment to sustainability, beauty and function.

Never did we expect that the restrooms would be selected as one of the top ten public restrooms in the U.S. for 2022! The creative design has also been nominated for recognition by the American Institute of Architects.

Similarly, the Living Shoreline restoration was implemented to address a very pressing problem — the erosion of our Pepper Creek shoreline. This ingenious project was a joint effort with the Center for Inland Bays. Not only did it solve our erosion problem, but it has also been selected for national recognition. The Living Shoreline at DBG has received one of the best restored shore awards by the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association. We need to give shoutouts to Sam Cashdollar, Jeremy Cole, Karen Steenhoudt, Dr. Marianne Walch, Carol Bason and all our CIB colleagues.

Lastly, just as the seasons change, the talented DBG team members also change. We have had some excellent additions including Bridget Curran, as a new Horticultural Assistant; three new Advisory Council members—Jeremy Hager, former Board Member; Dan Barbato, Vice President, Pennoni Associates; & Dan Levin, Director of Operations, SoDel Concepts.

In addition, Stephen Pryce Lea, our Director of Horticulture, has been promoted and taken on the additional duties of Director of Education Programs. Leading these two important and interconnected responsibilities will ensure that our horticultural mission is fully complimented by our education mission.

Craig Sims, our Director of Development, left after the funding for his position expired.

Lynda Messick who had hoped to join DBG as our Treasurer this year, was not able to assume these tasks due to the expansion of her previous professional commitments. Fortunately, DBG Board Member Alison Willocks, has stepped up and became our Interim Treasurer as we search for new candidates. Alison and Jane Hines, our Financial Manager have done an outstanding job in overseeing and directing DBG's finances.

Remember the "Fifth Season" is about to begin. Come experience it before we close on November 20.

*Raymond Sheryl*

Raymond and Sheryl



## LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

### New Members of DBG Advisory Council

David Small, Chair of the DBG Advisory Council said, "The DBG Advisory Council is a group of distinguished thought—leaders who have brought their extensive knowledge, insights and experience to the DBG mission of creating a world class public garden in Delaware."

Ray Sander said, "We are very proud that these three proven leaders have joined the DBG Advisory Council Team and expect them to bring new creative ideas to the table as we continue to grow the Delaware Botanic Gardens."



**Jeremy Hager** served with distinction for three years as a DBG Board Member. As a ISA certified master arborist, he is Special Advisor on the safety and health of the woodlands. Jeremy said, "I am glad to be able to continue to support the DBG Team."



**Dan Barbato** is a Civil Engineer at Pennoni [Engineering] Associates and is Office Director of their Newark Office. Dan said, "I am well-aware of the important conservation and wildlife preservation role that Delaware Botanic Gardens plays in Sussex County. I am proud to continue my active role in this amazing non-profit public garden enterprise."



**Dan Levin** began his career at SoDel Concepts in 2012 working his way through various capacities from Line Cook, to expeditor, and is a member of the Haley/Kammerer Consulting and Highwater Management Team. Dan said, "I am honored to join the Delaware Botanic

Garden volunteer team and follow in the footsteps of SoDel Corporate Chef Ronnie Burkle."

# EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## Sip & Saunter

Summer began with the annual “Sip & Saunter” Event, as over 100 guests enjoyed the gardens on a balmy June evening. In addition to being a fun time, it was a chance to say thanks to some of our long-time supporters and volunteers. The delicious food was catered by Good Earth Market, drinks by Dogfish Head Brewery and “live” music by Vince Varrassi and the 5th Avenue combo. This event occurred in the middle of our June Schell Brothers’ Kudos campaign, so Kudos became a theme, with everybody having a good time posing with the Kudos sign.



Vince and 5th Avenue



Far left: Staff (L to R) Bridget Curran, Sam Cashdollar, Stephen Pryce Lea, Jane Hines, Angie Phinney and Jeremy Cole

Left: Advisory Council members, (L to R) David Small, Tom Bason, Sue Ryan, Ron Bass and Sally Boswell



(L to R) Sally F. Walker, Barbara Peters and Sheryl Swed



Sussex County Council President Michael Vincent and Elaine Vincent



Jen Edmonston and Erich Pfeffer with guests



Good Earth Market Food Team



(L to R) Jeremy Cole, Peg Emerson, Sally Gore, and Sam Cashdollar



## "Free" Admission Passes at Partner Public Libraries

DBG is proud of our community outreach program to provide **"Free" DBG admission passes** at Sussex County Public Libraries.

