



108 Old Driftway Lane, Chris Draper & Lois Fitton

2025 TEWKSBURY GARDEN TOUR

Sponsored by: The Tewksbury Historical Society

ABOUT THE 2025 TEWKSBURY GARDEN TOUR

Thirty-four years ago, in 1991, the Tewksbury Historical Society decided to have a "Garden Tour". It became an annual event, offering local refreshments at a favorite stop. In 2007 it became a biennial event, changing to a "House and Garden Tour" in 2017. COVID came with its many life changes, and, in 2021, the THS reverted back to a total "Garden Tour", increasing the number of gardens to six.

Finding six garden owners interested in showcasing their gardens can be challenging and was nothing less this year. Thanks go out to the garden owners for their participation and for making the 2025 Tewksbury Garden Tour possible.

Pete & Marg Peterson

Bruce Jordan

Jason & Deborah J. DeSalvo

Sandra Ballentine & Leslie E. Smith III

Chris Draper & Lois Fitton

Michele & Robert T. Liana

The tour gardens are varied. A hillside property, sloped and wooded, resulted in a terraced series of gardens. A pollinator garden is found in the historic district of Oldwick. A "perfectly imperfect" oasis is sited in an eclectic garden. A garden that is part of an ecosystem providing diverse foods and habitat for people and animals is on the Tour. A



property, originally a dairy farm, has been transformed into a sanctuary of whimsical contentment. An overgrown and neglected garden is now a place of glory. This booklet provides details about each garden and shares tidbits about the garden owners you will meet.

Thank you to all ticket holders for supporting the THS. To fully enjoy the day, please stop at one of the local restaurants for a late breakfast, a leisurely lunch or afternoon snack, or visit one of the shops along the way.

Finally, thanks also to the Garden Tour Committee for thoroughly planning this event and to the many volunteers guiding you safely to and through each garden site.

**See our calendar to
discover more of our
fabulous events!**



DIRECTIONS FOR THE GARDEN TOUR

In addition to this booklet, you will receive a map of the gardens on the tour with a suggested route to follow. We are distributing two versions of the map to avoid a large number of attendees arriving at the same gardens at the same time. Hopefully, this will make traffic less congested and viewing more enjoyable. You do not have to visit the gardens in this order. It is only a suggestion for the shortest drives between gardens. You will also travel some of Tewksbury's scenic roads.

You will know that you arrived at the correct location when you see a "Garden Tour" sign at the driveway entrance. There is no time limit for your stay at each garden, but keep in mind that the tour will end promptly at 3:00 PM.

TIPS FOR GARDEN ETIQUETTE

While we want you to explore and have a good time, please keep in mind the following:

- Obey speed limits on our country roads.
- Please drive slowly entering and leaving all property driveways.
- Park only in designated areas as directed by attendants.
- Ticket holders receive wristbands for admission to the tour. All members of your party must wear the wristband visibly when entering the gardens.
- No food and drinks, except water, on the properties.
- No smoking on the properties.
- Restrooms are available at the Tewksbury Historical Society Headquarters.

THANK YOU TO THE GARDEN TOUR COMMITTEE

The Garden Tour would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of the Garden Tour Committee. A big thank you to them, and the numerous volunteers who contribute to the success of the Tour.

Laura LaFemina - Tewksbury Historical Society Graphic Designer/Social Media Content Coordinator

