MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK SYSTEM
GREEN HERITAGE
The Newsletter of Monmouth County's Open Space, Parks & Recreation Agency Vol. 47 No. 2 Summer 2013

FORT MONMOUTH REC CENTER JOINS THE PARK SYSTEM

This past spring, the County took the first step to ownership by signing a temporary lease agreement for the 21,000 sq. ft. Fort Monmouth Recreation Center (FMRC) and its surrounding 6.5 acres of property. This new county park facility is located in the Charles Wood Area of Fort Monmouth on Hope Road in Tinton Falls. The area is separate from Fort Monmouth's former main post on Route 35. Park staff have begun preparing a variety of fitness, sports, craft and educational programs to be offered in the fall.

Fort Monmouth Recreation Center *in Tinton Falls is undergoing preparations for use after a 2-year vacancy, overseen by Assistant Superintendent of Parks, George Richdale.*

Built For Play

This recreational facility comes equipped for a variety of sports and recreation activities—see list below. This is the Park System's first, large indoor gym, and second outdoor pool site. Located just off Parkway Exit 105, it will be easily accessible for county residents who might be thinking about taking a class or program with the Park System.

A ***full-size gym*** *with bleacher seating for basketball and other sport games and clinics.*

Staff were eager to begin working from this site as it is built exactly for the purpose for which it will be used. Currently, many of the park's indoor recreation facilities are located in beautiful, older estate homes or farm buildings that have been adapted for recreational use.

> ***"This is the first facility we've ever had that was designed and built for active, indoor recreation."***
> *–Bob Ward, Recreation Supervisor and Facility Manager of the FMRC*

From the easy-to-navigate layout to the ample floor space and storage, program participants are in for a pleasant surprise in terms of size. There's a lot more leg room and the Park System will be able to offer more programs and multiple sessions simultaneously, if needed.

Spacious ***program rooms*** *for crafts and other creative classes.*

Get To Know The "Fort"

Inside (21,000 sq. ft)

- Front reception area with large lounge
- 5,700 sq. ft. arena/gym with full-court basketball court and bleacher seating
- 6 program/activity/class rooms
- Commercial kitchen and snack bar
- Game tables: ping pong, air hockey, pool, billiards, foosball
- Gymnastics/sports equipment: balance beam, weights, ball nets, dolly/scooters, golf, etc.
- Piano, TVs & video equipment
- Office space
- Patio with outdoor seating

A large ***front reception*** *room and lounge with game tables and (inset) snack bar.*

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Green Heritage Staff

Editor/Writer: Lisa Bonelli
Photographer: Maribeth Gardner
Graphics: Laurie Stoppiello-Marswillo
Questions/Subscriptions:
732-842-4000x4336;
lbonelli@monmouthcountyparks.com

Get To Know The "Fort" (Cont.)

Outside (6.5 acres)

- 2,000 sq. ft. pool house
- 3,500 sq. ft. swimming pool and 500 sq. ft. kiddie pool
- Basketball court
- Picnic shelter with grills and tables
- 2 playground structures

*Park staff survey the **outdoor facilities**. Shown here (top) are the pool, one of the playgrounds and picnic shelter. The second playground (right).*

***Pool house** with restrooms for the 3,500 sq. ft. pool and kiddie pool.*

Patio with outdoor seating. That's a sunroom in the back.

All of Fort Monmouth's reuse and redevelopment of land and facilities are being managed by the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA). Over time, portions of Fort Monmouth will be sold and developed for commercial use and housing, while others will be preserved for open space and recreation.

To learn about programs offered at this site, see the next *Program Directory* due out August 2. www.monmouthcountyparks.com

PIT-FIRE POTTERY

Most people would assume (correctly) that Park System pottery classes are held indoors–but not if they signed up for this one. Pit-Fired Pottery is the most ancient of firing techniques. It involves placing pottery directly into a specially prepared pit-fire that "fumes" on color with organic materials and salts. This adventurous process takes participants from the 'normal' pottery location in the Creative Arts Center at Thompson Park, fireside to Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park in Long Branch. Look for this annual event in the fall issue of the Program Directory.

The finished pots have a magenta, rust and black color finish.

Student-artists wrap their pots with wire, straw, herbs and other materials.