Ray Sander said, "The public libraries are an important partner in our community outreach."

As of the publication of this newsletter, the following libraries are part of this program:

- Frankford Public Library
- Georgetown Public Library
- Laurel Public Library
- Lewes Public Library
- Millsboro Public Library
- Rehoboth Beach Public Library
- Seaford District Public Library
- Selbyville Public Library
- South Coastal Public Library, Bethany Beach



Kelly Kline, Selbyville Public Library Director said, **"We are thrilled to add the Delaware Botanic Gardens passes to our circulating collection. Partnerships among nonprofits enrich communities by making services, learning, and experiences accessible to all. The Selbyville Public Library is grateful for the opportunity to share this connection with our patrons."**



(L to R) Margaret Kimmel assisted by Cheryl Quirk teaching class

## Summer Classes

The **Butterflies & Blooms Class** kicked-off our summer classes on July 21, and was held every Thursday through August. The teachers were volunteer educators Margaret Kimmel and Craig Haggerty supported by Stephen Pryce Lea and other docents. The life cycle of butterflies, and a discussion of summer butterflies that visit the Piet Oudolf Meadow, including Monarchs, and Swallowtails was part of the presentation.

Guests learned to identify butterflies, discovered the critical role of both nectar, host plants, and blooms in the life cycle of butterflies. Participants concluded their butterfly experience by exploring the Piet Oudolf Meadow with DBG volunteers, identifying the many butterflies that visit the Gardens.



## *Kudos for DBG*

As indicated earlier, from June 2–July 4, Schell Brothers Project Kudos donated to DBG \$1 for each Kudos shared on social media Facebook and Instagram. As our social media editor, Stephen Pryce Lea, Director of Horticulture & Education Programs headed up the DBG Kudos campaign with help from our dedicated volunteers.

**DBG raised \$10,000.  
Thanks to everyone who participated.**



## *Tours*

**In addition to having guided tours every open day at 10 a.m., the summer season allowed us to highlight some of our garden features.**

### **Tree Identification Tours**

In June and July, volunteer Elizabeth Rives, a DBG docent and certified naturalist and tree and scrub expert gave special tree identification tours in the gardens and woodlands.



### **Piet Oudolf Meadow Summer Tours**

From June to late August, Stephen Pryce Lea gave summer and late summer Meadow Tours with a leisurely stroll through the Piet Oudolf Meadow focused on the benefits of growing native plants, the pollinators they attract, on summer perennials and on seed collection. He continues these tours with Fall Gardening for Wildlife October 1, 2, 15 and 16.





### Extension of Dry Creek Bed

Sam Cashdollar, Jeremy Cole and Bridget Curran have completed construction of a 75-foot extension of the dry creek bed that gently winds down the east side of the Restroom Complex to run under the West Woodland trail. A pump will soon push water gently down the dry creek bed.



### Bay Front Environmental Club Visit

On June 30, the Bay Front Environmental Club visited DBG and took a special guided tour given by Carol McCloud.



### EPA National Estuaries Group Visit

On July 25, visitors from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Estuaries Program were at the gardens, including: Nancy Laurson, EPA Headquarters, Washington, D.C., Ferry Akbar, Amie Howell, and Cathy Magliochetti from EPA Region III in Philadelphia. This EPA group was visiting to look at several of CIB's estuary programs—(DBG/CIB's Living Shoreline Project was one), as well as other properties on Piney Neck Road for possible land preservation/reforestation.

This visit was co-hosted by Carol Bason, DBG Science Advisor; Sam Cashdollar, DBG Director of Grounds & Facilities, Jeremy Cole, DBG Horticulturalist; and Dr. Susan Ball, Chair, Board of Directors, CIB; Anna Fagan, Deputy Director, CIB; Michelle Schmidt, Director, Conservation and Watershed Planning, CIB; and Dr. Marianne Walch, Director, Estuary Science and Restoration, CIB and member of the DBG Advisory Council.



(L to R) Debbie Micsky, President of Barefoot Gardeners Club presenting \$5,000 check to Carol McCloud, DBG Vice President

### Barefoot Gardener's Club Visit

On August 8, the Barefoot Gardener's Club visited and presented a \$5,000 check to DBG.



