September Newsletter

Our roots are in the sands of coastal Delmarva

September 18, 2018

Behind the Scenes

News from Board President Ray Sander & Executive Director Sheryl Swed

Longwood Foundation Visit – On August 15, Steve Martinenza from Longwood Foundation visited the gardens for the first time since his initial 2015 visit. He was briefed by members of the Board and was taken on a tour of the gardens. Steve was impressed with our progress and encouraged us to keep the Longwood Foundation updated as we move toward our 2019 opening.

Crystal Trust Visit – On August 21, Pat Anderson, Executive Director of Crystal Trust, toured the gardens with Ray, Sheryl and Cam Yorkston in order to get an update on what has been completed since her last visit in September 2017.

Completion of Meadow Garden and Preparations for Annual Dinner – We are writing this in the wake of the successful September 6 Fundraising Dinner and completion of the Piet Oudolf Meadow. None of this would have happened without our DBG supporters, dedicated staff, and the volunteers who show up day after day, week after week, no matter what the task or weather. DBG has created a community garden, and a garden family, unique on the Delmarva Peninsula.

First, the professional Horticultural Team, led by Gregg Tepper, Barbara Katz and Austin Eischeid supervised the design and placement of plants. Second, volunteers from other regional gardens, such as Longwood Garden Interns and Winterthur students, came to assist. Finally, under the leadership of Carol McCloud, our Garden Steward and Docent Coordinator, and with support from Sam Cashdollar, our Grounds and Facilities Supervisor, and horticulturist Heather Spencer, our local Garden Stewards made sure the plants were comfortable in the coastal sandy loam soil we call home. It took the volunteers and staff nine days to place and plant 33,000 plants. The Meadow Garden and its periphery now contain over 70,000 plants. That means
food for our native insects and birds and beauty for us! Our Garden Steward Volunteers, who helped with the final meadow planting and the meadow preparation during the August-September timeframe, worked side by side with Gregg and Carol. Thank you all for a job well done in such extreme weather conditions.

New Board Members – 4 new Board members were elected at the June and August Board of Directors meetings. In June, Ron Bass and Brent Baker were elected. President Ray Sander said, “As DBG continues the journey to open in 2019, we are honored to have an outstanding team of devoted Delmarva volunteers, who are bringing the gardens to life.” He continued, “Ron and Brent have been volunteer leaders and generous financial contributors to our gardens.”

Ronald Bass of Rehoboth Beach, DE. He holds a BS in business administration from the University of Baltimore. He worked for the Social Security Administration for 30 years. Ron has devoted himself to community service. Upon retirement, he worked as a volunteer with the Baltimore City mayor’s office on architectural projects in the city and volunteered for over 10 years managing the Otterbein Community Parks. The parks system consisted of seven different parks spread throughout the community and included infrastructure maintenance, planting contracts, lighting coordination with the city along with simple planting and watering duties. He is a devoted volunteer at DBG and member of the Futures Team.
Brent Baker of Millville, DE. He began his love of nature in the Boy Scouts, where he reached the rank of Eagle Scout. He has 45 years of Communication-PR experience. He served on active military duty for 29 years, and retired as the Navy’s Chief of Information with the rank of Rear Admiral. Brent then served as a professor and the Dean of the College of Communication, Boston University. He holds a BS in Communications from Northwestern University and an MS in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin. Brent brings his communications expertise to DBG serving as our Communications Director. He is the DBG Board Secretary and chairs the Futures Team. He is a lifelong gardener and volunteers as one of the DBG Garden Stewards.

In August, Ray Sander announced that DBG added two more leaders to its Board of Directors - Grant Watchorn and Tom Bason. Sander said, “Both Grant and Tom are devoted professionals who not only bring exceptional senior management skills but also demonstrated experience in nonprofit organizations. Their joining our Board adds a new drive and vision to our commitment to open the Garden Gates in 2019”.

