



DELAWARE
BOTANIC
GARDENS
AT PEPPER CREEK

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Summer Newsletter

Our roots are in the sands of coastal Delmarva

August 30, 2020

Update Report

President Ray Sander & Executive Director Sheryl Swed

Last year at this time, we were in the countdown to the Grand Opening of the Delaware Botanic Gardens. Piet Oudolf was coming for his final review of the Meadow and for the celebration. Our Annual Fundraising Dinner at the site had 300 guests scheduled for an amazing meal by great SoDel chefs and generous libations from Banks Wine & Spirits and Dogfish Head Breweries. In celebration of the Opening and Piet's creative genius, generous donors had established a \$75,000 Challenge Match for the Dinner. During this final push to "Open the Garden Gates," we were joined by our newest team member, Brian Trader as our Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture. Brian quickly jumped on this fast moving train and seamlessly added his many talents and energy.



Sheryl & Ray at the Rhyne Garden

Piet was delighted with the Meadow's progress and he recognized Brian's knowledge and capability to keep the Meadow flourishing. The Dinner was a rousing success. Despite a 15-minute downpour, the chefs, the servers, and the musicians all prevailed. The guests, inspired by the Challenge Match, helped us raise over \$154,000 for DBG. The Ribbon Cutting on September 19 continued the celebration with recognition from State and local leaders and our supporters.

A year ago, the DBG dream became a reality. Throughout this passage from dream to reality, our volunteers have continued to be the lifeblood of DBG. They continue to plant and maintain the gardens; they have become Docents who welcome and educate our guests; they manage our finances, prepare our grants, write our press releases, solve our IT issues, manage our resources and plan our future. DBG has progressed from sketches and drawings to an operating entity providing services and education to the public. If you want to be part of this growing community of volunteers, please let us know by contacting Carol McCloud at <mailto:carol.mccloud@delawaregardens.org>. There is always something to do at DBG, and there are many ways "to give back."

The Operating Reality of 2020 – COVID-19 has had a wide impact on life on Delmarva. It caused us to postpone our public opening and to alter our guest services. For details, see Carol McCloud’s **Volunteer Update**. Nonetheless, our staff and volunteers with Brian Trader’s leadership have continued to expand the gardens’ features. All 12-acres of the Woodland now have paths, which enable guests to experience the full beauty of this riparian habitat. A new collection of native azaleas has been added to DBG. Additional plants have been added to the Folly Garden, the Knoll Garden and around the Meadow. A new feature, the Rhyne Garden, has been extensively planted and is a beautiful welcoming addition to the parking area. Progress has continued on our joint Living Shoreline demonstration project with the Center for the Inland Bays. For details, see Brian Trader’s **Horticultural Happenings**.



Martin Lord & Albert By with Brian Trader on Opening Day July 16

Safeguarding our staff, volunteers and guests – While safety has always been an important consideration of our operations, COVID-19 made it a vital priority. To minimize face-to-face interactions between guests and our docents, we initiated an online ticketing system on our website. To prevent overcrowding at popular times, we initiated a timed reservation system to ensure the visitor experience was conducive to the quiet enjoyment of the sites’ many beautiful features. To avoid gathering in an enclosed space, we temporarily closed the Welcome Center to guests and moved all of our guest services to two tents in front of the Welcome Center.

A special recognition must be given to Tom Bason, our Director of Technology, for researching and developing these new systems. In addition, thanks must be given to Carol McCloud, Brian Trader, Kathy Johnson and Alison Willocks for helping implement these new systems and for training our Docents.

Keeping the Community Connected – During this time of sheltering in place, postponed openings, and cancelled events, communications has become even more essential to keeping our DBG community connected and keeping DBG in the public’s mind.

