Welcome to our Summer 2019 Newsletter. We are in the 60-day countdown to opening the garden gates to the public on Monday, September 16. We hope to see you at the Grand Opening Dinner on Thursday September 12, 2019, which will be discussed later in “Save the Date.” This dinner is a chance to talk to Piet Oudolf, famous plantsman and designer of the Meadow Garden, as well as to celebrate with friends and our DBG family.

After six years we are at an important “inflection point,” as we move from building a garden to operating a public garden and continuing to build new gardens. This year we had an opportunity to search for a new DBG leader, who could help us in this more complex operating environment.

New DBG Deputy Executive Director & Director of Horticulture – We celebrate the appointment of our new Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture Brian W. Trader, Ph.D. He comes to us from Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA, where he served as Director of Domestic and International Studies. Brian will formally join the DBG team on August 1.

The reaction to our June announcement of Brian’s appointment has been universally positive. We have heard from a lot of you including Rodney Robinson, a member of the original 2015 Dream Team, who shared his strong support of our selection. DBG Advisory Council Member and Associate Professor of Horticulture at Cornell University, Don Rakow said, “Congratulations on making such an outstanding choice. I’ve known Brian Trader for a number of years and agree he brings to the position extraordinary credentials as a horticulturalist, leader of programs, and progressive thinker. He also happens to be an incredibly nice person with a very positive outlook.”
As your DBG President, here is what I said in the June 6 announcement. “As we evolve from building a garden to operating a public garden, we knew that we needed to expand our talented team. With the addition of Brian Trader, we have a distinguished, professional horticultural leader to help guide DBG’s long-term growth. Brian Trader is the right person to take this new role as Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture. His addition to our team is happening at the right time as DBG opens to the public in September 2019.”

Brian Trader has worked over the last nine years at Longwood Gardens, the recognized gold standard of public gardens. Dr. Trader has demonstrated that rare combination of intellectual expertise, management leadership and practical Horticulture experience. As Director of Domestic and International Studies at Longwood Gardens, Brian has been a teacher and mentor to hundreds of future horticultural leaders. Brian has lectured extensively, and has authored and co-authored dozens of journal articles. Dr. Trader holds a Ph.D. in Horticulture; M.S. in Life Sciences; and B.S. in Horticulture all from Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. He was Chair of the Membership Advisory Council, National Association of Landscape Professionals; and is currently a Board member, American Society for Horticultural Science.

Raised on the Eastern shore of Virginia, Brian said, “As a Delmarva native, I couldn’t be more excited to join a passionate team in the opening of new gardens for our coastal communities. The opportunity to enrich the lives of Delmarva residents and guests through our inspiring and educational gardens is a dream. I would be remiss if I did not tip my hat to the many volunteers from Board members to garden stewards and hospitality docents who have brought this new and fast-growing public garden to life.”

Sheryl Swed, DBG Executive Director, said, “This is a great opportunity for DBG and for Brian. We are fortunate to have a Longwood Gardens veteran join our executive team. Brian has all the experience and tools to help us to move this legacy garden forward. Creating a public garden from a former soybean field and inaccessible woodlands takes the dedication and commitment of a team. This project is a success because of all of us, not just any one of us. Brian will help to keep us on course and open a new chapter of creative leadership.”

Carol McCloud, DBG Vice President and Volunteer Coordinator, noted, “Our volunteers are eager to learn more about our native horticulture and gardening. Brian’s credentials, professional experience and dedication to education will enhance all of our volunteers’ experience at DBG.”

**New DBG Treasurer** – There is another new face at DBG, who you can meet at the Grand Opening dinner. At the July Board meeting, the Board welcomed our new Corporate Treasurer and Board member Katherine A. Johnson. We are lucky to have Kathy aboard and she already has immersed herself in all the budget-financial activities and is a member of the Futures Team. She is becoming a key participant within our project management decision process.

Kathy holds a J.D. (law) degree and a Master of Science in Administration. She has worked in both the public and private sectors, including positions with a number of non-profit entities. For more
than 20 years, she served as a senior executive at various organizations involved in the health care and medical research fields. Most recently, Kathy held the position of chief administrative officer at the Massey Cancer Center at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, an organization with 130 employees and an annual budget of $18 million. After retiring and moving to southern Delaware, she started her own business in personal financial planning, specializing in financial topics affecting seniors and people with moderate incomes. Kathy volunteers extensively in the local community, including serving as tax counselor with the AARP Foundation’s Tax-Aide Program, past treasurer for the South Coastal Delaware Chapter of AARP, member of the grant review committee of the DCF Fund for Women, and treasurer of her homeowners association.