Janis Manning - Tewksbury Historical Society Content Editor/Project Manager

Wolfgang Meyer – Garden Tour Committee Chair

Pete Peterson - Tewksbury Historical Society Treasurer

Joan Umholtz - Tewksbury Historical Society Vice President/Garden Tour Publicity

Shaun C. Van Doren – Tewksbury Historical Society President

Volunteers – Parking Assistants and Garden Guides

Garden Owners



FUN EVENTS

2025

Saturday, June 21	10 am - 3 pm	Tewksbury Garden Tour
Saturday, June 28	9:30 am	League of Historical Societies of NJ Meeting (1)
Saturday, August 30	8 am - 4 pm	Labor Day Tag Sale (2)
Preview Fri Oct 3 Show Dates Sat Oct 4 Sun Oct 5 Mon - Fri Oct 6 - 10 Sat Oct 11	6 pm - 8 pm 10 am - 5 pm 1 pm - 5 pm 12 pm - 5 pm 10 am - 3 pm	33rd Tewksbury Art Show (1)
Sunday, November 9	5 pm	Covered Dish Supper & Program - Toy Trains & Their History (1)
Saturday, December 6	10 am - 4 pm	Christmas Antique Show - One Day Only! (3)
Saturday, December 13	10 am - 4 pm	Holiday Sale (2)
Sunday, December 14	12 pm - 4 pm	Holiday Sale (2)

Locations:

- 1 Zion Lutheran Education Building, 18 Miller Avenue, Oldwick
- 2 Oldwick Carriage House, 5 James Street, Oldwick
- 3 Old Turnpike School, 173 Old Turnpike Road, Califon

FUN GARDEN TIPS



INVOLVE OTHERS:

Family Gardening: Let your child help choose plants, build projects, and learn about gardening.

Community Gardens: Participate in a community garden to connect with other gardeners and learn new techniques.

MAKE IT FUN AND CREATIVE:

Garden Art: Add sculptures, quirky planters (like old wellies or tires), or painted ornaments to brighten up your garden.

Themed Plantings: Group plants around a theme like a fairy garden, a dinosaur garden, or a sensory garden.

DIY Projects: Build raised beds, DIY sprinklers, or homemade rain barrels with your family.

EMBRACE UNUSUAL TECHNIQUES:

Use Cayenne Pepper: Ward off pests by sprinkling cayenne pepper around plants.

Milk as a Fertilizer: Use milk as a natural fertilizer and a spray for powdery mildew.

Flour as a Soil Enhancer: Sprinkle flour on the soil surface for leafy crops.

OPTIMIZE YOUR SPACE:

Dense Planting: Plant densely to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

Cut and Come Again: Harvest leafy greens multiple times from one plant.

Succession Planting: Plant new seeds every few weeks to ensure a continuous harvest.

LEARN FROM OTHERS:

Ask for Advice: Don't hesitate to ask neighbors with thriving gardens for tips.

Follow Garden Blogs: Read online resources and blogs for gardening tips and inspiration.

Most importantly - Attend garden tours to learn about different design styles and plant combinations!!!!



18 Church Street

Front Garden Peonies and Irises.

Pete & Marg Peterson

A desire to live in a Victorian House, with land for a garden, was on Pete and Marg Peterson's "wish list" when looking for their new home. The village of Oldwick was the perfect place for them to find their gem. An 1890 house listed on the National Register of Historic Places located in the historic section of Oldwick, yet in a country setting, fit their criteria. The Petersons purchased their property in 2014, looking forward to enjoying the outdoors and gardening in a manageable setting.

When the house was purchased the only garden on the property was shrubbery around the house: boxwoods in the front and junipers along the driveway. There were wild rose bushes along the fence to the west. In addition, there were four established rose bushes along the west side of the driveway in the back with more junipers.

In 2016, the boxwoods in the front and the junipers along the driveway were removed. A huge panicle hydrangea was placed beneath the dining room window and shrub roses were added along the base of the front porch. Crape myrtle was added. Two Bigleaf hydrangeas were planted at the steps from the street up to the front yard. Over the years, irises were added.



Front Garden Hydrangea, Peonies and Irises.

Because the Petersons have always been attracted to nature, they wanted to give up the simple grass front yard and have a garden with curb appeal. They decided to transform the yard into a pollinator garden. In 2023, they began the project.

Working closely with Cording Landscape Design, they created a layout and selected plant varieties. Phlox was added to the existing phlox area. Gayfeather, sweet spire, varieties of peonies, ornamental onion, blue star, false indigo, sweet shrub, dianthus, Lenten roses, and varieties of thyme were planted. Panicle hydrangea, two Bigleaf



Front Garden Hydrangeas and Rhododendron.

hydrangeas and a mountain laurel were added to the property. The first full year of bloom was 2024. During that summer, Cording split the iris plants, which had grown quite big, and spread them throughout the garden. He removed the wild rose bushes along the fence on the west side of the driveway, replacing them with Miss Kim lilac bushes.

