

September
2012



Vol. 7
No. 1

Newsletter

Preserving and Protecting the Historic Princeton Nursery Lands
www.fpnl.org

Grand celebration for Arbor Day!

The Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands are happy to announce that there are now six interpretive signs installed at Mapleton Preserve to help explain the history of Princeton Nurseries for visitors. We had a fabulous crowd for the dedication ceremony at our annual Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands Arbor Day event in April.

Mayor Frank Gambatese and other South Brunswick and Franklin Township officials joined FPNL members and friends at the event. Also present were Dan Saunders from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office and members of the Flemer family that founded Princeton Nurseries and Princeton Nurseries alumni, including Wes Harvey.



Mayor Frank Gambatese, Karen Linder, William Flemer IV and Robert von Zumbusch at the sign installation ceremony on Arbor Day. Photo by Tari Pantaleo

Following the dedication ceremony, FPNL president Karen Linder presented an illustrated history of Princeton Nurseries, based on the copious material that had been collected to draft the interpretive signs. The talk was followed by our signature Arbor Day tree planting. This year's tree is a lovely pink dogwood from Mapleton Nurseries that was donated by the Pantaleo family in honor and memory of their father.



Mrs. William Flemer III and FPNL trustee Anne Zeman. Photo by Tari Pantaleo

job in the design and fabrication of the signs, to the maintenance staff at the D&R Canal State Park for putting the signs in the ground for us, and to the Belle Meade Coop for delivering the gravel and cement.

FPNL is especially grateful to sign committee members Karen Linder, Vicki Chirco, Tom Laverty, and Robert von Zumbusch for the time and effort they dedicated to the drafting of these signs, and to Bill Flemer and Mrs. William Flemer III for historical photos and source material. We owe thanks to Cornerstone Spatial Design, which did a superb



Signing in for Arbor Day Festivities. Photo by Jonathan Michalik

We are especially grateful to the New Jersey Historic Trust, which provided about half of the funding for this \$17,000 project. The remaining funds were provided from membership dues and donations - so **THANKS** to all of our members for your contributions!

New composting toilet is "open for business"

On April 21, 2012, Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands (FPNL) was joined by D&R Canal Park staff, officials from South Brunswick Township and the State of New Jersey, and others to dedicate the new Clivus Multrum composting toilet at the D&R Canal State Park Headquarters/Mapleton Preserve.

Getting the Clivus to operational status was a surprisingly challenging task that involved site selection and permissions, the digging of a substantial pit, laying a gravel base, placing the 500 (+) pound tub in the hole and grading around it, erecting the structure, and installing the roof, solar collector, and battery.



The roof-raising team [left to right] Tom Jacoby, Arthur Harvey, Doug Miller and David Southgate. All photos by Tari Pantaleo.



Contractor Richard Petty, Tom Jacoby and Doug Miller consult the Clivus installation manual.

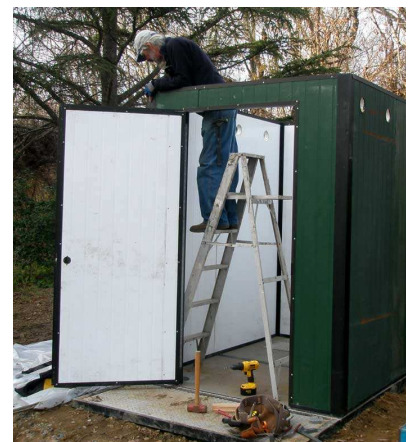
Beset by weather-related adversities, a long learning curve, technical difficulties, and complicated coordination with the various parties to the project, FPNL is delighted to finally inaugurate this new amenity.

Special thanks are due to project supervisor Doug Miller and FPNL trustee Tom Jacoby, contractor Richard Petty, Dave Reed of Mapleton Nurseries, Dave Wells, Brian Barry and Pete Septoff of Clivus Multrum, Inc., the D&R Canal Park staff and Trap Rock Industries (who provided the gravel as a donation to the effort). We also acknowledge the efforts of FPNL president Karen Linder, who wrote the grant, and South Brunswick Township, which will take responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the Clivus.

The completion of the Clivus Multrum installation marks an important milestone in the realization of FPNL plans for the Mapleton Preserve. In 2009, we were awarded a grant from the Federal Recreational Trails Grant Program to partially fund the installation of a composting toilet. Member donations and volunteer labor covered the rest of the cost. Until now, there were no toilets at the Preserve except an indoor bathroom (available only when the Park office is open) and, sporadically, a leased portable sanitation unit--neither of which is handicapped-accessible.

About the Clivus Multrum: This style of composting toilet was invented in 1939. The sloped design ("Clivus Multrum" means inclined chamber) separates liquid from solid waste. Over time, bacteria convert urine into nitrates and nitrites that are biologically and chemically stable and contain nutrients that are valuable for fertilizer. Bacteria, fungi, insects and compost worms slowly break the solid waste down into a compost-like material, reducing its volume by over 90%. Properly composed waste contains a wide array of plant nutrients and has been used as a fertilizer/soil conditioner.

Carbon dioxide and water vapor are the primary vent gases. A continuously operating solar powered fan pulls air down the toilet fixture and out through a vent stack, creating a completely odorless bathroom at all times.



Doug Miller erecting the Clivus structure

Princeton Nurseries Allentown deal closes, preserving 1,900 acre nursery property:

A landmark deal to preserve the former Princeton Nurseries Allentown property has finally closed after three years of negotiations between New Jersey DEP's Green Acres, the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) and the Flemer family. Other partners in this landmark purchase are Monmouth County, Burlington County, the Monmouth County Conservation Foundation and Upper Freehold. D&R Greenway facilitated initial discussions between the state and the Flemer family businesses in the area. Over 1,900 acres of land are now protected.