Sheryl Swed, Executive Director of DBG, said, “I have had the honor to work daily with these two accomplished leaders who are seasoned in both the private and nonprofit sectors. They both bring to DBG a new spirit of innovation and passion for this legacy public garden.”

Grant Watchorn has served as the Corporate Treasurer for the past year. He is a member of the Futures Team, and now joins the Board. He holds a BS in Accounting, an MBA, and graduate level education in information systems and logistics management. He is also a Certified Public Accountant. Grant served as an officer in the United States Air Force where he worked in the logistics management career field. Since retiring, Grant has provided pro bono services for a medium sized nonprofit organization, helping it improve its business planning and operating capabilities. Since moving to the Ocean View area, Grant has volunteered for the AARP Tax/Aide program, and he has served as the treasurer for the community association where he lives. He is also actively serving in his church.

Tom Bason of Ocean View, DE. Tom worked in Information Technology for Blue Cross Blue Shield for 25 years. After that, Tom worked in the commercial software industry where he managed the development of state-of-the-art software systems for large corporations. When the Internet boom arrived in the mid-1990’s, he joined several Internet startups as vice president of software development where he gained invaluable insights into the rigors of how strategic decision-making evolves in early stage business entities. Since retiring, he has provided his technology skills gratis to many not-for-profit organizations and for the past year, has managed the Delaware Botanic Gardens website and back office applications. He is a member of the Futures Team.
**Carol McCloud’s New Duties** – Executive Director Sheryl Swed also announced that Carol McCloud, Board Vice President, has assumed new duties as the DBG Garden Stewards’ and Docents’ Coordinator. Sheryl said, “Carol stepped-up to her new duties right when the volunteer work demands were at a peak. Working closely with Gregg, Carol welcomed new volunteers and organized the docents for the May 4 Sip & Saunter and September 6 Fundraising Dinner”.

We thank Carol for taking on these new demanding duties at a very busy time for all of our wonderful volunteers.

**Annual Dinner Party Highlights** – On September 6, we held our first Annual Fundraising Dinner Party at the gardens. All of our volunteers, sponsors, and Board members worked hard to make the dinner a huge success.

![A special thanks to Honorary Co-Chairs of the Dinner Event](image)

![Senator Gerald Hocker and Emily Hocker](image)

![George Robbins, Ray Sander and Ron Bass](image)

Special guests included the 2018 Annual Dinner Party’s Honorary Co-chairs, Chuck and Annette Pennoni, and Senator Gerald Hocker and Emily Hocker. Senator Hocker was instrumental in having DBG included in the 2019 State Bond bill, making DBG eligible for $100,000 of capital funds.

We salute our major sponsors Ronnie Burkle of SoDel Concepts, Ted Banks and Kami Banks Kane of Banks Wines & Spirits, Mark Carter of Dogfish Head Brewery, and Zachery McCarthy, Coastal Tented Events. Last, but not least, the principle reason DBG surpassed its fundraising goal of $100,000 was the very generous $50,000 challenge match of Ron Bass and George Robbins.

Sheryl and Ray sent an email to all the people who contributed to the success of the dinner saying in part, “A big thank you to everyone who made the dinner party a success – it took all of you to pull it off. A beautiful tent, great lighting, outstanding food and appetizers, lovely wine (nicely served), perfect music, dogfish beer and cocktails, Teddy’s bourbon tent, our amazing docents and volunteers, the generous challenge from Ron &
George, and the fact that our guests met the challenge, the generosity of our co-chairs Annette and Chuck Pennoni, and the beautifully prepared site. Champions all! Thank you! Ray & Sheryl.”

The Garden is ready for guests

Dinner at Dusk

A last minute surprise was the addition of two refurbished golf carts donated by friends of DBG. Coupled with the loan of another golf cart from one of our supporters, it provided the DBG docents with the ability to chauffeur many of our guests around the gardens before dinner: a welcome relief from the heat for more than a few folks.