It is now a welcoming spot for all kinds of birds to visit and the Peterson's to enjoy!



This garden serves as an entrance centerpiece between two driveways. It was created from scratch with rocks brought in from a neighbor.

19 Church Street

Bruce Jordan

From a "run down, neglected and overgrown" yard, Bruce Jordan has nurtured, coaxed and tended this property to its fullest glory as a garden befitting its location. Built between 1885 and 1886, this house is a gem in the historic district of Oldwick and was purchased in 2018. At the time it had been a "rental property" for many years, which was evident in its state of distress.

Bruce took his "canvas" - the yard - and began the hard work of creating a garden to please himself and his visitors. His "philosophy" of approach was personal but may inspire others to create their own place of beauty. He claims to be neither a "Master Gardener" nor a knowledgeable, skilled gardener. He was guided by his love of beauty.



While all other gardens are transitioning toward permanent plantings over time to reduce workload, this garden is re-designed each year with new annuals.



He planted trees and shrubs in sections of the property, naming them in memory of important people and pets of his life, both past and present. Each time he "walks the yard" he is reminded of the pleasures enjoyed with each one. It is a "meaningful" journey each day!

Reuse/Recycle/Compost are the rules of the garden. This fits perfectly with this generation's belief that nothing is to be wasted, destroyed or neglected. Repurposing everything, the first focus was to determine what could be salvaged, what had to be discarded and what could be relocated. Neighbors contributed what was of no interest to them in their own gardens, but did not want to destroy. He literally "hailed" over two hundred rocks from one garden. He attended estate sales, etc., and purchased almost all of his garden tools as "used prizes". All of the organic matter from the house is used to nourish the gardens - hence no waste here!

At the back of the property, a "wild" space has been dedicated to creating a refuge for snakes and many insects. Here they are welcome to stay and live!

Other than a lawn mower, Bruce refrains from using any electric or gas-powered tools. All the gardening, trimming and weeding is done by hand - a true labor of love. The grass is contoured for a flow that reduces the time it takes to cut the grass, done as minimally as possible. No fertilizer or pesticides are used.

Even the garage has become an oasis in the yard. Here are kept items downsized from the house, which can be easily retrieved or enjoyed as the urge calls.

This yard is so well loved and tended that records are kept of purchases and activities related to the property. Every winter a "summary" of the past season is created which includes plans for projects to be done in the coming season. A photographic record allows Bruce to recall the yard in all its stages of development.



The backyard on a misty morning. The dogwood is the Memorial Dogwood, the first planted specifically in remembrance of loved ones passed.



The area was created from scratch with a bench to provide space for reflection. On the edge is a weeping willow.

The result of this meticulous oversight and of the context surrounding the property is a "secret garden". He has tried to enhance that feel by giving it a sense of flow, quietness, reflection, texture and meaning.

Hopefully you will return to your own gardens with inspiring thoughts for your own spaces!



Sunchokes, Blackberries, Raspberries, Blueberries and Asparagus (left to right) with our Net Positive Energy Farmhouse behind.

36 Cold Brook Road

Jason & Deborah J. DeSalvo

Cold Brook Farm is a living example of a decidedly different approach to gardening – one in which nothing is planted purely for aesthetics but instead functions as part of a wider ecosystem aimed at providing an incredible diversity of food and habitat for people and wildlife.

Jason and Deborah DeSalvo, owners of Cold Brook Farm, purchased this 43-acre property in 2019 and immediately began working to improve the health of the land. They started using regenerative organic methods in January 2020, converting from a conventional GMO corn/soybean rotation to heirloom cereal grains. They removed extensive

amounts of invasive plants and replaced them with over 2,500 native trees, shrubs and plants. They installed a Permaculture Food Forest with well over 100 different plants, trees, shrubs, bushes and grasses. Around the farmhouse over 70 food crops are grown (the majority of which are perennial), which include vegetables, fruits, berries, nuts and herbs. A Net Positive Energy Home was built with a 72-panel solar array on the farmhouse and the barn that generates more power than is used for everything – house, barn, farm and electric cars.



