Becoming...
COUNTDOWN TO OPEN THE GARDEN GATES

“If cultural institutions were boxers, the Delaware Botanic Garden would be Rocky Balboa, an underdog with a seemingly uncrushable spirit.”
—ADRIAN HIGGINS, WASHINGTON POST 9/20/17

DELAWARE BOTANIC GARDEN AT PEPPER CREEK
Annual Report 2017
“Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek is a lesson in how a small group of people can make big things happen.”
—THERESE CIESINSKI, GARDEN DESIGN MAGAZINE APRIL 2018

Our **MISSION** is to create a world-class, inspirational, educational, and sustainable public botanic garden in southern Delaware for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

Our **VISION** is for beautiful, engaging gardens that inspire and educate.

Our **VALUES** encompass inspirational gardens, environmental stewardship, community focus, education and research, organizational transparency, financial responsibility, and civility and respect.

**FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

Dear friends, supporters, and soon-to-be friends,

2017 was a landmark year for the Delaware Botanic Gardens—the year that the project emerged from visions and drawings to the actual creation of the garden’s first features on the site. Shortly after the December 3, 2016 Ceremonial Groundbreaking, the DBG Reality Team of Pennoni, Bancroft and George & Lynch began the site work and by early April 2017 the DBG was ‘substantially underway.’

**The progress and accomplishments of 2017, show that the Delaware Botanic Gardens is by every measure a community-based garden.** While we have attracted nationally and internationally renowned designers and highly respected engineering and construction experts, the project’s workforce is drawn almost exclusively from dedicated volunteers who live here on Delmarva. And, while the project has been the beneficiary of several generous grants from leading regional foundations, the local community here has been the source of priceless hours of in-kind donations of time and talent.

**There is still time and need for others to help ‘Open the Garden Gates.’** Opportunities to give tribute or honor the memory of individuals through naming rights, to lend support through sponsorships of our fundraisers and to underwrite the work of our team and volunteers through your membership and donations.

You are invited to join in this rare endeavor...the creation of a landmark... the Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek.

**Join Us!**

Ray Sander, President, Board of Directors

[Photo of Ray Sander, President]

Ray Sander, President
Photo credit: Ray Bojarski

Cover photo credit: Ray Bojarski
Delaware Botanic Gardens Makes a Splash in the Garden World as the Piet Oudolf Meadow Nears Completion

Rodney Robinson, Landscape Architect for the Delaware Botanic Gardens said, "If you get Piet Oudolf to do a meadow, you'll have people come to Delaware who don't even know where Delaware is."

Piet Oudolf came to Delaware—he said he was attracted to the project because it is a public garden, and he "liked the enthusiasm of people working together for the 'public good.'" He designed our Meadow Garden—a two-acre palette of color bounded by serpentine pathways, that in the words of Director of Horticulture, Gregg Tepper, "is the jewel in the crown of the Gardens."

The Meadow will have more than 70,000 perennials and grasses when it is completed in June 2018. Consisting mostly of native plants, it will be a feast for wildlife and for the eyes.

New botanic gardens are a rarity, so news of a new botanic garden in Delaware was already generating excitement in the gardening world, but the Oudolf Meadow Garden, his first installation in the mid-Atlantic, has made the DBG national news. His unlikely arrival in Dagsboro has put DBG on the map.

“Later, walking the site along with Piet Oudolf, the rock star from Hummelo turned and said: ‘The garden scene here is small. But so much energy. It’s unbelievable.’”

—Adrian Higgins, Washington Post
Along the backroads of southern Delaware, in places where homesteads once stood, are the remnants of dooryard gardens—

Steps away from the Meadow Garden, at the edge of the woods, is a trace of the lives of people who once farmed this land. Where the old farmhouse stood generations ago, the remains of the brick foundation is now the centerpiece of the Folly Garden, an intimate remembrance of things past.

Within the old foundation Lenten roses and snowdrops will welcome spring to the sunken garden, giving way to daffodils and crocus as the earth warms. Bleeding heart, obedient plant, money plant, native phlox, hardy cyclamen and the cool blues of the spring star flower will mark the arrival of summer.

The Woodland Path to Pepper Creek

Three years ago, the twelve acre woodland was a snarl of greenbrier, a thicket so dense, the only passage possible was behind a machete.

