

Bloomin' Times

April 2025



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Photograph by
Smithsonian Magazine
Anton Sorokin

MEMBER NEWS



Photograph by Lee Perry

GCNJ's 100th Anniversary Celebration /Annual Meeting May 14, 2025

Contact Sharon Shiraga

Riverside Boat Trip

May 15th

9:30 am—Meet at Irene's

11:00 am—Boat departs

\$30 to Irene, pay at sign-up

(No Rain Date; refunds will be made.)

JARDINE ACADEMY SPRING TREE

Maryfran Annese: "Today we met at Cheryl Katz's home to decorate ornaments for Jardine Academy's spring tree. "Winnie the Pooh's Secret Garden" is the book that inspired the decorations for the tree. We colored pictures of Eeyore, Piglet, Tigger, Rabbit and Winnie the Pooh. Talented club members also drew free hand pictures of flowers, hearts, and sunshine." 2/26/25.

Community Projects Coordinator: Betty Round.



Rake & Hoe Garden Club Sharon Shiraga, President

BLOOMIN' TIMES NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Regina Kelley, "Profiles"

Jeanie Pelikan, Photography

Richard Pelikan, "Jersey Gems," Photography

Mabel Woloj, "Native Plants"

Karen Troiano, "Step Into My Garden," Brightwood Park et al.

Joe Da Rold, Editor, Photography

"Native Plants," "Garden Limericks"

Contributors To This Issue

Maryfran Annese

Cheryl Katz

Regina Kelley

Lesley Parness

Jeanie Pelikan

Lee Perry

Barb Spellmeyer

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25 Carolyn Seracka

PROFILES

by Regina Kelley

Meet

Joan Barna



Joan is a true Jersey Girl. She was born in Elizabeth, raised in Hillside and spent many summers at the Jersey shore. Joan and her husband John have two married daughters and six grandchildren.

Her love of history has influenced Joan's life. She has been involved with Miller-Cory House for over 41 years. She began as a volunteer in 1984 and worked as a volunteer there for nearly 10 years. When the long-time coordinator of services retired, Joan took her place, becoming the only paid employee of Miller-Cory. Although she has since "retired," she continues to volunteer. She has taught many different aspects of 18th Century life, including open fire hearth cooking, weddings and funerals in the 1700's. Joan knows how to make "potent potables" like Syllabub, a concoction of milk and hard cider that was quite popular in the 1700's. Both of Joan's daughters volunteered at Miller-Cory House when they were young.

About 20 years ago, Alice Cowell and a group of Rake and Hoe members were working at the Miller-Cory House. Alice invited Joan to attend a meeting. She joined the club in 2007 and felt that R&H was right up her alley. She has done all of the work in her own yard and very much enjoys the process. Joan has since served as Rake and Hoe's Recording and Corresponding Secretary. She has chaired the Shadowlawn and Hospitality committees, been co-chair of four different homes on the Deck the Halls Christmas Tours, and has chaired the Juniors.



Joan's parents loved gardening, cooking and history. Joan remembers attending many local antique fairs and flea markets with them. She has become an avid collector, and her collections are eclectic. She collects depression glass, cookie cutters, rolling pins, antique cookbooks and cooking pamphlets, teapots, bottle openers, oil dispensers, WWI and WWII memorabilia, and Cracker Jack prizes. Joan artfully displays parts of her collections in her family room. Perhaps because she displays with restraint, it is attractive and interesting and makes one inquisitive about particular pieces. She has a number of cooking related items in her collections, having inherited her mother's skills as an avid cook and baker. Joan is well known as a talented baker.

It is no surprise that Joan volunteers in other areas beyond Rake and Hoe. She is a member of Questers (a historical group), the Westfield Historical Society, and the Deutscher Club of Clark, where she is known as one of the "Cake Ladies". Joan also loves to dance! She has taken Salsa and Line dancing lessons and dances every chance she gets. She is certified as a Zumba instructor.

Joan feels a great sense of camaraderie with members of Rake and Hoe. She also very much enjoys the sharing of information and the lectures. Put simply, she thinks we are a fascinating and interesting group!



GARDEN POTPOURRI



Submitted by Maryfran Annese

QUOTE

"If every flower wanted to be a rose, nature would lose her springtime beauty.

The splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness."



Therese of Lissieux

WORDS TO KNOW

"Tubeling"



A tubeling is a young seedling plant grown in long plastic tubes, or 'plug,' containers. This allows the plants to be grown quickly and in large quantities.

Two of the primary benefits of tree tubes are rapid early growth and deer-protection until the tree grows past the deer-browse line. These benefits are generally achieved in the first two years. *jdr*



Photo by Barb Spellmeyer

EDIBLE FLOWERS

By Lesley Parness

Edible flowers do double duty, beautifying beds and borders and plates and glasses. Here are a few simple rules - use organically grown plant material, harvest on overcast days and early (just after the dew has dried), use as soon as possible or wrap plant material loosely in damp paper towel and store in an airtight container.

One of my favorite edible flowers is the nasturtium. The leaves or flowers are good in salads, adding a fresh, peppery taste. Cream the flowers with butter or cream cheese to add that same taste to a sandwich spread base. Pickle the buds with black peppercorns, a few cloves, and a blade of mace for a condiment resembling capers. In WW II, Brits gathered ripe nasturtium seeds and ground them as a substitute for black pepper. President Eisenhower liked the flowers stuffed with tuna salad, Marie Antoinette preferred a mix of mayonnaise and whipped cream. Any cultivar will do, I'm growing 'Indian Chief' with ruby red blooms and dark burgundy tinged foliage. [Ed: *Botanists recommend using young petals and leaves. The older they get the more bitter they will be.*]

Johnny jump ups, pansies, and violas are all edible and add color to salads, but also make lovely ice rings or individual ice cubes. For a ring to float in punch, use a Bundt pan and add successive layers of flowers and water, allowing each layer to freeze. For ice cubes, add a flower to each tray compartment, then freeze. Bag up lots for cucumber water coolers and ice teas. Speaking of tea, Bee Balm's red flowers produce an Earl Grey-like tisane. They can also be baked into scones and tea breads. *Monarda didyma* 'Cambridge Scarlet' fits the bill for a nice cuppa.

The rose has been a gastronomic delicacy since ancient Roman times and now is the time to harvest rose petals for candying. These look fabulous on strawberry shortcakes and cupcakes. The process is easy. Get ready a soft bristle paintbrush, several perfect in bloom roses (generally, red have the most flavor) 1 large egg white, 1/2 cup superfine sugar. Carefully pluck the individual petals from the rose and gently rinse in cool water. Place petals on paper towels until they are completely dry. Put a wire cooling rack on a baking sheet. In a small bowl, whisk the egg white well. Put the sugar into a shallow bowl. Gently paint a petal with the egg white, turning to coat both sides and allowing any extra to drop off. Then place the petal in the bowl of sugar, turning to coat both sides. Place the petals apart on the wire rack and leave until dry and hardened. When completely dry, store in an airtight container.



Carnations or gilly flowers, as Shakespeare called them, make a 17th century sallat (yes, salad). Mix with purslane (yes, that plant we call a weed) and thin slices of cowcumber (yes, cucumber) for an Elizabethan treat. 'Gloriosa' has an intense clove scent as an added bonus. Daylilies have been used for centuries in Asian cooking. Unopened flower buds can be added to stir fries, whole blooms can be battered, stuffed, and fried just as you do with zucchini blossoms. *Hemerocallis fulva* 'Europa' is delicious and comes in an array of colors to choose from.

Edible flowers have a long history here in America too. Colonials made use of the calendula's petals to flavor soups and stews, nicknaming it "pot marigold." We can use it so, or harvest flowers when in full bloom, and add to grains, like rice or couscous, for a beautiful golden glow. *Calendula* 'Calypso Orange' is a robust grower. And the daisy? Most are edible, but bitter and unpalatable, The delicious Crown Daisy however, *Glebionis coronaria*, or *Garland Chrysanthemum* can be grown from seed and is sometimes sold in Asian markets as shingiku, or tong hao. There is good information at whatscookingamerica.net and lovely images at theinspiredroom.net. Botanical Interests and Johnny's Seeds have pages dedicated to edible flowers in their catalogues and on their websites. So, this summer, make it "garden to table" even for the flowers!