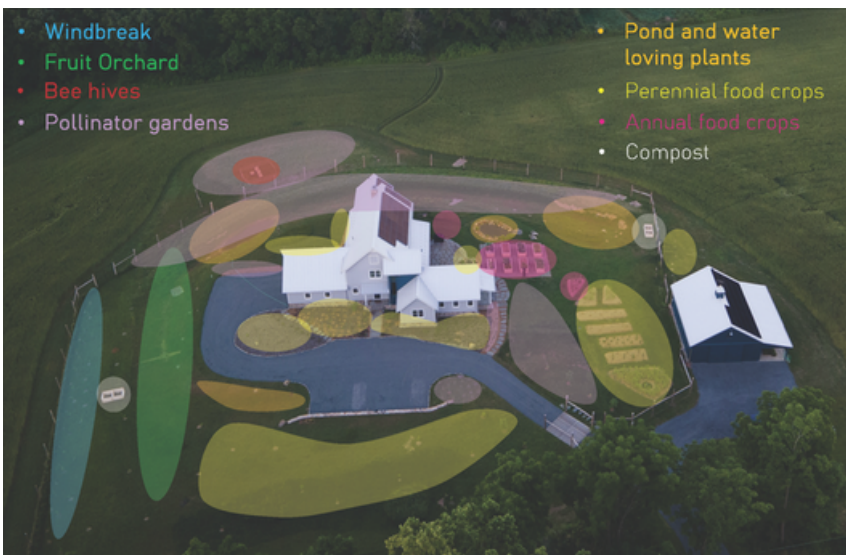
Herb Spiral and Raised Annual Vegetable Beds adjacent to the kitchen door for easy access.

The DeSalvos have not planted a single ornamental plant on their property, instead focusing on building holistic natural systems using Permaculture's zone-based model where the most intense focus (and labor-intensive work) immediately surrounds the farmhouse – within a deer fence enclosing 2 acres. Designing a Permaculture system is a

complex task and the DeSalvos worked with noted, local Permaculture Designer Adam Dusen of Hundred Fruit Farm to create a master plan for their property.



Arial shot of Cold Brook Farm showing the Permaculture landscaping in its entirety surrounded by our Grain Field (that had just been planted).



Permaculture Design - Living Systems, Food and Habitat.

The over seventy different fruits, berries, herbs, vegetables and nuts grown here are all Certified Organic (as of 2024) and because one of Permaculture's primary goals is people living in harmony with nature, numerous native plants and wildflower habitats have been planted throughout the property attracting an incredible number and variety of beneficial insects, pollinators, birds and wildlife.



Permaculture means everything has a purpose. Edible Thyme ground cover in the foreground and Garlic approaching harvest time in the background.

Before the DeSalvos arrived, the 43-acre property never had any buildings located on it. However, it is an important part of Tewksbury's history. The "Peach Train", fondly named and part of the Rockaway Valley Railroad, ran from West to East and crossed the Cold Brook here. Peaches were an important commodity of the area and were



Native Wildflower Meadow on septic field turns what is normally "wasted space" into a thriving Honeybee Habitat.



*Swamp Sunflower and Swamp Milkweed (both native perennials)
with our barn behind.*

transported via the railroad when it was operational from the late 1800's until just before the start of World War I. The stone abutments for the historic railroad bridge spanning the Cold Brook are still visible. It is believed that the Lenape Indians lived in this area. Artifacts have been found on the property near the Cold Brook.

***Rumor also has it that George Washington camped
very near, if not on, the property!***



Near the entrance gate - a showy cluster of Dutch tulips were a gift from a dear friend in the Netherlands.