Course leader Christina Carlson loads the pots into a salt, sawdust, and wood-prepare fire pit.

Students enjoy the fire as it decorates their pots.

Park Personali-Trees

Nature has its entertaining side, and the following flora may make you laugh out loud…or just wonder. Take a moment and get to know some of the unusual trees in the parks.

Hidden Faces

Like clouds, you can see a lot of things in the bark of a tree.

*Perhaps our most famous tree-face, the 'ghost tree' of **Tatum Park**. These cavities look like they could have been made by burrowing insects, and woodpeckers who fed on them (see page 10).*

*With a little imagination, you might be able to spot the face of "Bill the Cat" from the Bloom County cartoons in these Osage Orange trees at **Thompson Park**. The collection of circular growths resembles the assymetrical face of this kooky cat (ACK! Thppt!!!).*

*Can you see a creepy face looking back at you from this tree at **Holmdel Park**?*

Bumps, Burls, Galls & Butt Scars

Bumps, burls and galls are abnormal looking growths that may be caused by bacteria, fungi, virus or insects. They can also form in response to an irritant or injury of some kind, such as getting hit by a lawn-mower or being tied by wire.

Butt scars are triangular shaped gaps at the base of the tree caused by fire or some other type of injury. These scars may be associated with severe rot and/or bulge or swelling from an infestation.

*This **Tatum Park** tree has a unique pattern of rings near the base. The even spacing led some staff to guess they might have been caused by a former fence attachment.*

*Apparently this tree was hungry and ate a whole pig—at least, that's what the photographer thought. This photo was taken at **Sandy Hook, a national–not county–park.***

*This tree at **Historic Walnford** has a large butt scar.*

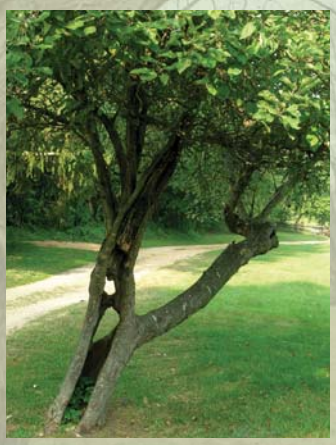
*A sycamore in the **Claypit Creek** section of Hartshorne Woods Park has a pattern of ring scars that looks like an elephant's trunk.*

*This **Tatum Park** oak has a scar at its base, clearly accompanied by rough swelling of some type. Sometimes people like to place objects inside—perhaps a geocache or a shiny present for the fairies.*

They're Still Standing

These next two trees are unusual in that they remain alive and upright after some pretty severe treatment.

*This poor locust tree at **Historic Walnford** is literally being strangled by an overly-friendly wisteria vine. The vine is so aggressive, it is reaching out to a neighboring tree (right) and overtaking that one as well.*

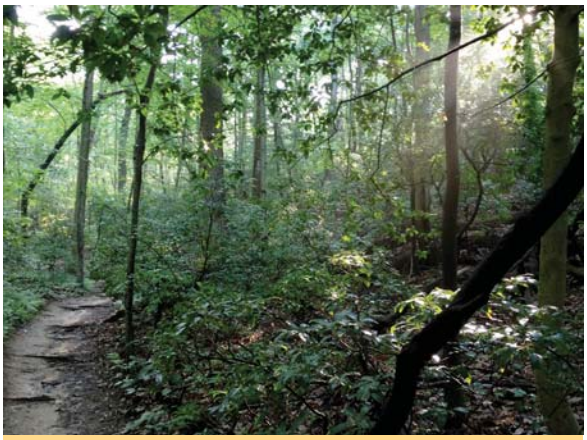


*This apple tree at **Huber Woods** has a butt scar that has overtaken the entire trunk. Eaten alive with almost no internal tissue, this tree lives on nonetheless.*

Reference: Hardwood Defects. USDA Wood Education Resource Center and Michigan Tech. Available at: forest.mtu.edu/research/hwbuck/hardwood_defects/galls.html Accessed April 9, 2013.