Editor's Note: My thanks to Lesley for sharing her fascinating articles and allowing me to reprint them in BT. jdr

NATIVE PLANTS

by Mabel Woloj

ENDANGERED BUTTERFLIES



Eastern Monarch

Over the past two decades, butterfly populations across the United States have experienced significant declines, with a comprehensive study revealing a **22% decrease between 2000 and 2020**. This troubling trend is attributed to factors such as habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change.

In New Jersey, the situation mirrors the national pattern. In the 1940s, the state was home to approximately 125 butterfly species. Since then, fourteen species have disappeared entirely, and an additional twenty-one are facing significant challenges. Notably, the Eastern Monarch butterfly population, which migrates through New Jersey, declined by 80% between 1996 and 2014. But they are not the only ones in trouble; New Jersey is home to several butterfly species that are considered endangered or threatened.

Several factors contribute to these declines:

- **Habitat Loss:** Reducing the availability of native host plants essential for reproduction.
- **Pesticide Use:** Destroying the insects as well as the plants they rely on.
- **Climate Change:** Disrupting migration routes and breeding cycles.

Garden clubs and individual gardeners can play a pivotal role in supporting butterfly conservation.

- Planting native species that serve as nectar sources and host plants provides essential resources for butterflies.
- Reducing or eliminating pesticide use creates safer habitats, including mosquito backyard treatments.
- Participating in citizen science projects, such as butterfly counts and monitoring programs, contributes valuable data to conservation efforts.



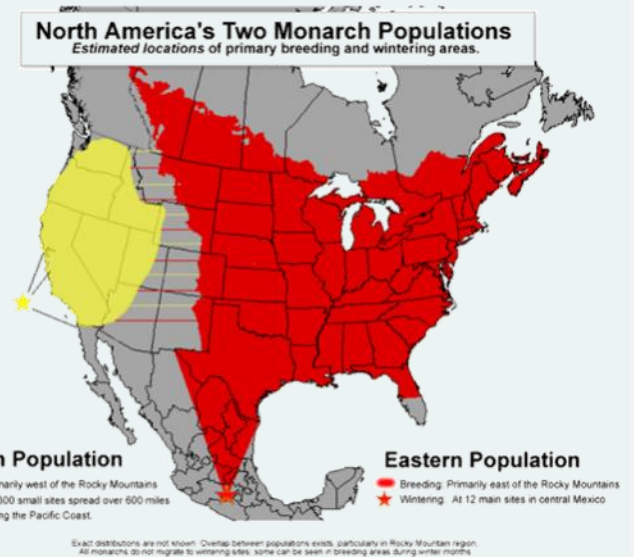
Swamp milkweed
(*Asclepias incarnata*)



Butterfly weed
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



Butterfly weed
In fall, with pods
full of seeds



By fostering butterfly-friendly environments in our gardens and communities, we can help counteract these declines and ensure that future generations continue to experience the beauty and ecological benefits of butterflies.

See Next Page

NATIVE PLANTS, *continued*

by Mabel Woloj

Here are some native plants in New Jersey that serve as host plants for butterflies:

Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.)

- Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) - Host for Monarch butterflies.
- Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) - Great for wet areas, also supports Monarchs.
- Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) - A vibrant orange flower that attracts many pollinators.

Wildflowers & Perennials

- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) - Supports the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and other butterflies.
- Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*) - Hosts the Pearl Crescent butterfly.
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) - Attracts butterflies and other pollinators.
- Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) - Host to several butterfly species, including the American Lady.



Wild Bergamot
(*Monarda fistulosa*)



Hackberry
(*Celtis occidentalis*)

Trees & Shrubs

- Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) - Essential for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and Red-spotted Purple butterflies.
- Willow (*Salix* spp.) - Supports Viceroy and Mourning Cloak butterflies.
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) - Host plant for the Spicebush Swallowtail.
- Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) - Host for the Question Mark and Hackberry Emperor butterflies.

Planting these native species not only helps butterflies but also supports overall biodiversity in our gardens.