82 Fairmount Road East

Sandra Ballentine & Leslie E. Smith III

I bought Fox Hill Farm 11 years ago, in the middle of winter and under a foot of snow. The previous owners, Helga and Reinhard Schwartz, had shown me photos of what to expect come spring, but I wasn't prepared for the profusion of flowers, shrubs and specimen trees that greeted me on closing day in May. Nor was I equipped to care for them, having spent most of my adult years in Manhattan. As I settled into bucolic Tewksbury, I felt a bit like the Zsa Zsa Gabor character in Green Acres. But with a little help from my friends (including the Gladstone-based designer Suzanne Perez), and a team of skilled contractors and

gardeners, I set about reinventing the house and grounds, making them my own while preserving aspects of what the Schwartzes created during their stewardship.



A specimen-quality Jack in the Pulpit tucked away in the side shade garden.

If starting from scratch, I might have done something more structured, but I leaned into the eclectic cottage garden and farm setting I inherited — and learned how to loosen up in the process. This perfectly imperfect oasis became my happy place, with each plant a friend and every tree an ally. I try my best to nurture them through the inevitable setbacks that arise in a garden surrounded by hayfields, and replant as needed when casualties result from my refusal to be ruthless with the wild creatures who share my patch of green.



The climbing roses and wisteria that drape the backyard pergola seating area will be relocated when the pergola is removed for an extensive renovation project of the back grounds next year.

I have a particularly contentious relationship with a groundhog named Fatty, who has feasted his way through pounds of poppies, phlox and dahlias over the years. The resident rabbits are so brazen they don't even blink when I catch them nibbling on new annuals. And a greedy family of voles knocked out most of my roses last winter. But never mind, because for better or worse, they are as much a part of this ever-shifting landscape as I am.



Enormous lemon-yellow Itoh peonies relish the direct sun behind the pool.

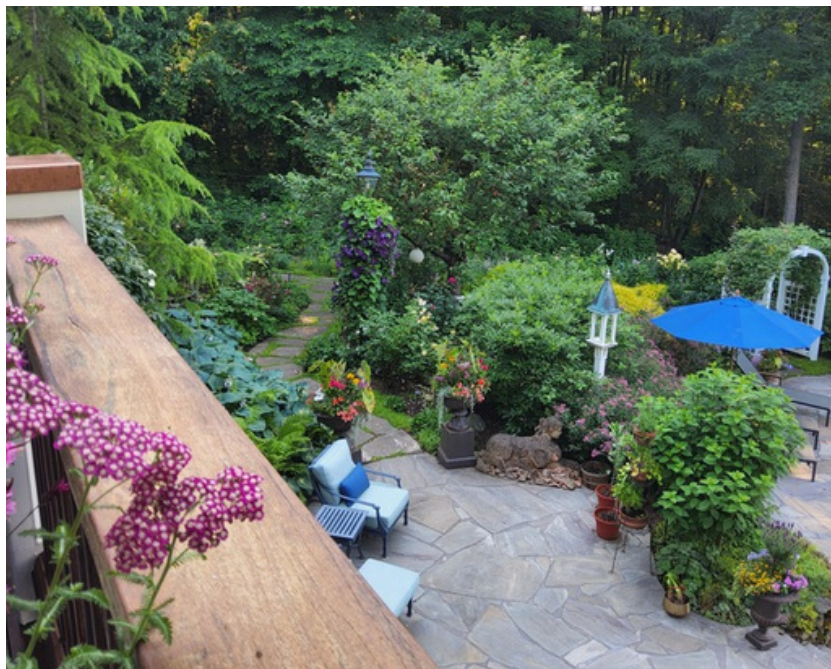


A thick patch of Shasta daisies in a backyard garden bed.



The bed near the house's back steps is presided over by a large European hornbeam, and contains perennials that don't mind dappled sun.

And while I may not be as excited to see Fatty at winter's end as I am to welcome back the spectacular Jack in the Pulpit in the shade bed, the lovely lemon-yellow Itoh peonies behind the pool or the crimson cluster of Dutch tulips given to me by a dear friend in the Netherlands for my 50th, there's something reassuring about the fact that like the plants, he made it through the long slumber. -S.B.