### University of Delaware Visit

On August 27, DBG hosted 15 students and 3 professors from the UD Landscape Architecture major. They had a class in the Leaning Garden given by Ray and Sheryl on the DBG Master Landscaping Plan and the group took a tour of the gardens.



### Women's Journal Visit

On August 16, the Woman's Journal staff shot their September 2022 magazine cover at DBG. The group included DBG Board members, docents, garden stewards and other DBG volunteers.



### Bethany Beach Boardwalk Arts Festival

On Saturday, September 10, DBG hosted a booth on the boardwalk staffed by our volunteers. There were 100 artists and an estimated 100,000 people at this event.



(L to R) Alison Willocks, Tom Bason, Angie Phinney and Sandy Fitt

### DBG IT Team

The DBG Information Technology team is a "behind the scenes" group that keeps the DBG Information Technology Systems, website and POS System up-to-date.



### Getting a Charge out of DBG

Jennifer Naylor and granddaughter Madeline from Dagsboro, DE charged their Tesla at the DBG charger stations. As part of the DBG Environmental Stewardship Program, these two charger stations were installed in winter 2022, in partnership with The Electric Vehicle Institute.



(L to R), Carol McCloud, Sally Gore, Barbara Peters, Peg Emerson, Ron Bass, Sheryl Swed and George Robbins

## Naming Rights Opportunities

At the June Sip & Saunter, some of the naming rights sponsors gathered with DBG Executive Director, Sheryl Swed. The sponsors included: Carol McCloud (Folly Garden); Sally Gore & Peg Emerson (Learning Nest); Barbara Peters (The Point); Ron Bass & George Robbins (Knoll Garden). We thank them all for their naming rights sponsorships.

Recently, Charlie Zonko sponsored the naming rights for the Woodland Ridge Garden. DBG has some other wonderful naming rights opportunities. If you or someone you know might be interested in being a sponsor, here is the list of the garden features available for naming rights.

- Observation Deck at Pepper Creek
- West Woodland Garden Pathway Bridge
- The Three Inland Dunes Gardens
- Reflecting Pool in Folly Garden
- Two Vernal Pools in East & West Woodlands
- The Gallery Garden
- Midway Woodland Edge Garden
- Oak Grove
- Piet Oudolf Meadow or sections of the Meadow

**Naming rights sponsors have a special naming rights sign installed at their feature.**

**If you are interested, please contact Executive Director Sheryl Swed, 202-262-9856 or email [sherylswed@delawaregardens.org](mailto:sherylswed@delawaregardens.org).**



## Benches Needed

DBG has expanded the West Woodland trails, including a new shortcut trail that loops to the west of the Restroom Facility taking you to the Restrooms-Welcome Center Area. So, we need more benches for our guests to rest. This is a perfect time to name a bench after someone special as a timeless gift. There are two types of 48-inch benches—one with a back and one flat bench. The benches can be inscribed with up to 33 characters including spaces.

**Go to [delawaregardens.org/bench-orders](http://delawaregardens.org/bench-orders) and scroll down to bench order details.**



# CAPITAL PROJECTS



## Annette Pennoni Meadow Pavilion

Our Pennoni and SEA Studios Architect partners have interviewed contactors interested in the Pavilion Request for Proposals (RFPs). The RFP will go out not only to commercial builders, but also to some custom home builders who are building structures that are even bigger than our pavilion. This allows us to go to a larger group of potential builders. As we said before, receiving the \$475,000 in the Bond Bill allowed us to move forward. We expect to select a contactor this fall, with work completed in time for the 2024 season, subject to supply chain problems.

This all-weather facility is needed so we can operate all year-long for DBG educational events and to develop a revenue source by renting the pavilion facilities for meetings and special private events such as weddings, etc.



## Staff-Volunteer Pole Building

Sam Cashdollar, Director of Grounds & Facilities is working with Mark Davidson at Pennoni Engineering, and Diamond State Builders to get this project started. As this newsletter went to press, we are waiting for the building permit. Diamond State hopes to start onsite construction in mid-to-late October. The 30' X 40' pole building construction should go "pretty quickly." We hope the pole building will be all completed by the end of the year.