Entering the Woodland from the Folly Garden, the path slopes down toward Pepper Creek and the pathway edge is marked with a stone wall built by staff and volunteers.

Under towering oaks, sweet gum and maples are American hollies, sassafras and dogwood, and beneath those, highbush blueberries, native fens, and azaleas.

Hundreds of natives were planted in the Woodland Garden in 2017 by DBG staff and volunteers. Views of Pepper Creek brighten the trail along the way, and three vernal pools sing with frogs in spring. There are fanciful ‘nests’ built from collected branches, and benches built from fallen trees.
A PLACE FOR LEARNING

At the end of 2017, plans were in place for the creation of the Wetland Outdoor Classroom.

Working with Envirotech Environmental Consulting Inc. on design and planning, and with underwriting from Dogfish Head Brewery, the Wetland Outdoor Classroom is nearing completion. It will be a learning place for all students and visitors to the Gardens. Around the wetland will be the Inland Dunes Garden, a re-creation of a rare and disappearing habitat found in western Sussex County along the Nanticoke River.

GOOD FOOD AND GARDENS GO TOGETHER

For five years, the DBG has partnered with Good Earth Market and SoDel Concepts to produce a magical ‘Farm to Table’ dinner and 2017 was our most successful yet. 200 guests dined and reveled, and generously donated $110,000 for the DBG. In 2018, the first ‘Dinner Party in the Gardens’ will be held on site.

TREE-MENDOUS PARTNERSHIP MAKES BIG THINGS POSSIBLE

The TREE-mendous Delaware Tree Planting, a project of the Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs (DFGC) is one of many partnerships that are making the creation of the Delaware Botanic Gardens possible. DFGC President Lisa Arni, started the program to encourage Delaware garden clubs to help purchase trees for the DBG Woodland Garden through donations of $100 to honor or remember a loved one, friend, or business colleague.
A ballet of gardeners in choreographed motion—such was the scene in late September, when volunteers planted 17,000 perennials in the Meadow Garden. Teams were led by Director of Horticulture Gregg Tepper and Advisory Council member, Barbara Katz, and augmented by other professional horticulturists, landscape architects and designers from around the country who volunteered their time for the chance to work with Piet Oudolf. A rock star in the garden design world, Oudolf is renowned for his work on the High Line in New York City.

From the early months of 2017, the team of DBG volunteers grew from fifty people logging about 100 hours per month, to a team that meets weekly to tackle tasks at the Gardens. Directed by Garden Volunteer Coordinator, Janet Point, who is herself a board member and volunteer, 115 people answered the call in 2017 to come to the Gardens dressed to get dirty; to plant, to weed, to mulch and be part of a team now called the Garden Stewards. (New members are encouraged to apply!)

Most of the volunteers are experienced home gardeners, some are Sussex County Master Gardeners, and many are members of local garden clubs, but all are there to help ‘Open the Garden Gates.’

But, there are many paths to service at the DBG, and not all require garden gloves. Volunteers lead our communications team, do community outreach at festivals and events, write grants, manage the website, provide photographic services and provide financial and legal expertise.
VOLUNTEER GARDENERS
This list includes our Garden Stewards and those who joined them to assist on the Meadow Planting days in 2017.


Jean Sewald  Max Sewald  Dianne Shawley  Marianne Smith  Thomas Smith  Clay Stradley  Sheryl Swed  Mardi Thompson  Alan B. Tuttle  Larry Woda  Pamela White  Bonnie Wright  Joe Zaia  Elaine Zawaleta

Photographers Ken Arni, left and Ray Bojarski have volunteered their time and services to document the creation of the Gardens.

Photo credit: Ken Arni

Photo credit: Ray Bojarski
TO BUILD A GARDEN IS TO CREATE A LEGACY...

To build a garden from scratch...to take a former farm field and woods and envision a plan, create a design, and put it on and in the ground is monumental. This is the work that a group of committed volunteers inspired by the land and each other are doing at the Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek.

The DBG is the beneficiary of tremendous generosity from volunteers, partners, and foundations, but the costs of this endeavor are great. Most all of the funds raised so far have gone into design and planning, infrastructure, plants and equipment. There is still much to be built.