Patio and pool seen from deck (late spring).

108 Old Driftway Lane

Chris Draper & Lois Fitton

The serene, wooded surroundings of the Tewksbury Highlands beckoned Chris Draper and Lois Fitton! Property parcels in the area are oddly shaped, of varying sizes, and cutoff from main public roads because they were woodlots, intended for small-scale production of forest products, as opposed to building sites. The area was also used for hunting as evidenced by a crumbling tree stand and a log cabin with an outhouse on a neighbor's properties.

In 2002, they purchased the spec home and property on Old Driftway Lane. In 2003, they began an extensive garden renovation. The hillside property is sloped and wooded making large gardens impractical. It was overrun

with invasive species which, once cleared, formed the basis for four terraced levels behind the house, along with rustic stacked stone retaining walls in the front.



Steps to Lower Lawn (later spring).



Looking up from Lower Lawn (late summer).

The Upper Woodland Garden ascends almost 500 feet up the incline from the front walkway. It features daffodils, pink and white hellebores, three varieties of ligularia, astilbe, bottlebrush buckeye, indigenous beech, oak and birch trees, along with natural boulders.

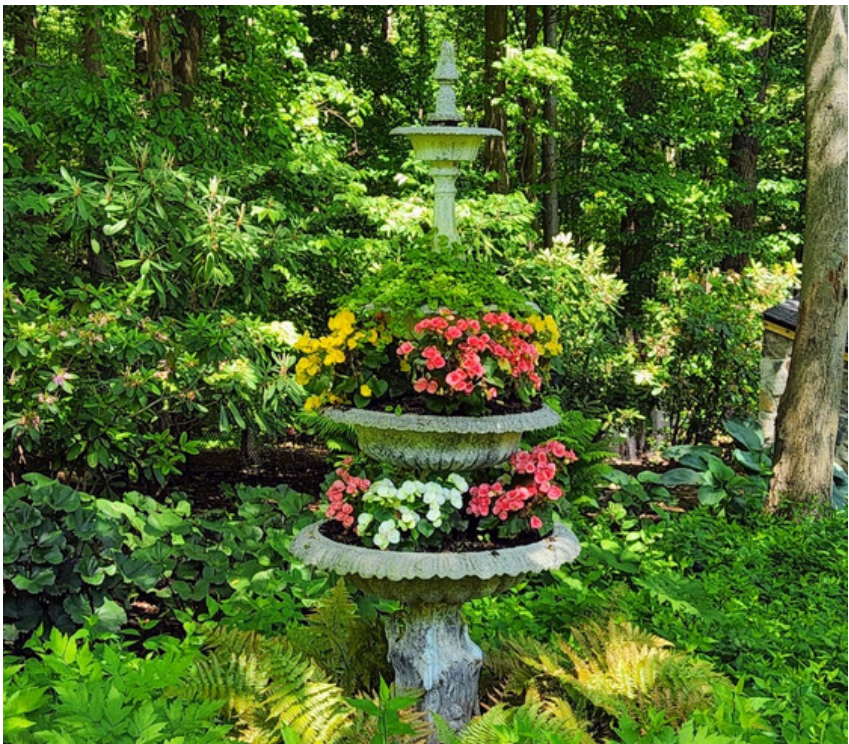


Limestone raised cutting beds (late spring).



English Cottage Garden (summer).

At the rear of the house, the first terrace is a bluestone patio, accessible via stone steps from the driveway flanked with dwarf mondo grass, ferns, creeping Jenny, and an olive jar water feature. The patio is overlooked by an ipe wood deck, with a loggia area underneath the deck. The loggia features seating, hanging and stationary lanterns, potted palms and a moss, fern, columbine and dwarf mondo grass installation. On the same level is an informal rose garden with over fifty hybrid and heirloom roses mixed with perennials including daffodils, crocuses, tulips, clematis, Virginia bluebells, penstemons, perennial geraniums, sweet woodruff, decorative cherry trees, winterberry bushes and andromeda, which offer color throughout three seasons.