More than 1,000 acres will be preserved as open space by creating a 512-acre State Wildlife Management Area and adding nearly 500 acres to the Crosswicks Creek Greenway in Monmouth and Mercer County. Once the existing nursery stock has been removed and the land has been restored, these properties will be open for public use. Another 847 acres has been preserved through acquisitions of development rights on farmland. On this acreage, deed restrictions on the property will keep the land permanently available for agriculture uses. The farmland will be a major addition to the permanent agricultural land base in this area, where about 15,000 acres of farmland are already preserved.

The \$28 million agreement was a true cooperative effort, requiring the finalization of 150 different documents at the closing. \$16.5 million in state, local and nonprofit open space funding sources was used for open space purchases. The SADC and its county and local partners provided another \$11.4 million to purchase farmland easements on an additional 847 acres.

In an August 17th press release issued by the preservation partners to announce the closing, the Flemer family said *"We are grateful to the people of the state of New Jersey for their support of the preservation of precious open space and irreplaceable farmland in our state. Future generations of farmers and nature lovers will together enjoy these beautiful lands that have meant so much to the William Flemer and John Flemer families."*

Notes from the fields

Pokeweed: Fall is a beautiful time to come for a walk at the Mapleton Preserve. The summer heat has abated, and the palette of the landscape has changed to the warm burgundies, yellows and browns of autumn. Migrating birds scour the woods and fields for food to fuel their flight to warmer climates. One favorite food for the birds is the beautiful perennial known as Pokeweed.

Pokeweed, also known as inkberry, is at the peak of its beauty in early September, when the plant, which can grow up to 8 feet tall, is festooned with dangling clusters of purple berries. The plant gets its name from the Native American word "pocan," for red-dye or blood, and it yields a vivid magenta ink that fades to brown with time.

Although a bounty for the cardinals, mockingbirds, robins and catbirds that feast on its berries, the plant contains a long list of toxic compounds that make its consumption hazardous for humans and livestock unless specially prepared. In the spring, very young plants contain lower levels of toxins, and are considered an Appalachian delicacy, but only after the greens have been boiled repeatedly to leach out and destroy poisonous components.

Vomiting, diarrhea, and sometimes death are notable side effects, and all parts of the plant are poisonous, particularly the taproot, seeds and mature stems and leaves. So take our advice, and leave the berries for our feathered friends!



Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*). Photo courtesy of Kate St. John, author of "Outside My Window" at www.wqed.org/birdblog/:

Fall membership drive: Our fall membership drive is underway, and we are grateful to our members for their support of our mission. This year, member dollars helped pay for excavation services, sign design and installation, rivets and a solar battery for the Clivus, program costs, newsletter mailings, postage, concrete, trail maps and refreshments.

Without your help, we could not do what we do! Since we solicit renewals and donations only once a year, **we urge you to join or to renew your membership in Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands TODAY, and help us rebuild our treasury!** Visit our website at www.fpnl.org to join or renew using either PayPal or by downloading a membership form.

Scavenger hunt at Mapleton Preserve

What do acorns, bugs, turkey feathers, and deer skulls have in common? They are all items that were found by participants at the recent Mapleton Preserve/D&R Canal State Park Scavenger Hunt, where 30 (+) scavengers scrambled to collect a list of natural objects and the answers to Princeton Nurseries history-related facts.

Teams were asked to collect only about half the items on the list - the rest of the items were documented by taking pictures of them with cell phones and cameras.

To our surprise, in response to the request for a photo of scat (the scientific term for animal droppings), one team brought back a picture of what appears to be BEAR SCAT, and others brought back evidence of fox and deer.



Upcoming events: Come visit Mapleton Preserve this Fall!

Saturday, Sept 29, 2-4 pm, National Public Lands Day at Mapleton Preserve:

FPNL will be hosting their annual work day at Mapleton Preserve for National Public Lands Day. This is a great opportunity to help beautify the Preserve. Some of the tasks include litter pickup, weeding the butterfly garden, clearing of brush from around Mapleton Preserve's signature row of ginkgo trees, and removal of vines from flowering trees.

Sturdy shoes and work clothes are recommended. There will be some tools available, but please bring your own if you can, so there are enough tools to go around. Meet in the parking lot at Mapleton Preserve, 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston. The event is FREE and all are welcome. For more information, call 609-683-0483 or visit www.fpnl.org



Thursday, Nov. 22th (Thanksgiving), What's for Dinner? A Thanksgiving Day Nature Walk: Join FPNL President Karen Linder for a Thanksgiving Day morning exploration of the Mapleton Preserve. Come find out what's on the menu for Thanksgiving dinner for the animals and birds at Mapleton Preserve, and enjoy the abundance and subtle beauty of late fall. This 10 am program will begin at the Main Office for the D&R Canal State Park, 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston. The event is **open to all, but preregistration IS requested. Call 609-683-0483 to reserve a spot.**

Sunday, Dec. 16th, Audubon Christmas Bird Count (BIRDERS TAKE NOTE!): The Kingston segment of this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by the Kingston Greenways Association, begins at 7:30 AM to catch the "early birds". We will bird until noon and then take a break for lunch at Main Street Café. The group then continues with the count in the afternoon. You can join us for morning, afternoon, or both. If you are interested, give Karen Linder a call (609-683-0483) for more info. We would particularly appreciate the help of experienced birders, but novices are also welcome!