The leadership of Brent Baker, Director of Communications, with the active participation of Brian Trader, Carol McCloud, Tom Bason, Ray Bojarski and Sheryl Swed, has created a steady stream of attractive and informative public messages featured in the media. As one seasoned fundraiser



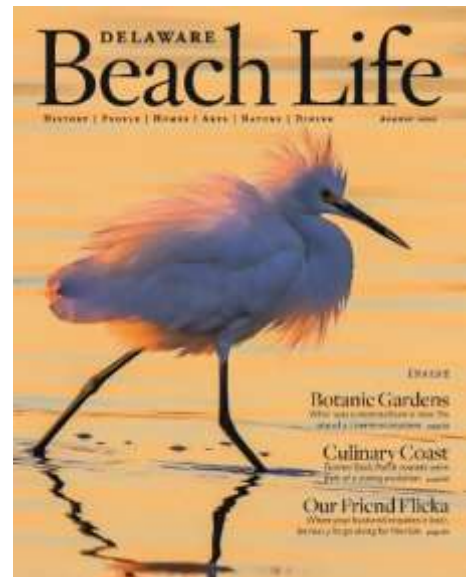
said, “I have never seen such constant media publicity for a non-profit before.” Timing is everything, and DBG media coverage reached a high point In July-August, as we opened. In the July 2020 *Delaware Today* magazine, readers voted DBG as “Best in Delaware 2020” in two categories: (1) Best downstate place to enjoy nature, and (2) Best downstate nonprofit Instagram presence. We note that Brian Trader is editor of both the DBG Facebook page facebook.com/delawaregardens and the DBG Instagram page instagram.com/thedelawarebotanicgardens. Paige Marley of WRDE-TV (NBC) covered the July 16 opening. Her feature story aired that evening on WRDE-TV and on WBOC-TV (CBS). In July and August alone DBG had over a dozen stories in Delmarva media including opening stories in the *Coastal Point* and *Cape Gazette* regional newspapers. DBG was even featured on YouTube’s

Page Marley, WRDE TV, at the Rhyne “Native Plant Channel,” with Brian giving an informative DBG tour.

On August 12, Ray Sander was interviewed by Jake Smith on WGMD-FM “Delmarva Live” talk radio, and they discussed the public opening and previewed plans for the September 25 Virtual Dinner.

Delaware Beach Life Magazine – The icing on the media cake was the major feature story, “From Soybeans to Splendor” by Lynn R. Parks with photos by Ray Bojarski and Carolyn Watson, in the August issue of *Delaware Beach Life*.

A major story like this doesn’t just happen. Since last spring our communications team has collaborated with Terry Plowman and his capable staff especially Lynn R. Parks, who spent many hours on this excellent story. The article is illustrated with 18 beautiful color photos by our own Ray Bojarski and Carolyn Watson. The eight-page article can be read by going here [From Soybeans to Splendor](#). It is one of the most impressive and detailed stories of how the DBG dream became a reality. Our special thanks to all who worked on this important media project. If you have a copy, please share it with your family, friends and neighbors. Thanks to the *Delaware Beach Life* team.



Delaware Beach Life

Annette Pennoni Meadow Pavilion – As featured in our last newsletter, we are excited about the plans for the new all-weather pavilion championed by Chuck Pennoni in honor of his wife Annette Pennoni, one of our strongest supporters. We just received new drawings of the pavilion by Scott Edmonston detailing the view from the Meadow Garden. We are currently looking for support in building this important infrastructure that will allow us to extend our opening season and present important educational programs throughout the year. The ability to host events and workshops without weather limitations is paramount to sustain the gardens.



Annette Pennoni Meadow Pavilion as viewed from the Meadow Garden

Restrooms Update – In June, we completed the installation of the sewer line connecting our gardens to the county sewer system. In the coming months, we will build the 1,175 square foot restrooms designed by Scott Edmonston’s SEA Studio Architects. On August 20, we brought our design, engineering and building team together on-site. The team includes Scott Edmonston and Harrison Meade from SEA Architects, Mark Davidson from Pennoni Engineering, and Wanderson Noriega from WN Builders. WN Builders was selected to construct the restrooms because of the quality of work shown when they built the Welcome Center. The restrooms will be located in the west woodlands just south of the Welcome Center and near the new west woodlands trail. We plan to drill a new well to serve the restrooms and future Annette Pennoni Meadow Pavilion with potable water. We have asked the Marmot Foundation for a grant of \$40,000 for the restrooms and will use some of the \$200,000 Bond Bill for the restrooms. We are thrilled to feature green technologies in the design of the restrooms to inspire our community and protect the natural environment.