Antique fountain as a planter for begonias (late summer).

The roses and perennials follow the slope downward, joining the Pool Garden via a hakonechloa-bordered stone walkway complemented with hydrangeas. The walkway emerges through an arbor covered with pink climbing roses.

Alternatively, the pool may be reached from the bluestone patio via stone steps descending between stacked stone walls topped with azaleas and pink spiraea. The walls have "aged" well and are home to moss, ferns, pachysandra and climbing succulents which soften the wall's appearance.

The pool level garden, flanked by cherry trees and dwarf Japanese maples, host one hundred purple and cream tulips, along with peonies, liatris, beautyberry, nepeta, hydrangea, goat's beard, perennial hibiscus, penstemon and ironweed - ensuring color for three seasons.

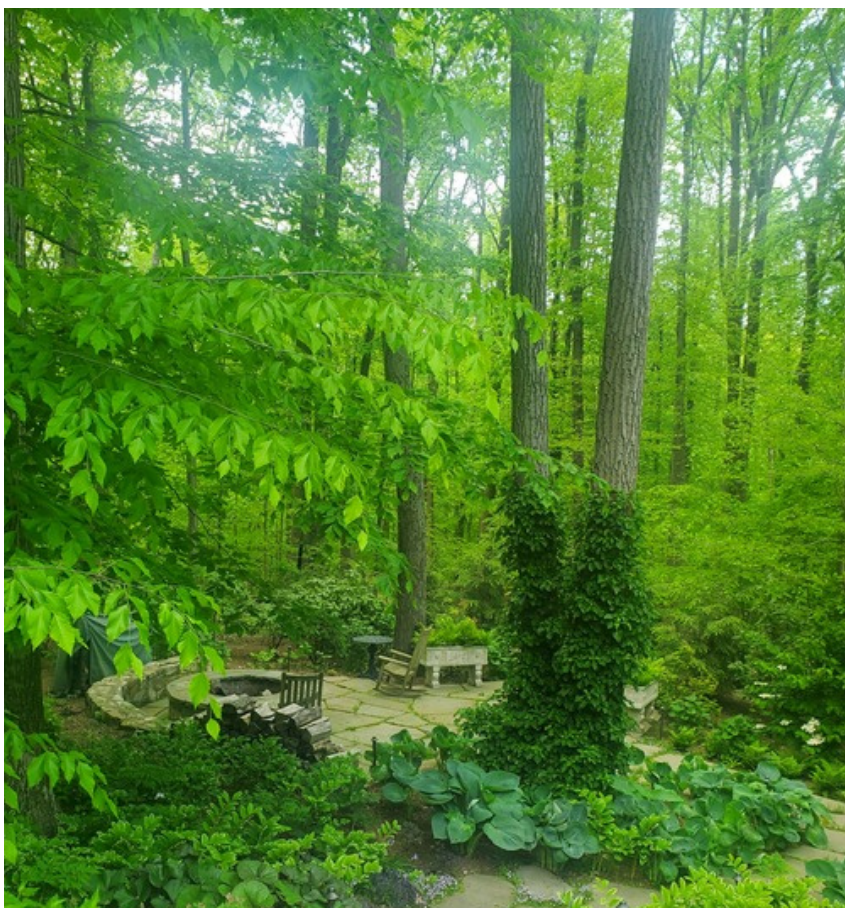
A stroll along the stone path through the Pool Garden and down more stairs brings you to the Lower Lawn, your gateway to an English Cottage Garden, Cutting Garden with unique limestone raised beds and the Lower Woodland Garden.

The English Cottage Garden features a broken stone walk with creeping thyme and succulents. Plantings include purple and cream tulips, irises, hydrangea, Montauk daisies, creeping phlox, creeping succulents, liatris, milkweed, cardinal flowers, balloon flowers, and dwarf decorative grasses.