For perspective the footprint of the building is like two Welcome Centers sitting side-by-side. Half of the building will be a garage-workshop area, the other half of the building will have an office, restroom and meeting/breakroom similar to the layout in the welcome center.



## VOLUNTEER & TOURS UPDATE

News from Carol McCloud,  
DBG Vice President & Volunteer Director



**With the hint of fall just around the corner and our beautiful Meadow starting to go to seed, our Volunteers are realizing it won't be long until the incredible humidity will be behind us.**

July and August this year marked one of the hottest summers on record. In spite of the heat, our Garden Stewards have been working hard alongside our staff, weeding, planting, rebuilding the nests, cutting the lawn/mounds, maintaining the pathways to make sure the Gardens were beautiful for our June, Sip & Saunter and our daily visits by our guests. Our Garden Stewards never disappoint, they come to volunteer with our staff in all types of weather. Their contributions and hard work are commendable.

As a result, the Gardens have been a flurry of butterflies, bees buzzing and an abundance of plants and grasses. When I give tours, our guests consistently express their

amazement that our 37-acre property is maintained by our volunteers and a very small staff.

We started out in 2022 with 109 active Garden Stewards. Active does not mean that they have come and volunteered at the Gardens. We keep them active for at least a year. Some may not have returned due to illness, injury or personal reasons; however, plan on returning. We had 71 Garden Stewards who have come to the Gardens to volunteer and continue to do so. Since May 1st I have sent out 28 emails to possible Garden Stewards. Nine have started volunteering with three more returning in the fall. Which brings our total, at this time for Garden Stewards, to 83 which is an impressive number.

Another role of a volunteer at the Gardens is as a Docent. At this time, we have a total of 28 Docents to greet our guests, check guests in, answer questions and sell merchandise. Our Docents are truly amazing. They

too come in all types of weather to make sure the guests have a wonderful experience. Even with no A/C or heat, in the Welcome Center, they still go above and beyond for our guests. We couldn't be open without them. Our sign-in book is full of accolades both for the Gardens and our Docents.

To show our appreciation to our Volunteers we will again be having a Volunteer Appreciation celebration in the fall.



## Training & Development

We continue to have Training & Development programs for our volunteers. In addition to the training provided in February, March, April and May below are the additional training sessions to date:

- **June—Tree ID Training with Elizabeth Rives, Volunteer & Certified Naturalist**
- **July (2 Sessions)—Meadow Garden Summer Training with Stephen Pryce Lea, Director of Horticulture**

## Tours

The pre-booked group guided tour program has been extremely successful this year with Covid behind us. To date we have given 27 large tours with 10 more booked to the end of the season. Also, three rescheduled due



to poor weather conditions. We have also given small group tours from guests signing up on our website or as walk-ins every day at 10:00 a.m. that we are open. Our largest tours will be coming in October by bus, thanks to the opening of our new restrooms. It's been an exciting season for our tours.

In conjunction with our group tours our Director of Horticulture, Stephen Pryce Lea has also been giving Meadow Garden Tours, late spring, early summer, mid-summer and will continue in the fall. Elizabeth Rives, Volunteer, Certified Naturalist and tree & shrub expert has been giving Tree Identification tours in the Woodlands and will continue in the fall as well.

As Director of Tours, I share the privilege of also being a Tour Guide. The opportunity of being a tour guide is shared with Stephen Pryce Lea, Elizabeth Rives, Gary Stokes and Margaret Kimmel.



(L to R) Stephen Pryce Lea, Elizabeth Rives, Gary Stokes & Carol Mccloud taken in Folly on August 18

**If you are interested in having a large group tour, please contact me at [carol.mccloud@delawaregardens.org](mailto:carol.mccloud@delawaregardens.org).**

**Please check out our website: [delawaregardens.org](http://delawaregardens.org) for specialty tours**





# HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

News from Stephen Pryce Lea,  
Director of Horticulture



**Celebrating a great summer of success. DBG matched record hot temperature with record-breaking attendance numbers, memberships and new product lines encouraging an increase in gift shop sales, including DBG plant sales.**

June saw a month of social media activity, thanks to Project Kudos we raised \$10,000 from Schell Brothers' Kudos Campaign. We had lots of fun, and great support from staff, volunteers and board members who helped get the message out. We are still seeing the "benefits" of that Kudos engagement online, with lots of great online comments on DBG Facebook and Instagram pages. We are building an engaging social media audience that attracts a diverse range of loyal followers and guests.