Development Update – As a non-profit, we always face financial challenges. This year, we face a more difficult 2020-2021 fundraising environment because most foundations have rightly shifted their giving to focus on COVID-19 related assistance. Nevertheless, our active development efforts continue. Raising funds is not just about foundations. We need every member and supporter to be generous so we can maintain and build for the future. We are thankful for Cam and Kathy Yorkston’s leadership as the DBG development consultants. Cam continues to pursue all possible fund-raising opportunities.

Recently, he brought two foundation representatives to



Ray with Murray Sawyer at the Rhyne Garden

the Gardens. On July 16, we hosted Murray Sawyer of the Ellice & Rosa McDonald Foundation. Murray was very impressed with the new Rhyne Garden. Then on July 24, we hosted Pat Anderson representing the Crystal Trust. Pat also was impressed with all the new features since her last visit. Both foundations were early supporters of the Gardens.

Naming Opportunities – Carol Bason has updated some of the naming opportunities for our members and supporters. You can go to delawaregardens.org/naming-opportunities. If ever there was a time for all of us to step-up, it is now. Here are two of our most recent opportunities.



As the roads of our Woodland Gardens come together near the middle of the 1000-foot DBG showcase on Pepper Creek, a piece of land stands out into the natural scene, effectively forming its own and relationship as "The Point."

It is here that DBG guests can look out upon the creek, see how close it is to bird egg watching, and enjoy the view of the woods and the creek. Pepper Creek is an 8-mile tributary in Delaware's eastern Cape Fear watershed. Among them are Cypress Swamp, where white blue-birds and other songbirds, the Atlantic Oyster. The Point offers a unique opportunity to see and enjoy a place in nature with the beauty of a natural setting.

- **ENJOY THE VIEW:** Really enjoy the view and the beauty of Pepper Creek and its wildlife. A nature signpost to the Point provides a unique view of the creek, the sky, and the trees. As you watch the sky, it is a great opportunity to see the birds and the trees. The view is a unique and beautiful one.

- **PROTECT THE POINT:** A 10-foot high fence is being built along the Point. This fence is being built to protect the Point from the woods and the creek. It is a great opportunity to see and enjoy a place in nature with the beauty of a natural setting.



To learn more about this naming opportunity contact Sheryl J. Towell, Executive Director, sheryltowell@delawaregardens.org, 202-262-9856.



North of 'The Point' and beyond a small wetland there is a large opening in the trees of the Woodland Gardens where the sun shines through to the forest floor. Deep in the center of the dense surrounding woodland, you look up and see the sky. Here you can stand in amazement in a huge bird's nest. It is human-made, yes, but a natural ecosystem unto itself nonetheless. Citizens of the coastal forest make their homes within, find their prey, and become prey to other predators. This is the "Learning Nest" of DBG, a magical place where guests of all ages can learn about the web of life and the balance of nature.

This is the height of several nests in DBG's Woodland Gardens made of interwoven hardwood twigs. It features a nest of the woodcock, a nest of the blue jay, and a nest of the red-shouldered hawk. The nest is a place for learning, research, and discovery. It is a place to connect with the woodland forest and to see the balance of nature with its predators and prey relationships—a habitat of nests and corridors for insects, birds, and bees that are prey for birds, eagles, hawks, and predators themselves of the woodland forest.

- A place to **CONNECT** with the woodland forest and to see the balance of nature with its predators and prey relationships—a habitat of nests and corridors for insects, birds, and bees that are prey for birds, eagles, hawks, and predators themselves of the woodland forest.
- A place to **EXPERIENCE** the science of the forest's natural cycle through the processes and the changes that occur through decomposition, sending stored nutrients and other life-giving substances back into the soil to nurture seedlings to fill nature once again.
- A place to **VISUALIZE** the intricacies of nature's design, the complexity of the nest's precise weave and structure in diversity of shape as a bird's nest, a shelter from weather, and protector of the young.
- A place to **ENGAGE** all learners in the web of life, analyze the science—observe, collect, measure, and build a nest in real time as a scavenger hunt, read and write about their findings.
- A place to **CONTEMPLATE** the woodland ecosystem and its benefits to sustainability, research, renewal, and growth as a buffer and stabilizer to the Pepper Creek divide.