The dinner raised over $107,000 but none of this could have been accomplished without all of our partners and sponsors, which included:
OUR DINNER PARTNERS

Honorary Co-Chairs Chuck & Annette Pennoni

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It is clear that now is the time to jump on board the DBG train - As Darin J. McCann reported in the September 13 Coastal Point newspaper, "The DBG momentum to open the gates in 2019 is picking up steam. It’s probably time to start paying attention to what’s taking place in Dagsboro. In fact, it’s probably past that time, because the freight train that is Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek is already rolling down the proverbial track. And it is only picking up speed now. The train is coming. And it’s coming fast."

Development Update

We have good news! We received two important financial contributions to the gardens.

Delaware Community Foundation Grant – On June 28, the Delaware Community Foundation (DCF) presented a $25,000 Capital Grant to DBG to help build the new Welcome Center, which will enable the gardens to open in 2019. Representing the Delaware Community Foundation, Bill Allan, Senior Vice President for Southern Delaware, said, “We have been part of this project when the garden first acquired the land from the Sussex County Land Trust. It’s exciting to witness the gardens evolve from the earlier renderings to now having these thousands of plants in the ground. We can literally see the gardens take root. The Delaware Community Foundation is excited about the number of people the gardens have the potential to touch. We are already seeing the DBG Wetland Outdoor Classroom engage our young people in the wonders of nature. This is just one of the many educational opportunities this great addition to our Region will offer. It is just so heartening to see all these volunteers working together. These dedicated volunteers are themselves being touched.
by this wonderful project. The visitors are going to benefit from this same enjoyable experience. The Delaware Community Foundation is really happy to be part of this great project.”

President Ray Sander said, “The Delaware Community Foundation (DCF) plays a vital role in empowering philanthropy throughout our State. DCF is a unique organization that helps people save and invest money they would like to donate to deserving causes. DCF works with potential philanthropists and makes suggestions on how and where to best direct their funds to worthy projects. The Delaware Community Foundation is where the Delaware Botanic Gardens established the DBG Endowment Fund in 2015. In this way, DBG is giving back to the community. Our Board strongly believes that DBG should be a giver as well as a receiver. Today we are the fortunate receiver of a $25,000 capital grant, which will help us to build our Welcome Center. The DCF grant will be covering a major part of the initial building costs, and DBG will be covering a large portion of the center’s outfitting cost.”

DBG Executive Director Sheryl Swed said, “On behalf of the entire DBG team, we want to thank the Delaware Community Foundation for this generous and timely Capital Grant for the Welcome Center. This structure is an essential element of our 2019 Public Opening. The Welcome Center will be the focal point of our interactions with visitors. This is where visitors will pay their admission, become members and purchase DBG merchandise and plants. Like all the major garden paths, the Welcome Center will be ADA compatible.”

The WN Builders began construction of the Welcome Center on July 16.

**Sander/Swed Welcome Center Sponsorship** - It should be noted that the cost of the Welcome Center building will exceed the $25,000 DCF grant. In order to enhance the Welcome Center, Ray Sander and Sheryl Swed stepped up and donated $35,000 to cover the additional construction costs and electrical connections. We thank them for this generous sponsorship.

**State of Delaware Bond Bill** – In July, as the Delaware Legislative session ended, the Bond Bill was passed. In that bill, under the Community Reinvestment Fund, $100,000 was allocated for the DBG. We want to express our thanks to our Sussex County legislators including State Senator Gerald W. Hocker, and Rep. Ron E. Gray for helping make this happen.

**Futures Team Update**

**News from Board and Futures Team**

The Futures Team has been working with staff and various project leaders to track all garden projects that must be completed in order to open the garden gates in 2019. Thanks to Tom Bason, DBG Online Relations Advisor, we have acquired Microsoft Project Management software to monitor each project. The Project List is updated every Thursday. The Futures Team works closely with each project manager and the Budget and Development Committees to be sure we have the financial resources to complete all the priority projects.

