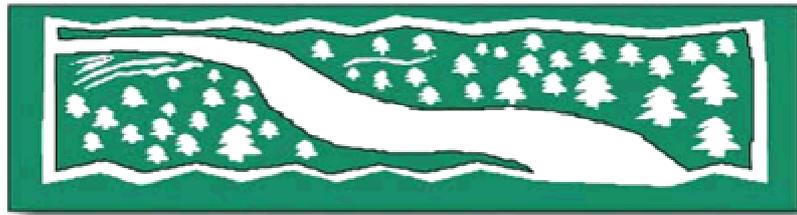


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Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands

## NURSERY NEWS

**Congratulations – Propagation House restoration funding recommended!** The Propagation House at the Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site has been recommended for a **\$290,000 Historic Preservation Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust**. Only 60 historic sites in New Jersey were selected for funding, so this a great honor. The grant application, which will focus on emergency stabilization and preparation of architectural plans for the building's restoration, was submitted by South Brunswick Township's Historic Preservation Commission last June. Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands played a major role in the preparation of the successful grant.

The recommended funding still needs to be approved by the New Jersey Legislature, which may take some time due to the financial issues that the state is now facing. However, funding is likely to go through eventually, as restoration of historic sites is widely recognized to have a stimulatory effect. This is the eighth round of funding from the Garden State Preservation Trust, which was established by a voter-approved ballot initiative to preserve open space, farmland and historic sites.

Once funds have been allocated, they will be matched by a \$290,000 from the Endowment Fund that was donated by Wm Flemer's Sons Inc. when the property was preserved.

**Propagation House Charrette:** A preservation plan for the Propagation House is currently being prepared by Watson & Henry (preservation architects and engineers), to identify the issues, needs and



Discussing restoration priorities at the Propagation House Charrette  
photo by Robert von Zumbusch

priorities related to **adapting the Propagation House for future interpretive and educational use**. The work is being funded by Middlesex County, through a grant to South Brunswick Township. As part of the plan, a charrette was held at the Mapleton Preserve in late November, 2008 with key stakeholders. Members of South Brunswick Township Historic Preservation Commission and the Mapleton Preserve Commission, staff from South Brunswick Township and the D&R Canal State Park, NJ Parks and

Forestry, NJDEP, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and FPNL trustees shared an all-day session that focused on potential future uses for the Propagation House. Its history, its restoration needs and stabilization priorities were also discussed. This was followed by a tour of the tree storage buildings and Propagation House, a rare treat, as these buildings are currently closed to the public.

**Princeton Nurseries Closes:** The Princeton Nurseries Allentown, NJ site ceased operations on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 as a result of declining economic conditions, ending an almost 100-year history for this proud operation. However, prior to their closure, Princeton Nurseries agreed to help FPNL and the D&R Canal State Park to preserve an important part of Princeton Nurseries' rich history – the special varieties or “cultivars” that were selected and developed by the Flemer family that founded Princeton Nurseries.

We are delighted to announce that Princeton Nurseries have donated 20 different tree specimens, so that they may be preserved for the future as part of the Flemer Arboretum. For over forty years, Princeton Nurseries had an active program of breeding and introducing superior new shade trees, flowering trees, shrubs, and vines. These efforts produced many successful varieties that had desirable properties including disease resistance, winter hardiness, or exceptional blooms. Its generous donation brings us closer to our goal to acquire examples of each of the more than 60 varieties of trees introduced by William Flemer III and his father, William Flemer, Jr. We are grateful to Dave Reed of Mapleton Nurseries, who will be “babysitting” the new trees until the site has been readied for them.

**How can you help?** Space in the arboretum is in urgent need of clearing, since many vines and trees have sprung up since the Nursery left the site in 1995. We need volunteers who are willing to assist in this task, so the trees can be settled in to their new home. FPNL is also seeking donations to help defray the cost of the power equipment needed to dig out stumps and grade the arboretum. If you would like to help “clear” or donate funds to help develop the arboretum, please contact Karen at 609-683-0483. **We need all the help we can get for this challenging project.**

**175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D&R Canal:** This year marks the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, which was opened on June 25, 1834. For almost 100 years, the Canal provided an efficient and safe route for transporting freight through central NJ, and was one of America's busiest navigation canals. The Pennsylvania Railroad leased the canal for 999 years in 1871; its interest was the railroad, not the canal; the canal had ceased to be profitable by 1892 and was abandoned after the 1932 season.



After the D&R Canal closed, the State of New Jersey took it over and rehabilitated it to serve as a water supply system. In 1974, over 60 miles of the canal and a narrow strip of land on both banks were designated as a state park—a purpose it still serves today.

The D&R Canal State Park office is now headquartered at 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston, in what used to be the headquarters of Princeton Nurseries. To celebrate the D&R Canal's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, several canal-related events are being held. You can find a complete list of them at <http://www.dandrcanal.com/programs.html#calendar>

**We would like to bring one of these events in Kingston to your attention.** To celebrate the Park and raise awareness of this important recreational resource, the Kingston Historical Society and East Coast Greenways are sponsoring *Hands Along the Canal* —a bold undertaking that will attempt to line thousands of hand-holding park users along the historic towpath from Harrison St. to Rocky Hill. Those of you who love and use the D&R should mark your calendars, register at the website and plan to be a part of this show of support for the park! **Participants will link hands at 10 am, and you must plan to arrive early, in order to be in place at this time.** If you plan to be a part of this "human chain", please register ASAP at <http://handsalongthecanal.com/> so the organizers can keep track of where everyone will enter the park.