81% of our expenditures in 2017 were spent directly on the development of the Gardens. We could do this because of volunteers—our Garden Stewards who are in the Gardens week by week planting and tending—and all of the advisors and coordinators who give their time and experience pro bono in communications, business and legal assistance, outreach, website management, grant research and writing, videography and photography, volunteer coordination and executive management.

“We define beauty at the Delaware Botanic Garden as not only aesthetics, but also the ability to support life—to be respectful of resources and other beings that inhabit the space—bees, insects, birds, wildlife, and the life in the soil.”

—GREGG TEPPER, DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE

* The true value of the DBG 37-acre site is not reflected in the in-kind income. The land was last valued at $1.2 million and the Sussex County Land Trust leases it to DBG for $1 per year for 99 years, renewable twice.
Funds Raised

With thanks to our members and contributors for their vision. The following donors made gifts from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2017, through Memberships ($250 and above), Annual Giving, Capital Campaign, In Kind Giving, and Matching Gifts/Sponsorships from Special Events. We strive to insure names and giving levels are correct. If you believe there is an error, please contact us.

**Foundation Giving**

$750,000+
- Longwood Foundation, Inc.

$250,000–$749,999
- Elice & Rosa McDonald Foundation, Inc.

$40,000–$249,999
- Colman Family Foundation
- Crestlea Foundation, Inc.
- Crystal Trust
- Marmot Foundation
- Welfare Foundation, Inc.

**Up to $39,999**
- Benanav Family Foundation
- Dorothy G. Bender Foundation
- EXXONMOBIL Foundation
- Global Delaware Fund
- Henry A. Strohminger Family Foundation, Inc.
- Kimberl-Clark Foundation
- Raymond James Charitable Trust
- Wakefield Family Fund

**Gifts in Kind**

$1 Million+
- Sussex County Land Trust

$150,000+
- Pennoni Associates

$30,000 to $70,000
- Baird Mandelas Brockstedt
- Banks Wine & Spirits
- Delaware Electric Cooperative
- Dogfish Head Brewery
- Nickle Electric
- Robinson Anderson Summers, Inc.
- Sposato Irrigation

$10,000 to $29,999
- Archetype Press
- Bancroft Construction
- Bryant Design
- Coastal Tented Events
- East Coast Garden Center
- George & Lynch
- Good Earth Market
- Lake/Flato Architects
- Mac Impressions
- SoDel Concepts
- Yorkston Consulting

$5,000 to $9,999
- EDiS
- Nason
- Tunnell & Raysor PA
- Quillen Signs

**Up to $4,999**
- Roy Dibik
- Austin Eisenshded
- Barbara Katz

Horticultural Material

- Aggar Turf Farm
- Babikow New Moon
- Cavano’s Nursery
- Gro Wild Nursery
- Hoffman Nursery
- John Mickle
- Pepper’s Greenhouses
- Putnam Hill
- Gregg Tepper

**Corporate/Association Giving**

$50,000+
- Dogfish Head Companies
- George & Lynch, Inc.

$10,000–$49,999
- Bancroft Construction Company
- Barefoot Gardeners
- Pennoni Associates, Inc.

$5,000–$9,999
- Coastal Tented Events
- Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs
- Piet Oudolf
- Robinson Anderson Summers, Inc. (RAS)
- SoDel Concepts & Plate Catering