The task ahead for the Futures Team is to build a project plan and timeline for the DBG team to complete in order to open the garden gates in June 2019 for preview tours and then hold a public grand opening in September 2019.

Finally, the Board of Directors reviews the Futures Team recommendations, and approves each project when deemed ready. At that time, final project timelines are set and budget resources programmed.
For example, at the recent Board Meetings the following projects were approved:

1. Welcome Center Building shell, decks and electrical to be completed in September.
2. Hoop Houses final Outfitting for full operations this fall.
3. Eastside stone paths to connect Folly Garden and Dogfish Head Learning Garden (Wetland Outdoor Classroom and Inland Dunes) with Meadow Garden completed in August. This included building two more inland dunes between the Folly Garden and Learning Garden.
4. Piney Neck Road Tree planting of 270 trees in front of deer fence. This is funded by a $5,000 Grant from Delaware State Forest Service, and to be completed in mid-September.
5. Woodland Irrigation Project completed in August.
6. Woodland shoreline Electric Deer Fence to be complete in fall.

As usual, our staff and volunteer Garden Stewards have a major role in these projects.

**Outreach / Speakers / Tours**

News from Carol McCloud, Board VP, Garden Stewards and Docents Coordinator

**Garden Party – Docents** – As you have read, DBG had their first Garden Party dinner, at the site with 300 guests, on September 6. The event was a huge success in a large part due to the 15 welcoming and knowledgeable docents, who are also part of our Garden Steward Team. They even gave “golf cart tours.” Our Docents were as follows: Carol Bason, Donna Buono, Marjorie Bushong, Don Duca, Karen Dudley, Craig Haggerty, Claudine Maggio, Karen Nowell, Jack Powell, Sandy Powell, Peggie Ravida, Angela Schaab, Kurt Schaab, Pamela White and Bonnie Wright. The guests certainly could tell who they were in their bright green vests! What an honor it is to be the Garden Steward and Docent Coordinator. They are an amazing, dedicated and hard-working group of individuals. A great big thank you to all!

Garden Party Docents Donna Buono, Karen Dudley, Craig Haggerty and Marjorie Bushong are ready to help raise funds in their money-green vests! Photo courtesy of Donna Buono.

**Garden Stewards** – From the Phase III completion of planting the Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden, in late June, to preparing the gardens for the September 6 Fundraising Garden Dinner Party, the volunteers were key players. It was very hot and humid in August, and yet the Garden Stewards showed up day after day with weeding knives and buckets of mulch to prepare the gardens to look their very best for
our partners, sponsors and friends. They also prepared other sections of the gardens by planting in the Woodlands and along the Woodland boarder.


Many of the people listed above helped us finish planting the final phase of the Meadow Garden along with the following volunteers: Mohamad Akhter, Dawn Anderson, Sally Boswell, Wendy Brister, George S. Bullen Jr., Bill Chamberlain, Phyllis Farreny, Cindy Goulder, David Green, Liz Hollyfield, Dawn Huffman, Mary Carol Hunter, Kathy Kinsella, Peggy Kircher, Harry Merritt, Beth Mills, Donald Ott, Patti Pleva, Robert Poli, Tricia Precht, Carrie Preston, the Camp Rehoboth Team, Jane Rice, Libby Rice, Selma Tepper, Carl Tull, and Dave Wright (per DBG timesheets). Thank you, one and all.

Speakers & Private Tours Bureau – DBG has an outstanding Speakers/Tour Bureau for the Gardens. Our informed & talented speakers do an outstanding job of sharing information and updates about the Gardens. Our speakers include: Director of Horticulture Gregg Tepper, Board Member Ruth Clausen, President Ray Sander, Executive Director Sheryl Swed, Volunteer Grant Writer Carol Bason & Grant Writer Sally Boswell. Also, a part of our community outreach is having our Table Top display with photos, literature and updates at such events as the April 17 Delaware Hospitality Expo in Lewes, the May 5 Native Plant Sale in Ocean View and the August 7 Dagsboro Days Night Out, just to name a few. This is a great way of keeping the community updated, introducing new members to the Gardens and attracting new volunteers to sign up and become a member of our Volunteer Team.