It should be noted that our Board expressed our special thanks to Grant Watchorn, the outgoing treasurer. DBG thanks Grant for a smooth transition and for getting us through the last year plus by creating a table of accounts that is much more meaningful and more relevant to what we are doing.

**Entry Garden** – As we explained in the spring newsletter, we began 2019 with our major project being construction of the 2-acre Entry Garden, including a parking area, dunes between the parking area and the Meadow Garden, and a “hammerhead” entrance at Piney Neck Road. The new visitor entrance will include a Piney Neck Road right turn lane into the Visitor Entrance and a wider two-lane road gate.

Once again, we called on the proven construction team of Pennoni, George & Lynch, and Bancroft Construction. We hope the project will be completed in mid-August. This will complete the First Phase of the DBG Master Plan.
Volunteer Task Leaders Step-up – We mentioned in the spring newsletter about the Board’s Executive Committee creating a “volunteer task leader” transition team to ensure that we finished the gardens on schedule, after the former Director of Horticulture left in February. We will let Carol McCloud, our Board VP and Volunteer Coordinator say more in her column, but we must give special thanks to Angela and Kurt Schabb for their leadership in the Meadow and Meadow Edge Gardens. Thanks to Jan Poli, who took leadership of the Folly Garden.

We also thank Board member and Horticulture writer Ruth Clausen, for supporting the work of the task leaders.

Blueberry Days – One of the major volunteer projects was the planting of 1,824 blueberry plants on May 13-15. The blueberry bushes were planted around the Dogfish Head Brewery Learning Garden and in two of the inland dunes. Karen Steenhoudt, who did the dunes planting design, was there to supervise. This was an amazing sight to see all the volunteers mobilize for the blueberry planting.

Living Shoreline Project – Also, at the May 14 Board Meeting, Karen Steenhoudt briefed the Board on the “Living Shoreline Project,” which she is also designing. This is a collaboration project between DNREC, Center for Inland Bays (CIB) and DBG. Karen explained her thinking in creating the designs, especially in the light of Climate Change and sea rise and the increased shore erosion in coastal regions. Karen has been active in many DBG projects and graduated recently from Temple University with a Master’s degree in Landscape Architecture. Her designs for the DBG projects comprised her capstone project towards her degree. We thank Karen for all her hard work at DBG.
Welcome Center Completed – We give thanks for the friends of the garden, who support us financially and the business community who give us major “in-kind” support, sharing their expertise at well below market prices as “in-kind” contributions. The latest example of this business “in-kind” support is with the Welcome Center.

We are proud to announce that we have completed work on the Welcome Center, and we opened the center for visitors at three events - the May 17 “Bugs & Beer,” the June 1 Volunteer Open House, and the June 13 Sip & Saunter.” A special thanks again to the Welcome Center builder WN Construction, Brazil Wanderson; interior designers, Scott and Jen Edmonson of SEA Studio, LLC and the electrical team from Nickle Electric, Steve Dignan and Anthony Mongeluzo.

Bugs & Beer – On May 17, the DBG opened its gates for the first “Bugs & Beer” lecture by Todd Fritchman at the Dogfish Head Learning Garden. It was a clear success with 75 visitors and DBG volunteers participating.

Ray Sander, president of DBG said, “This event kicks off our 2019 educational program at DBG. It happened because of the strong support and collaboration between Dogfish Head who is our lead naming rights supporter, and Envirotech, who created the Wetlands Outdoor Classroom. They are our educational mission support team.”
Mariah Calagione, co-owner of Dogfish Head said, “We are proud to be partners with DBG and it’s exciting to see the Wetlands Outdoor Classroom in action with a wonderful teacher like Todd.”

Todd Fritchman, owner of Envirotech added, “The constructed wetland has provided a habitat for the growth and development of frogs, toads and multitudes of macro invertebrates such as damsel flies, dragon flies, crustaceans such as crayfish, insect pollinators and much more.” In short, he said, “This class allowed us to understand the biological diversity of this Living Outdoor Classroom and to best understand the ecological significance of the wetland and the biota it supports.”