**Up to $4,999**
- 1st Choice Properties, LLC
- After Glo Spa
- Alban Tractor Company
- All About U
- Alpha Zeta Fraternity at UD
- Apple, Inc.
- Archetype Press, Inc.
- Babikow Greenhouses
- Baird Mandelas Brockstedt
- Banks Wines & Spirits
- Beach Life Magazine
- Beach Pilates & Wellness
- Bethany Beach Ocean Suites
- Bethany Fine Arts Gallery
- Bin 66
- Blue Skies Farm
- Bryant Design
- Burke Equipment Company
- Cape Gazette, Ltd.
- Carl M. Freeman Golf Facilities
- Carolina Street Garden & Home
- Cavano’s Perennials, Inc.
- Clayton Theatre
- Coastal Point
- Country Wicker, Etc., Inc.
- Custom Fitness by Lisa
- Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association
- Dellinger, George & Suzanne Hain
- Delmarva Environmental, Inc.
- Delmarva Hosta Society
- Delmarva Sedation Dentistry
- Denney Lighting & Design
- Duck Creek Horticultural Society
- Eastern Sussex Democratic Club
- East Coast Garden Center
- Environet Environmental Construction
- Fulton Bank N.A.
- Gallery One, LLC
- Garden Club of Millsboro
- Garden Gate Garden Club
- Gardeners by the Sea
- Gardening Angels
- George H Bunting Jr Insurance
- Good Earth Market, LLC
- Haupts-Berlin
- Heidi Lowe Gallery
- Hocker’s Super Center, Inc.
- Hoe ‘n Hope Garden Club
- Hoffman Nursery, Inc.
- Inland Bays Garden Center
- Jayne’s Reliable
- J.W.M. Enterprises, Inc.
- Jefferson, Urian, Doane & Sterner, P.A.
- Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture, LLC
- Just Hooked
- Kurt Bluemel, Inc.
- L&W Insurance
- Lake/Flato Architects, Inc.
- Law Offices of Stephen D. Parsons
- London Landscapes, LLC
- Lord Baltimore Lions
- Lord Baltimore Women’s Club, Inc.
- Lord’s Landscape & Garden Center
- Lupo Italian Kitchen
- Made by Hand International Cooperative
- McCabe’s Gourmet Market, Inc.
- Middletown Odessa Garden Club
- Midde Smith Fine Art Gallery
- Minuteman Press–Dewey
- MissionSeekers/Roxana Zion
- United Methodist Church
- Musicrope Enterprises, LLC
- Nason Construction, Inc.
- New Moon Nursery
- Oceanfront Fishhouse
- Oxford Garden Club
- PDK Horticultural, LLC
- Pottery Place
- Quillen Signs
- Red Clay Garden Club
- Red Sky Websites
- RentAMobileMovieTheater.com
- Sablereaw Pottery
- Salon on Central
- Salt Air Gardeners
- Salt Pond Women’s Club
- Schott-Davis
- Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College
- Sea Studio, LLC
- Serendipity Quilt Shop, LLC
- Shady Park, Inc.
- Silver Pine Garden Club
- Smith Farm
- Southern Sussex Rotary Club
- Spade & Trowel Garden Club
- Sprig and Twig Garden Club
- Sunshine Times LLC
- Sussex County Council
- Sussex County Land Trust
- Tidewater Physical Therapy & Rehab Assoc.
- Trinity Logistics
- Tri-Supply & Equipment Company
- Tunnell and Raysor
- Turtle Moon Designs
- Worcester County Garden Club
- Womanswork
- WSFS Bank
- Yorkston Consulting
- Zonko Builders, Inc.

**Individual Giving**

$115,000+
- Sheryl Swed & Ray Sander

$60,000+
- Ronald Bass & George Robbins

$10,000 to $40,000
- Ted & Monica Banks
- Henry & Marcia DeWitt
- David & Jamie Doane
- David & Kathy Green
- Nick & Julie Kypreos
- Douglas Mearns
- Jane Rice
- Steve & Janet Point
- Jane Rice
- David & Susan Ryan
- John & Kelly Shone
- Stephen & Susan Soulas
- Richard Weissmann & Patti Drago

$5000 to $9,999
- Arthur & Sallie Melvin
- Ruth Rogers-Clausen

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Governor’s Award for Conservation

In February 2017, RAS, DBG landscape architects, submitted an inspirational Master Plan for a 21st century public garden. Site work began in early 2017 and in May, the plan and its implementation were recognized for excellence—the DBG was awarded the 2016 Governor’s Conservation Award for excellence in the fulfillment of urban conservation activities in Sussex County. DBG Executive Director, Sheryl Swed said that “the award was a validation of the outstanding professional work of our designers, engineers and construction experts.”
YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TO OPEN THE GARDEN GATES...

- **Become a member** delawaregardens.org
- **Become a sponsor** of our annual Dinner Party in the Garden
- **Volunteer!** In the Gardens, with community outreach, as a docent, or ‘in the office.’
- **Learn** about naming opportunities in memory of or tribute to a loved one.

“We are grateful to all who have given their time and treasure to create this place of natural and horticultural splendor—the Delaware Botanic Gardens on Pepper Creek. For those who have given and those yet to give, we need your continued support to ‘Open the Garden Gates’ in 2019.”

—SHERYL J. SWED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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