Finally, a “master list” of past and upcoming DBG public presentations and tours is maintained. When requested, DBG will conduct hosted small private tours at the site. If you would like a small group private tour or speaker presentation, please contact Carol.McCloud@delawaregardens.org. DBG requests a $250 donation for a speaker or an onsite private tour. This will help us to open the Garden Gates in 2019.
In the Garden

News from Gregg Tepper, Director of Horticulture

With the summer quickly moving to autumn, the days shorten, the temperatures cool and the plants, shrubs and trees begin transitioning to a long period of rest. The work in the Garden though never ceases. Our Garden Stewards and staff will be tasked with on-going maintenance as well as several new projects this Fall.

The Meadow Garden still has some final grasses and phlox yet to be added to the lower section, while weeding continues as well as some general grooming. The late fall and winter will be the time to appreciate the textures and structures of the remaining stems and seed heads as well as the beautiful meadow grasses, with their varied shades of golden browns, pale tans and rich caramel colors.

Fall in the Meadow is heralded by the late flowering of various asters, such as the showy aster shown below, as well as the maturation of flowering stems, which feature their varied seed heads in an infinite combination of shapes and structures.
Additional Garden Projects for this fall include:

- The Tree Planting Project will install 270 trees that include white oaks, eastern red cedars, chestnut oaks, loblolly pines and Virginia pines, to provide an attractive and varied screen along the road front and will become another important section of habitat for wildlife.

- The Inland Dune Gardens, which are gently bermed areas of the Garden, are in the works to be planted this fall and into next spring with various native plants, shrubs and trees that thrive in the well-drained, often dry, sandy soil of southern Delaware.

- The East Woodland Border is a Garden between the woodland, Meadow Garden and Inland Dunes Garden that will be densely planted with various perennials, grasses, sedges and shrubs to provide a pleasing mix of colors and textures with multi-seasonal interest.

- The Folly Garden will have additional spring-flowering bulbs added.

- The Woodland Garden will have shrubs added as well as several perennials and work will be done on the pathways to grade and level the surfaces as well as line the edges further with logs.

All these efforts are furthered by our dedicated Garden Stewards and I am extremely grateful for all they do for us. I am also most grateful for my two co-workers, Heather Spencer and Sam Cashdollar. Each day I work with them, I get to experience a sense of effective teamwork that makes so much possible. Thanks to both of you for your special skills, thoughtful manner and dedication to our project. Now, let’s get planting!

2018 Summer Happenings

There was a lot of activity going on this summer as the gardens hosted visiting groups, including the opening of our Dogfish Head Learning Garden and the initial Girl Scout project.

**Sussex Central High Visit** – On May 31, thirty-two Sussex Central High School students visited the gardens to observe nature and conduct various projects. The junior-year students were welcomed by President Ray Sander, who explained that, “DBG is in the beginning of a long-journey.” He said he hoped they would return next year when the DBG will be open to the public.

Ryan Revel, a biology teacher, organized the field trip with Sheryl Swed, the Executive Director of DBG. Swed explained that the Sussex Central students were the first student group to visit the garden, as part of a “pilot” educational field trip. “She thanked Ryan and the students for being the first participants in the DBG education program.”

Ryan explained, “The science part of our International Bachelorette require that students do something called a group four project. We teach biology and chemistry and the International Bachelorette involves college level courses. Students take these courses over a period of two years.”

The four-hour visit began with students recording the weather conditions, which affect the plants and observations in the garden. Then there was a tour of the gardens led by Gregg Tepper, Director of Horticulture. He explained how the various plants support the wildlife in the gardens. Therefore, it is a “living” garden. Observing the meadow garden, student Ryan Sosnoski said, “I like the diversity of
plants here.” Walking in the much cooler Woodland Garden, student Ashleigh Steele said, “I like the variety of environments within the gardens, there is something for everybody.”