The spectacular summer garden displays have delighted our visitors. We could not sustain these wonderful gardens without our dedicated staff, and volunteers who continue to tend the gardens bringing this color and excitement to Pepper Creek shoreline.



**FOLLY GARDEN:**

A popular gathering area for guests and shade-loving plants like the Limelight Hydrangeas enjoying a break from the blazing sun. Thanks to the shade of several mature Walnut trees the Folly provides much needed respite from the heat for plants and visitors.



**RHYNE GARDEN:** The Rhyne like many gardens across the State had some Echinacea and Monarda plant losses, due to the winter severity. We had the opportunity to replant some areas in late spring, so there would still be a colorful display as guests enter the gardens. Replanting more plugs and in-house raised seedlings of coneflower and bee balm in the cooler conditions during fall.



**PIET OUDOLF MEADOW GARDEN:** Has looked fabulous this summer. Lots of great guest feedback from those returning to see the gardens develop. The meadow has really advanced and filled-out from previous years. We have adopted a renewal strategy to replace any failed meadow plants and the combination of fall planting and in-house propagation of plants from Jeremy Cole and Bridget Curran have begun filling those meadow gaps.

Thanks to the dedication of our team, and continuous propagation, we have a replenishment plan for all meadow areas. This fall we will be planting another 80,000 spring flowering species bulbs throughout the gardens—60,000 of those in the meadow—adding to the 84,000 bulbs planted last fall.



**LEARNING GARDEN:** This summer our guests gathered under the shade sails installed by Sam and Jeremy enjoying the much needed shade and the biological diversity of the reconstructed vernal pool, and the colorful annuals that bring even more pollinators to the garden.

## GRANTS UPDATE



**WOODLAND GARDEN TRAILS:** Important not to overlook the hard work it takes our staff and volunteers who constantly tend to the winding trails. Lots of good guest feedback. Kudos to Sam and Jeremy and all their hard work on our fantastic, ever expanding woodland trails.



**PEPPER CREEK SHORELINE:** The Point and Observation deck are still providing a lot of visual excitement as people view the shore wildlife and Living Shoreline Project. In mid-September, DelDot began the Shoreline Stabilization Project accessing the creek along the West Woodlands fence line and restoring the remaining 700-ft of shoreline.

I am happy to report that working closely with Carol Bason, volunteer science and grant advisor, to successfully get the Rhyne and Restroom rain garden green technology updated.

Special thanks to Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) as a very important DBG partner.

Again—thanks to DNREC, we start the new “Gateway Garden” this winter and hope to complete the first phase of this exciting project around the time we re-open in March 2023. We will have the start of a wonderful new Gateway Garden to welcome our returning guests.

Some other initiatives include:

- Were awarded a \$5,000 grant from Delaware Forestry Commission Urban Community Forestry UCF to plant another 1,000 sapling trees this fall on the roadside berms.
- A third successful grant application in association with TEDI “Trees for Every Delawarean Initiative”—\$17,500 will provide 183 trees for the West Woodland Trail.
- A grant application has been submitted for funds from Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust to have 13 informational signs throughout the ornamental gardens.



# Butterflies AND Blooms



I am pleased to report that **Butterflies & Blooms classes** in late July and August, and our summer and late summer meadow Tours were a great success. Thanks to volunteer educators **Margaret Kimmel** and **Craig Haggerty** for sharing their butterfly expertise.

Special thanks to **Carol McCloud** our tireless Tour Director, who is at the gardens every open weekday day to give the **10 a.m. tour**, as well as other days for special tours. Carol also makes sure we have docents to staff the gardens on open days which is greatly appreciated.



Finally, thanks to everyone who contributes in so many ways to make the garden a success. My new role as Director of Educational Programs encompasses my passion for teaching. Working with a multi-talented group of volunteers using the Butterflies & Blooms Class as a template to create future educational classes. **Fall Container class** on September 15 with DBG volunteer designer **Jan Poli** giving a container garden demonstration class. **Margaret Kimmel** and I worked in unison to offer our guests **The Great Monarch Migration class** on September 22.

**Lot's going on in the gardens this fall, as we create new opportunities to visit the gardens and learn more about gardening naturally whilst enjoying the blessings of nature.**