Sources;

- ◇ https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/butterfly-populations-plummet-by-22-us-since-turn-century-2025-03-06/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ◇ https://www.njconservation.org/help-new-jerseys-beautiful-butterflies/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ◇ https://www.njconservation.org/our-marvelous-mysterious-migrating-monarchs/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ◇ https://people.com/butterflies-in-u-s-disappearing-at-catastrophic-rate-with-no-sign-that-that-s-going-to-end-11693431?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ◇ https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/06/declining-butterfly-populations?utm_source=chatgpt.com

SKY-WATCH

SKY-WATCH

The Pink Moon

April's full moon is the first full moon of spring. The pink moon is a nod to the bountiful blooming flowers and trees that the spring weather brings. In particular, the pink moon gets its name from a hot pink wildflower, *Phlox subulata*. Commonly referred to as creeping phlox, it is one of the earliest and most widespread spring flowers. The wildflower is native to eastern North America and often attracts butterflies that herald spring's arrival.

The April full moon is also known as the Paschal full moon. Easter falls on the Sunday after the Paschal moon makes its appearance in the night sky. The full moon will rise on April 13, 2025. In Asia, this moon is known as the "Peony Moon." *jdr*

GARDEN LIMERICK

The Pink Moon

The full moon of April is not what you think
It's called the Pink Moon, but it's not really pink

Pink is the beauty of spring in the trees

Roses and peonies calling to bees

The moon is in sync with an earth that's turned
pink. / jdr



WORDS TO KNOW

"Apogee & Perigee"

Each month the moon's elliptical orbit takes it to its furthest point from the center of the Earth (Apogee), approximately 226,000 miles. This is also referred to as a "Micromoon."

Perigee is when the moon is closest to the Earth. The most common name for this occurrence is "Super-moon." The moon looks bigger when it rises over the horizon, but it is an optical illusion.

Gardeners and farmers often plant and harvest by the phases of the moon. Also, when the Moon is in perigee, tides are higher than usual. *jdr*

SKYWATCH LIMERICK

"Moon in Apogee"

The new moon emits a gentle light

Reflected from the sun at night

Orbiting body all aglow

So far away, so far to go

In apogee on its distant flight. / *jdr*

The new moon will rise on April 26th.

CLUB PHOTOGRAPHERS



Lee Perry



Lee Perry



Joe Da Rold



Kay Cross

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Barbara Spellmeyer



ENVIRONMENT

THINGS TO KNOW

ARBOR DAY

Arbor Day is considered a national holiday in the U.S.A., celebrated on the last Friday of April. It is officially recognized as National Arbor Day.

Julius Sterling Morton spearheaded the creation of Arbor Day in Nebraska on April 10, 1872. More than one million trees were planted across the state that day.

On April 22, 1885, Arbor Day became a legal holiday in Nebraska.

Hawaii and Alaska celebrate Arbor Day in November and April respectively due to their different planting seasons.

America's national tree is the oak. There are more than 60 species growing natively throughout the U.S. The National Arbor Day Foundation put it to a vote in 2004, and Congress made it official. The redwood was a top contender and came in second place.



LIVE OAK

CICADAS ARE COMING



Brood XIV cicadas photographed in 2008. The cicadas emerge every 17 years. Gene Kritsky

This spring, residents can expect to see cicadas from Brood XIV, the cicadas that emerge every 17 years. States expecting cicadas this year include Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, **New Jersey**, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

It is considered to be among the largest periodical cicada broods, along with Brood XIX, which emerged in 2024,

Brood XIV will likely begin to emerge during the third week of April or when areas experience a “good rain.” The cicadas emerge once soil temperatures reach 64 to 65 degrees. The nymphs first make their way to the surface of the ground, then crawl up a tree or an upright surface. They then lock their claws onto the surface they have chosen.

TRIVIA

- ◆ The buzzing noise associated with cicadas is their version of singing.
- ◆ The males sing three different types of songs, engage in duets with the females and then mate.
- ◆ Those worried about their gardens should not fret. Cicadas do not eat. Instead, they drink.
- ◆ There is no way to know if cicadas sleep, but they do quiet down at night.