After the tour, the students divided into three basic groups. One group studied the native plants as they prepared a “Field Guide” of 30 native plants. The second group began taking water samples at the garden’s Wetland Outdoor Classroom, and the third group began to take “soil samples” in the various gardens. The chemistry teacher, Kristen Ables said, “Field work is always the best, and I’m looking forward to comparing these water and soil samples with the data you already have.” The samples went back to the classroom for further study.

Ryan Revel summed up the Sussex Central High School visit saying, “I think a lot of learning happened here today. I envision these students bringing their children here some day. It is amazing to me that so much of the information Gregg Tepper shared today was so similar to what I have said in the classroom. This visit magnified many of those teaching points.”

**Girl Scout Garden** – On June 18, Girl Scouts from Troop 20566, York, PA created a new garden in the western edge of woodland area facing the meadow. The 15 Girl Scouts and 9 adults worked on preparing this project for months. They selected 500 plants and 4 redbud trees, which they planted on a very hot day.

Co-Troop Leader Wendy Brister explained, “We have been working on this project since March, raising money by selling native plants, and we have meetings. Our emphasis was teaching the importance of pollinators in the garden.” Three of the Girl Scouts: Ara Kessler, Emma Porter and Katie Hess received the Bronze Merit award for their participation in the DBG Project.

DBG President Ray Sander said, “This is a very special day. This sets the example of how DBG will work with the Girl and Boy Scout organizations in the area.” He pointed out that the troop co-leader, Wendy Brister, is a longtime supporter of Delaware Botanic Gardens. He told Wendy, “Your troop’s donation of plants and hard work has greatly enhanced the garden’s natural beauty.”

DBG Director of Horticulture Gregg Tepper said, “I’m excited about how this Girl Scout project turned out. The dedication and generosity of Girl Scout Troop 20566 is here for all our visitors to enjoy as they walk along the western edge of Woodland Garden.”

Troop 20566 is part of the Echo Valley Community of Girl Scouts Heart of Pennsylvania. They meet in eastern York County and the Girl Scouts attend Eastern York School District and Central York School.
District. Co-Troop leader Marie Moore also explained that they are an unusual group because Troop 20566 is composed of mixed age groups including Brownies (grades 3 and 4), juniors (grades 4 and 5) and Cadets (grades 6, 7 and 8). “We all stay together and learn together,” Marie said. Girl Scout Catarina Brigham observed, “This is such a pretty and calming place, I like the gardens.”

Executive Director Sheryl Swed said, “As a former Girl Scout, I am so proud of these young women and their wonderful contribution to the beauty of the gardens.”

Longwood Garden Student Interns Visit – On June 21, Delaware Botanic Gardens (DBG) hosted 25 student interns from Longwood Gardens. DBG President Ray Sander said, “Longwood is the gold standard of public gardens. We have all been inspired by Longwood Gardens. The Longwood Foundation’s generous and creative philanthropy empowered the DBG project in 2015. Now DBG’s relationship with the Longwood excellence has an additional connection with the timely help from these future leaders trained at Longwood Gardens. We are sincerely thankful for Longwood Gardens and their students.”

DBG Director of Horticulture Gregg Tepper welcomed the students and conducted a tour of the gardens. Then the students went to work weeding the garden to prepare for planting and then transferred plants from the temporary nursery to the lower section of the Meadow. Gregg observed, “Such talented young people with boundless enthusiasm! They worked hard and made a significant contribution!”

DBG Executive Director Sheryl Swed thanked Longwood’s Director of Domestic and International Studies, Dr. Brian W. Trader, and Gregg Tepper for their leadership in making the working visit possible! Dr. Trader replied, “I wanted to thank you for your hospitality and for engaging with our students. You should be proud of the progress and I look forward to returning in the fall. Congratulations!”

Let’s work together to Open the Garden Gates

All photographs that are not attributed were taken by Ray Bojarski
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