At the other end of the lower lawn is the Lower Woodland Garden, which features white and lavender woodland

phlox, Solomon's seal, a variety of large and small mounded hostas, indigenous and hybrid rhododendrons, large iron urns filled with Dragon Wing begonias, a natural stone patio and circular double begonias and ferns.

The entire property is a work in progress and collaboration between Chris Draper and Back to Nature, an award-winning, ecologically minded landscape architecture, construction and maintenance firm based in Northern New Jersey!



Lower Woodland Garden with stone firepit (late spring).



*Walk through the black iron gate to see
Blue Bells, Snapdragons, Astilbe and
our rented birdhouse for Bluebirds.*

2A Longview Road

Michele & Robert T. Liana

Michele and Robert have been creating their piece of Paradise for over fifteen years. The property was originally owned by the Apgar family, an original, prominent Tewksbury family, who ran a dairy farm that boasted more cows than people. As Michele says, “imagine a population density that would make even the most populated cities envious! I can picture mooing cattle roaming freely across the fields while farmers expertly tiptoe around them, trying not to disturb their bovine overlords. It must have been

quite a sight: a harmonious ballet of humans and cows, with everyone trying to avoid stepping in anything unsightly!”

Fast forward to 1995 when the Lianas stumbled upon this charming three-acre property. To them it felt like discovering an oasis in an arid desert. With visions of peaceful retreats dancing in their heads and dreams of tranquility lulling them into blissful contentment, they decided to make it their own. They embarked on their adventure with the newly built Victorian house whimsically named “Enchantment” — “because if you’re going to live



When you enter the arbor gates into our courtyard, you will see all kinds of hydrangeas in pinks and yellows, irises and Shasta daisies, all centered around our wishing well draped with Clematis Sweet Autumn. Walk in further, and you will find an arbor settee to relax and have tea.

somewhere picturesque, why not add a sprinkle of fairy dust?" To top it all off, they envisioned beautiful gardens overflowing with vibrant flowers and delightful scents that would make even the most cynical bee stop and smell the roses. Little did they know that their idyllic escape would soon transform into both a sanctuary and an ongoing comedy show as we navigated our way through homeownership!



Here's a cozy little nook where you can plop down, sip on your afternoon tea, and bask in the delightful company of Hot Lips Turtlehead and Joe Pye weed. Yes, you heard that right - Hot Lips.



"I'm late, I'm late, for an important date!" I can hear the frantic echoes of the White Rabbit from Alice in Wonderland as he scurries about, glancing at his watch like it's a ticking time bomb. But you have all the time in the world to sit and smell the flowers.

Upon discovering the property, Michele saw a vast land before her resembling a blank canvas, ready for her creative touch. It's as if Mother Nature handed her a clean slate, urging her to create flower gardens. She "envisions vibrant reds and sunny yellows dancing in the breeze, with bees buzzing and butterflies fluttering around, possibly critiquing my gardening skills. With this space and potential, I might transform it into a botanical Disneyland! Every petal will be perfectly placed while weeds are unwelcome guests. So, grab your trowel; let's turn this land into a floral wonderland that even the squirrels will envy!"

Regarding the Victorian house they affectionately call "Enchantment," they neither stumbled on nor did they magically conjure it up with a flick of a wand. Oh no, my

friend! This grand structure, complete with its intricate details and charming quirks, was painstakingly crafted by the Lianas from scratch. Picture it: an open canvas just waiting for an artistic vision to splash some color onto it. They took what could have been a dreary shell and transformed it into a whimsical wonderland of delight! The gardens you see now were once mere patches of dirt that dared to challenge their gardening prowess. With each shovelful of soil and every plant carefully chosen (and occasionally swapped out after realizing they weren't good at surviving), they cultivated an outdoor paradise of English and Meadow gardens where even the most stubborn weeds tremble in fear!

The inspiration came from a personal blend of garden tours and glossy magazines filled with impossibly perfect gardens!



As you can see, here stands "Mr. Joe Pye" in all his glorious splendor, radiating an aura of confidence that could only be rivaled by a peacock strutting its stuff at a fashion show.