THE MANY LEGACIES OF HARTSHORNE WOODS

Hartshorne Woods Park in Middletown preserves nearly half of the Navesink Highlands, one of the highest areas along the Atlantic Coast. It is located at the eastern end of an elevated ridge or cuesta that extends all the way across Monmouth County from Atlantic Highlands to Upper Freehold (and into Burlington County). This 794-acre park is notable for its extensive contiguous forest cover, rare century forest and unique military past.



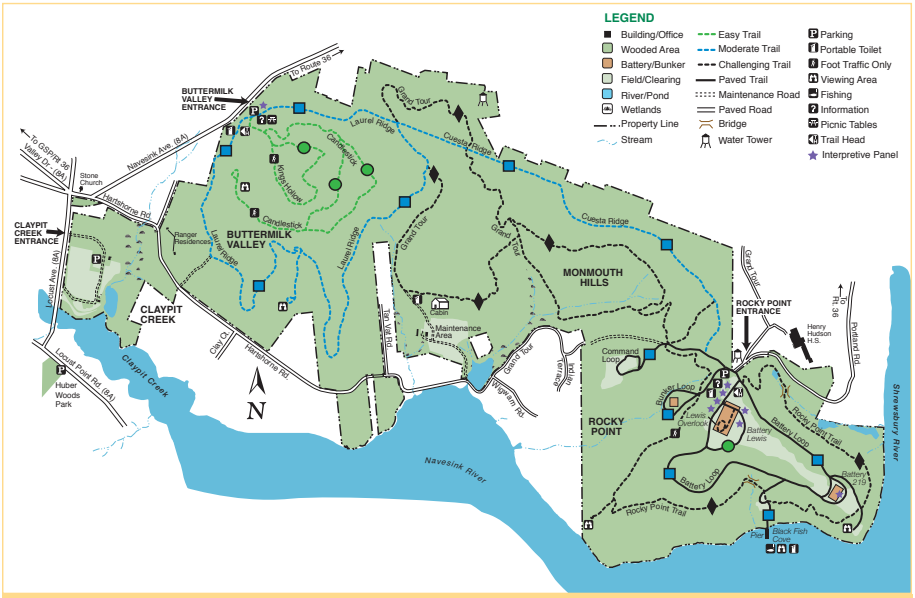
*The **"Century Forest"** of Hartshorne Woods Park.*

The "Century Forest" of Hartshorne Woods

Nearly 750 acres of the park are covered with forest, including approximately 550 acres of old growth forest that has not been timbered for over 100 years. This "century forest" features chestnut oaks on the cuesta ridges, while on the slopes there are black, scarlet and chestnut oaks with abundant rhododendron and mountain laurel that bloom strikingly in June. American beech, white oaks, tulips and hickory trees flourish with a diverse understory in the protected hollows.

***Rhododendron** (Pinxterbloom Azalea, pictured) and **Mountain Laurel** (see, p. 8) both bloom strikingly in June along the roads near Buttermilk Valley and the Laurel Ridge trail.*

The once-prevalent and stately American chestnut, decimated by disease a century ago, notably grows throughout the park and some 16-inch diameter specimens are among the largest in the region. Park ecologists monitor forest health in Hartshorne Woods by evaluating plots for their composition, quality and disturbance including impacts of disease, deer browsing and invasive species. They also undertake targeted land clearing to remove invasive species and enhance historic views (all subjects of previous articles in this newsletter).



*Most of **Hartshorne Woods Park** is forested, shown in dark green.*

Hartshorne Homes & History

Woodlands are only part of this park's legacy; the landscape has been shaped by human habitation for several centuries. Hartshorne Woods takes its name from one of Middletown's earliest European settlers, Richard Hartshorne, who settled on the Navesink River at a place called Portland Point around 1680 and accumulated more than 2,300 acres of the Navesink Highlands and Sandy Hook. Hartshorne's descendants built handsome homes along the river and on Rocky Point.

Five former homes, a schoolhouse and boat club once existed within park boundaries; old roads, traces of stone foundations and other landscape features are still evident.

At least five former Hartshorne home sites, a schoolhouse, and a boat club are known to have existed within the current park boundaries. In addition to the system of old farm roads that connected various Hartshorne houses and that now serve as park roads and trails, traces of stone foundations, plantings, and other landscape features are evident in the park.