To learn more about this naming opportunity contact Sheryl J. Towell, Executive Director, sheryltowell@delawaregardens.org, 202-262-9856.

Salute to Ray Bojarski – Looking at Ray Bojarski's wonderful photos in *Delaware Beach Life* reminded us of what a major role he has played in visually documenting every step over the last 5 years building the gardens. As they say, one picture is worth a thousand words. In the case of any garden, pictures best illustrate the beauty and the rich multi-color palette of the plants. In addition, this year, Ray Bojarski, Brian Trader and Tom Bason brought to the DBG website a series of videos that provide virtual tours of the Gardens. For the first time, our members and the public could visit the closed gardens on our website. All of our communications, including our website, our virtual garden tours, our Annual Report, our Newsletters and News Releases, are filled with Ray's visual magic.

In honor of Ray's 5 years of devoted and highly professional service as the DBG Chief Photographer and certified Drone pilot, the DBG Board of Directors passed a motion of appreciation at their July 21 Board Meeting. We all thank Ray Bojarski for a job well done!



Ray Bojarski

We end our update thanking the many people who have stepped up in this very difficult year that has tested our team as never before. It is a blessing to work with such a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, members and supporters.

Best,

Ray and Sheryl

Save the Date for DBG's Virtual Dinner



We recently announced the DBG “Virtual” Annual Dinner to be held on Friday, September 25 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Those who have been long-time members or supporters will recall that the DBG annual dinner-tradition began at Good Earth Market with Matt Haley of SoDel and Sue Ryan, former president of DBG, leading the way. For the last 2 years, we have celebrated our dinner at the DBG site. This year the COVID-19 situation necessitated innovation and flexibility.

Fortunately, our long-time partner, SoDel Concepts, has perfected the virtual dinner concept and Scott Kammerer and his great team are presenting an amazing five course, Tuscan-inspired dinner including a special cocktail. Ted and Kami Banks of Banks Wines & Spirits in Millville have again agreed to contribute the wine.

For information about the program, menu and to purchase tickets for our Virtual Annual Dinner, please visit our website at delawaregardens.org/new-events/2020-dinner-tickets. For information about being a sponsor, please go to delawaregardens.org/new-events/2020-dinner-sponsorships.

We hope to meet a \$25,000 Challenge offered by Ron Bass and George Robbins as part of our Virtual Dinner program. Go to delawaregardens.org/2020-25000-challenge to participate in the challenge.

The 2020 Virtual Annual Dinner is a fun way to enjoy great food and to connect with the DBG community. It will begin at 6:00 pm, and you can watch the show on your home computer or cell phone as you enjoy the food and libations.

Menu

First Shared Course – **FINOCCHIONA & ROMANO TOSCANO** FENNEL GARLIC SAUSAGE | PECORINO ROMANO | PICKLED FENNEL SALAD | BLISTERED GRAPES

Second Shared Course – **WHITE ANCHOVY & PANZANELLA SALAD** HOUSE BREAD | BAYWATER HEIRLOOM TOMATOES | BASIL | RED ONION | VINEGAR & OIL | SEA SALT

Third Shared Course – **PINZIMONIO & WHITE TRUFFLE RICOTTA** BABY CARROTS | RADISH | FENNEL | BELL PEPPER | SAN BONIFACIO VIRGIN OIL | CRACKED PEPPER

Fourth Course – **CACCIUCCO** PRAWN | MUSSELS | SQUID | FIN FISH | WHITE WINE TOMATO BROTH | RED CHILIES | GARLIC | SAGE

Shared Dessert – **VIN SANTO OLIVE OIL CAKE** GOLDEN RAISIN & APRICOT COMPOTE | BERGAMOT | PINE NUT ALMOND CRUNCH | VANILLA BEAN

Cocktail – Tito's Harvest Apple Ginger Spritz

Please make your dinner reservation and support our legacy gardens. We will see you there virtually!