This class was not just a lecture. It was a “hands-on” experience with participants taking water samples and observing the creatures living in the wetlands. Fritchman observed, “It was clear that inquiry based learning works and profound interest was generated as the participants literally got wet and into the experience. Their questions began to flow. After class, the visitors took a leisurely stroll through the gardens and Alison Skeel of Kensington, Md., said, “The gardens are fantastic, and I can’t wait to come back.”

**Sip & Saunter** – On June 13, we held our “Sip & Saunter” event, sponsored by Dogfish Head Craft Brewery. Mark Carter, Beer and Benevolence Director at Dogfish Head and his crew did a masterful job of providing a fine selection of beers and special cocktails as well as oysters from Chesapeake and Maine and assorted appetizers.

We had about 200 attendees, including some of our great friends and supporters from Sussex County, including Sussex County Administrator Todd Lawson and Sussex County Council Members I.G. Burton, Doug Hudson and John Rieley. Also attending were Cape Gazette Publisher and member of the Sussex County Land Trust Dennis Forney and Sussex County Economic Development Director Bill Pfaff. DBG Board Member and Executive Director of Southern Delaware Tourism Scott Thomas told attendees that DBG will be a “big draw” for Sussex County visitors.
Happy Fourth of July – Nine DBG volunteers provided another forward step in the march to the September 12 Grand Opening Dinner with a special DBG Float in the Bethany Beach July 4th Parade. The volunteers used Bob Ravida’s red pickup truck decorated with a redbud tree from Lord’s Landscaping, flower boxes and DBG banners to celebrate.

The DBG float got a 2nd place award in the non-profit category. Bringing the float to life under a hot July 4th summer sun were Ray Sander, Peggy & Bob Ravida, Sheryl Swed, Carol McCloud, Brent Baker, Kurt & Angela Schaab & Donna Buono.

New Meadow Garden Plant Collection List – Thanks to Tom Bason, Ruth Clausen, Angela Schabb, and Jan Poli we have a new website page that provides pictures of each plant variety in the Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden. Over 70,000 herbaceous perennials and grasses are represented. Go to www.delawaregardens.org/plant-collections and click on the Garden section map to view the plants in that section.

Margaret Kimmel produced DBG’s “Plants are in Bloom” flyers, which identified all the plants in the Meadow Garden in bloom in June and July. Margaret also produced a wonderful pamphlet that described all the hollies donated to DBG by the Anderson family. A lot of effort went into identifying and learning the history of each Anderson holly. Ray Bojarski provided pictures of all the hollies.

Important Events - Save the Date

Annual Meeting at DBG – On Monday, July 22 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. we will hold our first “onsite” Annual Meeting at the new Welcome Center. If you haven’t had the chance to visit the site recently, we have now completed all the Phase I gardens, including: the Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden; Dogfish Head Learning Garden (including the Wetland Outdoor Classroom and Inland Dunes); the John & Carol McCloud Folly Garden, and the Woodlands Garden. This is also a chance to meet some of our new Board members, tour the gardens, and pick up the new plant guide to the Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden and the Guide to the Anderson Holly Collection.

Grand Opening Dinner Party – We expect to have 300 people attend the Annual Fundraising Dinner on Thursday, September 12. Our partners include:

- Plate Catering of SoDel Concepts with Chef Ronnie Burkle designing the menu to ensure a seasonal farm-fresh experience and SoDel Concepts Pastry Chef Dru Tevis creating a delicious array of desserts.
- Banks Wine & Spirits will be providing the wine and a refreshing margarita bar.
- Dogfish Head Craft Brewery will be providing a selection of their beers and a surprise seasonal cocktail.
- The dining area will be under a beautiful sail cloth tent provided by Coastal Tented Events facing the Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden
- Piano music and vocals provided again this year by Vincent Varrassi
Piet Oudolf will be there as well as Carla and Jack Markel and all the members of the DBG Board plus the new Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture, Brian Trader. You may also get a chance to meet Adrian Higgins, *The Washington Post* Garden Columnist, who will be our guest.

**Become A Dinner Sponsor** – We still need sponsors. You can become a sponsor of the Grand Opening Dinner by going to our website at [www.delawaregardens.org/new-events](http://www.delawaregardens.org/new-events).