Source: Saleen Martin, USA Today

Burning Bush is Invasive

This familiar shrub, prized for its vibrant red fall foliage, seems like a harmless addition to any landscape. However, burning bush has become a highly invasive menace in many regions, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast. It aggressively displaces native shrubs and understory plants, forming dense thickets that shade out and outcompete native species. An alternative shrub to consider: Beautyberry. An easy-to-grow shrub. Leaves contain a chemical (callicarpenal) that may repel mosquitoes.

Source: National Wildlife Federation.

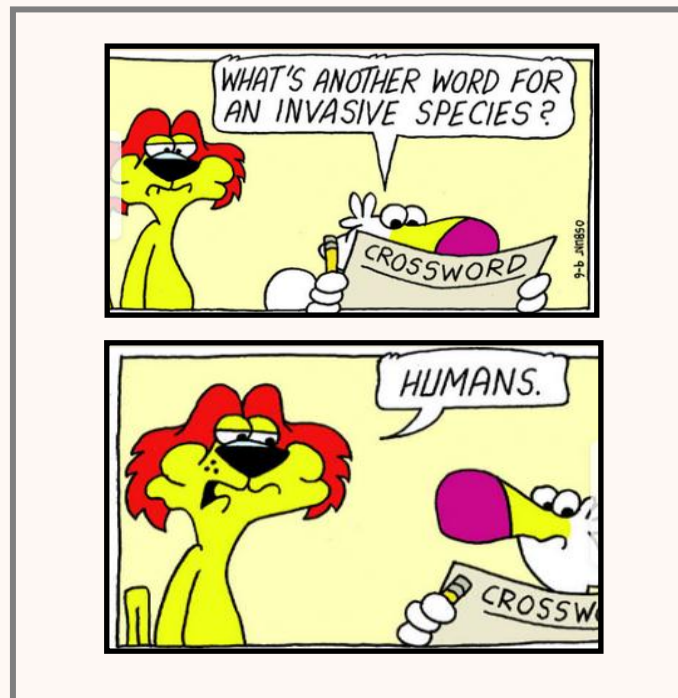


NJ Invasive Species Strike Team

info@fohvos.org

Upcoming Events

- **April 16, 9am-4pm Strike Team 18th Annual Conferences**
 - Duke Farms, Hillsborough NJ
 - [Details and Registration link](#)
- **April 25, 9:00am-3:30pm, Duke Farms Spring Stewardship Workshop**
 - Invasive Species Identification, Prioritization, and Management Techniques [Registration Link](#)
 - Duke Farms, Hillsborough NJ
- **June 28, 10am-12pm, Strike Team Private Land Workshop**
 - Private Residence, Hopewell Township NJ
- **July 19, Strike Team Private Land Workshop**
 - Private Residence, Hopewell Township NJ
- **September 20, 9am-1pm, Master Ecologist Course**
 - Invasive Species Identification, Prioritization, and Management Techniques [Registration Link](#)
 - Duke Farms, Hillsborough NJ



ECOLOGY SUCCESS STORY

Yellowstone National Park

A new study shows that the return or loss of apex predators can affect every part of the food web. The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park in the 1990s has benefited the entire ecosystem. By the 1920s, as a result of government initiatives to control large predator populations, gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) were driven extinct. Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus canadensis*) thrived without these predators, which in turn decimated some plant populations. The loss of some trees and shrubs then threatened beaver populations. This sequence of events is known as a trophic cascade — when the actions of top predators indirectly affect other species along the food web, ultimately affecting the entire ecosystem.

Yellowstone supports food resources and habitats for a huge, diverse group of wildlife. Streamside regions are a small but crucial part of the food supply. The analysis found a 1,500% increase in willow crown shrubs along streams over the study period, demonstrating a major recovery of these shrubs. The study links this significant willow shrub recovery to a reduction in elk browsing. The return of predators to the region enabled willows to grow back in some areas.

Wolves were reintroduced in 1995/1996, and scientists were uncertain whether their return could restore balance to the park's ecosystem. In late 2020, Trump administration officials stripped Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in most of the U.S. Yet, by 2024, there were 124 wolves in Yellowstone, with 11 packs and six breeding pairs.



The study highlights the importance of long-term monitoring. These ecosystem changes do not happen overnight, and understanding them requires patience and persistence. *jdr*

Source: [livescience.com](https://www.livescience.com)