Volunteers Update

News from Carol McCloud, DBG Vice President & Volunteer Director



Carol McCloud

Back in March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Carney's Stay at Home Order, we had to suspend our organized volunteer days in the gardens. It was very difficult for our Garden Steward volunteers to be away from the Gardens for almost two months. When we sent out the email inviting our volunteers back we received responses such as, "this is exciting," "great," "outstanding, I've missed the Gardens," "I can't wait to be in the Gardens again." I too am a volunteer and shared our team's excitement at returning to the Gardens. Not only did our seasoned volunteers return energetically, we also had several new volunteers sign up to join our amazing team. We could not wait to be back in the Gardens doing what we love: planting, weeding, maintaining and curating

the Gardens in preparation for re-opening. We achieved just that on Thursday, August 2020, by re-opening to our public. We say it over and over again: we could not do all we do without our volunteers.

The following quote captures the epitome of our volunteers:

"The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others." DeAnn Hollis, Client Engagement Leader, Shared by PAWS for People."

Our staff worked diligently to keep up with garden maintenance while advancing several garden projects. A couple of weeks prior to inviting our volunteers back, some of our Volunteer Task Leaders assisted in the Gardens as a pilot for how we could safely welcome volunteers back to the Gardens. The safety and health of our team (Staff, Volunteers, and Board) was the highest priority. Following the guidance provided by Governor Carney relating to the Coronavirus pandemic, DBG leadership decided to limit the number of people in the gardens to 10 individuals including DBG staff. Each day, volunteers would be selected on first-come, first-serve basis for assisting in the gardens. Since the number of volunteers was limited, we kept a log to be sure not to go over the allotted number. Volunteers were asked to follow the guidelines that were sent: "Please only come to the Gardens if:"

- You are comfortable coming to the Gardens
- You are feeling well (no cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever)
- You have NOT tested positive for COVID-19
- If you have recently returned from areas in the U.S. or abroad with a high number of COVID-19 cases (based on CDC announcements), we ask you not to visit the site for 14 calendar days

- You have not been around anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 for 14 days

We followed these guidelines for safety:

- You may be working alone or more than 6 feet from another individual
- Please bring and use your own tools and gloves to reduce chance of cross-contamination
- Please bring and use your own water and water vessel
- Please bring and wear your own facial mask
- Please do not go inside the container where you used to sign-in
- We will have a sanitation station outside of the container with hand sanitizer and towels
- We will have a virtual sign in and Volunteer hours will be emailed to Carol McCloud”

Our Volunteer days were Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

In July, we changed our hours from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm due to the heat with volunteer days being Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We will continue those days and times until fall.

We achieved a lot in just a few months: weeding in all our gardens, planting of our new Rhyne Garden as well as the Knoll Garden. In August, we began our Living Shore Line project. (See details and update under **Horticultural Happenings.**)

On Thursday, August 20, 2020, we reached our greatest achievement by re-opening the Gardens to our public. Prior to opening, we held a refresher training session (Monday, August 17) for our Docents who welcome our guests. Our process had changed due to COVID. Like our Garden Stewards, our Docents were excited to get back to what they love. Again, the training was all about safety for our Guests, Docents and Staff. One big change was we are not using our Welcome Center at this time. We have tents setup for our Docents to receive our guests. All admission purchases are done ahead of time on our website. Reservations are in half hour intervals so our guests can maintain a safe distance. Masks are required. Our guests were so happy to be back in the Gardens. We were so happy to welcome them. If you would like to become a volunteer at the Delaware Botanic Gardens, please go to our website at delawaregardens.org/volunteer-to-help to sign up. We would love to have you join our amazing team.



Carol & docent Tricia Precht at outdoor check-in

As always, I'd like to thank all **our volunteers** for their passion and dedication to DBG. It is an honor and a privilege to volunteer alongside you. You are greatly appreciated.

Tours – Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we are not now able to offer guided tours in the Gardens. We hope to resume our tours soon. We will give an update on our website delawaregardens.org when we are able to resume. If you would like to contact me for a future tour, I can be reached at carol.mccloud@delawaregardens.org.

Horticultural Happenings

News from Brian Trader, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture



Brian Trader

It's official, we are tracking to have our warmest summer on record and July in Delaware was the warmest in history. With weeks of temperatures in the 90's, even the plants in the meadow were welcoming the clouds and searching for shade. The weather has not hampered the progress of new projects in the gardens nor the spirits of our volunteers and team. Since May, we have completed the herbaceous planting of our Rhyne Garden, initiated our Living Shoreline Project, and planted over 700 native ferns in the Knoll Garden. Even with all of this success, we are still fighting the battle against weeds and have even more to accomplish before autumn.