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**Volunteers & Tours Update**

News from Carol McCloud, DBG Vice President

**Volunteers** – As Garden Steward and Docent Coordinator I am constantly in awe of our volunteers and staff. They do whatever it takes to get things done on a daily basis. When I first took on the role of Volunteer & Docent Coordinator, I was not sure what I was getting myself into. I have to tell you it has been both rewarding and an honor to work with these amazing people. In talking to Brian Trader, our incoming Deputy Executive Director and Director of Horticulture, he too is amazed at how much the volunteers have accomplished at DBG.

In early 2019, we found ourselves without a Horticulturist. At that time, we had several volunteers step up to the plate to be Task Leaders of the Gardens. This wide scope of volunteer/horticultural tasking simply has never been done.

Carol McCloud
at any other startup public garden. We all worked together to do what had to be done in preparation for our September 2019 Grand Opening. It has been quite a journey.

Our volunteer task leaders are:

- Angela Schaab who ordered new replacement plants for the Piet Oudolf Meadow and supervised their planting.
- Jan Poli has been caring for the Folly Garden. She also created beautiful containers for displays for our events
- Craig Haggerty is creating an electronic inventory of all the plants at DBG.

All these tasks were accomplished with the help of our Garden Stewards. Primarily we have planted over 3,500 plants & bushes in the Meadow and the Inland Dunes. Along with planting, we’ve weeded & mulched the beds, groomed and mulched the trails and assisted in putting stone dust on all the trails of the Piet Oudolf Meadow. Several have also been Hospitality Docents for three events.

**Meadow Garden** – Speaking of the Meadow Garden, on May 22 Angela Schaab sent out an email to leadership with the subject line “Done!” She wrote, “Over 1,500 Andropogon (black mountain grasses) have been planted during the last three days. This task was accomplished ahead of schedule. This completed the major meadow repair for all the deceased *Bouteloua gracilis* (blonde ambition). As well as corrected the flood-damaged bed 210, which is now put back together. Small ‘tweaking’ & spot mulching still needs to be done and of course, weeding will proceed throughout the growing season. Again all this was accomplished with the hard work of our Garden Stewards.
Open House – On June 1, we held our first Volunteer Recruitment Open House. It was a great success. We now have a new group of volunteers working beside our seasoned volunteers in all areas of the Gardens.

Volunteer Incentive Program – To thank our hard working volunteers the Board has approved a Volunteer Earned Annual Admission Incentive Program. The volunteer program categories, which qualify for the annual earned free admission, are:

- #1 - 50 hours worked in a given year
- #2 - 100 hours worked in a given year

The 50 hours worked earns one annual free admission for the following year. The 100 hours worked earns one annual free admission plus one guest for the following year. Our volunteer research data indicates that in 2018 there were 31 volunteers who reached 50 hours and 18 volunteers who reached 100 hours. Did I say that our volunteers are amazing!

We are always in need of more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, go to the web site www.delawaregardens.org/sign-up-to-volunteer. We have four basic volunteer categories:

1. Garden Stewards – They are the backbone of our daily planting and garden maintenance. If you like to get your hands dirty, this is the opportunity for you.
2. Docents - Are our smiling and knowledgeable guides. If you like to share information and meet new people, this is the opportunity for you.
3. Hospitality Docents – Provide cheerful guest services and work in the Welcome Center.
4. Administrative Staff – Have varied duties based on your experience and the gardens needs in things like drafting letters, working with our digital team, etc.

New "Opening Day" Challenges – In the last newsletter I discussed having a volunteer survey. This would determine how many volunteers were interested in helping us staff the gardens as Docents once we open to the public. We have held meetings, shared the type of roles and responsibilities needed as well as the dates and times they would be available to staff the gardens. We are still working on this process. Soon we will be sending a separate email to the interested volunteers who want to be a Docent, with a schedule for training soon.

Volunteer Docent Training – The Hospitality/Docent training, for when the Gardens open, will be held at the site. The training will be specific for each staff position. The training includes Hospitality Docent for Welcome Center, Parking Lot Greeter & Gardens/Woodlands Docents. There will be study guides, checklists, special guided tours, workshops and a series of final “dress rehearsals.” At the Welcome Center, there will also be training for using our “point of sale” computers. This will be for admissions and gift shop sales. Once trained our Hospitality/Docents will have the knowledge to answer guest questions and to work in the Welcome Center.