Because there is limited parking at the entrances to the D&R Canal, organizers are asking bicyclists and runners to park a distance away and bike or walk/run to the park entrance of their choice (Rocky Hill at Rt. 518; Rockingham Historic Site at Rt. 603/Laurel Ave; Kingston Lock at Rt. 27; D&R Canal State Park/Mapleton Preserve at 145 Mapleton Road; Millstone Aqueduct and Footbridge at Mapleton Road). These locations highlighted in yellow on the map below.



If you plan to enter the Canal at the Kingston Lock on Rt. 27, parking is very limited. **However, ample parking will be available at Mapleton Preserve/D&R Canal State Park at 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston** – those who park there can follow a trail to the canal. FPNL will be at the Preserve to provide directions to the Canal.

Come help celebrate the canal's 175th anniversary year by taking part in this ambitious historic effort.

**After the event, there will be a special concert at Mapleton Preserve (145 Mapleton Road) by Riverside, Central New Jersey's favorite bluegrass band** from ~11-1, featuring Bill Flemer, Jerry Steele, David Olsen, and Steve Hendershott. Bill Flemer was for many years engaged in the family business, Princeton Nurseries, which, in its heyday, was the largest tree nursery in the country. So pack a picnic lunch, and plan to make a day of it!



### Events at Mapleton Preserve this Spring

**Sat, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 p.m -- Arbor Day Tree Walk:** Join Stephanie Fox, naturalist at the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, at 1:00 p.m. for a leisurely walk along the nursery roads in Mapleton Preserve (formerly Princeton Nurseries). We will be identifying the trees and shrubs found within the property and explore their uses through time, from folk remedies to modern day supplements. The walk will begin at the D&R Canal Park Office at 145 Mapleton Road, Princeton. Following the walk, from ~2:30 to 3:30 p.m., Lori Pantaleo (vocals), Doug Miller (accordion), and Bill Flemer (guitar) will perform tree-themed songs. A tree will be planted in the Flemer Arboretum during this hour, and refreshments will be available. Each participant will receive a baby tree to take home. It is free and open to all. Please call 609-924-5705 or see <http://www.dandrcanal.com/programs.html#calendar> to pre-register. For more information, contact Stephanie Fox at 609-924-5707 or Karen Linder at 609-683-0483.

**Sat, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8 – 11 a.m. -- Birding BIG DAY for the D&R Canal 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Join Karen Linder in a morning bird walk at the Mapleton Preserve and the seedbeds along the D&R Canal in Kingston. This walk is part of a larger effort to inventory all the bird species seen along the D&R Canal and adjacent preserved areas in one day. The effort is being championed by NJ Audubon volunteer Arlene Oley and the D&R Canal State Park in recognition of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canal. FPNL will be covering the Princeton Nursery Lands on Mapleton Road and adjacent sections of the D&R Canal. Our goal is to find as many different species at the site as possible. For details and further information, please call 609-683-0483.

This is a fantastic time to bird, as spring migration and breeding season will be in full swing. So please mark your calendars and plan to join the group. You do not need to be an expert - all that's required are a pair of eyes and the desire for a fun day! The event is rain or shine. **If you plan to bird with FPNL, meet at Mapleton Preserve/D&R Canal State Park Headquarters at 145 Mapleton Road at 8 am, and preregister at 609-683-0483.** If you want to help cover another section of the Canal, please contact Arlene Oley (arobirder@aol.com) or park naturalist Stephanie Fox ([dnrnaturalist@verizon.net](mailto:dnrnaturalist@verizon.net)), or call the D&R Canal State Park office (609-924-5705).

**Sat. May 9<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. – Hands Along the Canal:** Sponsored by the Kingston Historical Society and the East Coast Greenway, this event will line thousands of hand-holding park users along the banks of the D&R Canal from Harrison Street, Princeton to Rocky Hill, in celebration of the Canal's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This show of support is scheduled to take place at 10:00 am. However, participants MUST arrive well before 10:00 am in order to park, walk to the canal and get into position along the path. Parking will be available at Mapleton Preserve – those who park there can follow a trail to the canal. **FPNL will be at the Preserve to provide directions to the**



**Canal.** Come celebrate the canal's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary year by taking part in this ambitious historic effort. See p. 2 for full details.

**Sat. May 9<sup>th</sup>, ~11 a.m. -1 p.m. Bluegrass Concert – Riverside Band:** After the Hands Across the Canal event, come hear Central New Jersey's favorite Bluegrass band, "Riverside" at Mapleton Preserve, at 145 Mapleton Road in Kingston. Bill Flemer, Jerry Steele, David Olsen, and Steve Hendershott are longtime Princeton-area musicians. The band's collective experience in rock, country, and folk idioms gives Riverside a unique approach to traditional bluegrass music and adds a bluegrass flavor to songs by the Beatles, the Byrds, and to country and western swing favorites. It's free and all are welcome. Bring a picnic, and enjoy the day!

**Wed. June 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m. – FPNL Annual Meeting:** Save the date! The speaker for our annual meeting will be Princeton resident **Patricia A. Taylor**, who will speak on **"Elegant, Little-Known Native Plants"**. She is the author of many gardening books and hundreds of articles that have appeared in numerous publications, including The New York Times, Horticulture, and Green Scene. Her talk will focus on elegant but mysteriously unappreciated native plants that can survive benign neglect as well as the presence of munching animals. The event will be in the Education Building at the D&R Canal Mapleton Preserve, 145 Mapleton Road, Princeton 08540. For more information, call 609-683-0483.



**Virginia Bluebells**  
Photo by Anne Zeman

**Sat., August 8<sup>th</sup> - Bug photography - a special two-hour workshop with Wil Hershberger:** This expert in insect song and photography will be at Mapleton Preserve to share his skills. More details to follow, but save the date! See <http://www.musicofnature.com/songsofinsects/index.html> for some of his work.