In June, we completed the herbaceous planting of our beautiful and functional Rhyne Garden. Over 12,000 native perennials welcome guests as they park and visit our botanical gardens. The plants were sourced from nurseries around our region and from May until late September will provide seasonal colors. These native perennials help slow and filter water flowing from our parking area into the natural environment.



Garden Stewards at work on the Rhyne

This October, we will plant over 30 'Brandywine' red maples and several species of native shrubs to complete the project. We thank the many volunteers who assisted with the preparation, planting and weeding of DBG's newest garden. The educational value of this functional system has already been an inspiration to guests and homeowner associations within our region.



Robert Collins, Project Manager from the Center for the Inland Bays, working on the Living Shoreline

In collaboration with the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays (CIB), we have finished the first phase of our Living Shoreline Project, which will protect and help sustain approximately 300 feet of DBG's shoreline. Our team and volunteers have been working with CIB staff and volunteers to install an anchored-branch toe (ABT) as the first phase of the project. The ABT is constructed of natural materials found from DBG's Woodland Gardens and will help reduce the energy coming ashore from boat wake and waves. We are excited for the completion of this project in the fall with additional phases including planting of native salt grasses and construction of a viewing platform.



Garden Steward planting fern on the Knoll

Our Knoll Garden, sponsored by Ron Bass and George Robbins, received a planting upgrade earlier this summer when DBG staff and volunteers planted over 700 native ferns. The ferns will take a few years to establish and will eventually create an intimate space with scenic views of Pepper Creek. Some of the species planted include *Dryopteris marginalis*, *Onoclea sensibilis*, and *Adiantum pedatum*. This fall, we hope to compliment the fern plantings with native shrubs, which will further immerse guests as they enjoy the Knoll Garden's high elevation.

Though we have only recently opened the gardens to the public, we are excited for our guests to see our progress and enjoy our natural beauty. As the Meadow Garden transitions into the fall season and the temperatures begin to cool, we encourage a visit to our gardens.

Tribute to Brian

To honor Brian's one-year anniversary, the Volunteers on the August 3 volunteer day presented DBG with a donation of \$2,845 to help fund building of a bridge over the wet area in the new western woodland pathway.



DELAWARE BOTANIC GARDENS

Virtual Dinner Party

Friday,
September 25

In Partnership
with SoDel Concepts

Please become a sponsor

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PRESENTING SPONSORS
 BLUE LUPIN \$5,000

- Business logo (or name) in newsletter, website, program and social media
- Private tour of the gardens including refreshments given by Director of Horticulture, Brian Trader
- Meadow Garden Circle Gift Membership
- Native tree

GENTIAN SPONSORS
 \$2,500

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- Family Gift Membership
- Native shrub

SUNFLOWER SPONSORS
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- Business logo (or name) in newsletter, website, and program
- Bluebird nest box in the gardens
- Dual Gift Membership

BIRD'S FOOT VIOLET SPONSORS
 \$500

- Business logo (or name) in newsletter, website, and program
- Wren nest box in the gardens
- Single Gift Membership

Name (business or individual as you would like it listed) PLEASE PRINT

Address

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Contact Name and Phone

Level of Sponsorship (check the appropriate box above)

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Please make your check payable to: Delaware Botanic Gardens and mail to:

Delaware Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 1390, Ocean View, DE 19970 or

Bill me Pay for Sponsorship online at delawaregardens.org/new-events

For more information: Call Sheryl Swed at 202-262-9856 or email sherylswed@delawaregardens.org or Angela Phinney at angie.phinney@delawaregardens.org

I cannot sponsor but would like to help with a tax-deductible gift of \$_____ Check enclosed.



DELAWARE
BOTANIC
GARDENS
AT PEPPER CREEK



East Woodland Edge Garden



Rhyne Garden

Thanks to many devoted DBG people who are thinking “out of the box” to innovate and move DBG forward in 2020.

We extend a special thanks to our staff, Brian, Sam and Jeremy for their dedication to DBG during the COVID crisis. Well done and keep safe.

All photographs by Ray Bojarski except as cited.