Small Group Tours – We are offering a series of small group (20 or less guests) morning tours to the public this July & August at the Gardens. There is a $250 donation for up to 20 guests and $25 per guest over 20. To book a small group tour, please contact me at carol.mccloud@delawaregardens.org.
The Woodlands

Jeremy Hager, Board Member and ISA Board-Certified Master Arborist

I was five years old. My kindergarten class took an early morning field trip to our local Nature Center to learn about trees, birds, and insects. As a child who rarely spent time indoors, I could barely sleep the night before.

The young lady who was in charge of the field trip met us at a narrow trailhead lined by large Tulip Poplars and Oaks that towered over the understory Rhododendron and Fern. After a few paces into the shaded trail, she instructed us all to stop and look around. Most kids proceeded to chatter. I remained silent. I bent down and began turning over leaves and digging in the black forest soils. I recall being in awe of all the insects I encountered and birds I could hear. I recall thinking these trees must be the grandparents of the trees in my own yard. I’m unable to recall what occurred the rest of the trip but I vividly remember the feeling that came over me. It was one of discovery, wonder, beauty, and excitement.

After hearing about the Delaware Botanic Gardens, I was instantly intrigued. My chance encounter with Carol McCloud at Jayne’s Reliable Earth Day event in 2018 allowed me the opportunity to begin meeting the wonderful people associated with the project. It wasn’t until I visited the property in late 2018 and toured the Woodlands, did I realize I needed to get involved. Gregg Tepper, our former Director of Horticulture, met me onsite and took me to the narrow trailhead that enters the Woodlands. We took a few steps in and I asked him to stop with me for a few moments. As I looked around in all directions, I knew this tract of forest was unique. Partly because of the beautiful trails that had been installed and partly because of the diverse species and the untouched nature of this area.

After joining the board in early 2019, I began to spend more time in the Woodlands and discovering all it has to offer. Beautiful remnants of old trees remain on the forest floor providing habitat for a wide range of wild life. Handmade nests large enough to fit 20 people have been weaved by volunteers using branches from nearby trees. Log benches, carefully and beautifully crafted, have been strategically placed along the meandering trail system to allow for peaceful moments alone or with friends and family. Vernal pools packed with native vegetation reside in lower portions of the Woodlands and provide a look into plant material and wildlife native to coastal Delaware. A short stroll along the trail system leads to a view of Pepper Creek. As you look out onto this waterway with large Pines and Hollies shading you from the sun, you can almost imagine what this area was like a hundred years ago. The diverse understory plants, ranging from Fern and Azalea to native Redbud and Sassafras, are tucked away amongst the tree canopy. It took everything I had not to place this first...the trees! Specimens of old growth Persimmon, large Loblolly Pines, native American Hollies, Walnut, Cherry, and Oaks of varying varieties are artistically placed by nature throughout the Woodlands. It’s a wonder how this area was not cleared in the recent past to develop homes, increase farmable land, or to simply harvest for the wood values. As with any forest, its constantly evolving and adapting. A fitting metaphor for our own lives.
There are many upcoming projects including a partnership with DNREC to install a living shoreline along Pepper’s Creek and planting additional native understory trees. Trails will continue to be expanded further around the Woodlands and as with any project at the gardens, the Woodlands would benefit from your financial and/or volunteerism support. When you make your visit to the Gardens for the first time, it’s important to remember that nearly everything you experience here was envisioned, created, and cared for by local volunteers. In never ceases to amaze me the relentless dedication and passion of our volunteer groups and reminds me of the pride that volunteerism brings to each one of us.

As that fateful field trip in Kindergarten was a building block towards me choosing to study horticulture at Virginia Tech and becoming a professional Arborist, I am excited to hear how the Woodlands and DBG will shape not only our local youth but also our retired visitors. There is something instinctual about our need to connect with the forests and nature around us. I would encourage everyone to visit our beautiful gardens and spend time in the Woodlands to experience that discovery, wonder, beauty, and excitement that has and will continue to shape my life. I look forward to seeing you on the trails.

**Let's work together to Open the Garden Gates**

All photographs not attributed were taken by Ray Bojarski, DBG Official Photographer

Bench orders must be received by 7/26 to be on site for Grand Opening Dinner. Click [here](#) to order.
GRAND OPENING DINNER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
5–8 PM

Tickets $250
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Piet Oudolf

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