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One early and well preserved Hartshorne farm known as Portland Place recently became part of Hartshorne Woods Park. Daniel Ward Seitz, a Hartshorne descendant and a longtime supporter of the preservation of Hartshorne Woods, bequeathed Portland Place to the Park System in 2008 and it will be preserved as a historic site. Portland Place was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012, and this summer the Park System will begin the first phase of restoration. The house will remain closed to the public until restoration is complete.

Artists like James E. Buttersworth, a 19th century marine artist whose painting of ***Rocky Point*** *is shown here, have long celebrated the Navesink Highlands' picturesque scenery, depicting what novelist James Fenimore Cooper called one of the most beautiful combinations of land and water in America.*

Portland Place*, once a 200-acre farm, now includes a house and carriage house on a five-acre riverfront site. The oldest part of the large historic house dates from the early 1700s.*

Gun Batteries & Military Presence

High atop Rocky Point, with stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean and Sandy Hook, stand several landmarks from the park's military past. With the looming threat of war in the late 1930s, the military initiated a program to modernize the nation's coastal defenses. In 1941, the U.S. Government acquired several Hartshorne tracts totaling 224 acres for harbor defense of New York. The hilltop was cleared, including a mansion on Rocky Point owned by Julia Hartshorne Trask, but large portions were left in their wooded state.

Many buildings from the WWII period, such as troop housing and an observation tower, were intended as temporary wartime construction and were demolished by the Army after the war. However, several key features survive – two large gun batteries (Battery Lewis and Battery 219), the Plotting-Switchboard Room, four Fire Control Stations, and the large open field in front of Battery Lewis.

Battery Lewis is 600 feet long, 180 feet wide, and 40 feet high, and was outfitted with two 16-inch guns, each capable of shooting an armor-piercing projectile 25 miles out to sea. The guns, mounted in heavily protected enclosures called casemates, and their associated ammunition magazines and power rooms were covered by up to 14 feet of reinforced concrete and a thick layer of gravel and compacted fill to protect them from aerial bombardment and naval gunfire. The battery, named after Col. Isaac Newton Lewis, was considered the zenith of military technology for its time.

Soldiers at ***Battery Lewis during World War II****. These guns were never fired in battle and were dismantled in 1948.*

Battery Lewis *today.*

During the Cold War era, the base served as an Air Force radar defense site and an Army Nike missile command and control site. After deactivation, the military housing and support buildings were demolished. The Park System worked with the federal government to transfer the site to the County (completed in 1974 and 1984). It was added to the existing 500 acres of Hartshorne lands that established the park in 1973.

This summer Battery Lewis will undergo restoration of the deteriorating concrete canopies over the two casemate openings. The Park System is also looking ahead to renovating the interior. **Learn more about this park's military past on your next visit—a series of wayside information panels have been installed.**

Deep Cut Gardens
Home Gardener

152 Red Hill Road
Middletown, NJ 07748

GS Parkway Exit 114, to Red Hill Road
732-671-6050

SAVE YOUR OWN SEEDS FOR NEXT YEAR

Diane Allen, Staff Horticulturalist

"All the flowers of all the tomorrows are held in the seeds of today". This Swedish proverb is true on so many levels. Many seeds are easy to collect and it's a great gardening activity for summer days when it's too hot for heavy work. If you are gardening with children, it's a wonderful teaching opportunity. As you allow the seed heads to mature (instead of removing them), you may also find their presence adds an interesting new dimension to your garden. Late summer and fall become, in a way, a beginning rather than an end, in that the seeds represent the beginning of next year's garden. Finally, as you save seeds year after year, you will be developing your own personal strain of plants adapted to the growing conditions in your garden.

Use your imagination as you gather materials for this project. Foil tea bag envelopes are perfect for very small amounts of seed.

Getting Started: Equipment

The equipment you need can be found around the house.

- Bowls and bags for collection
- Paper plates or sheets of paper for drying
- Sieve for winnowing
- Small bowls or jars for fermentation
- Air-tight containers for storage
- Coin envelopes for storage (or, you can make your own–one of my fellow gardeners makes them out of pages torn from old seed catalogs)

For some seeds, like Echinacea, it is also handy to have a crab-pick available to pick out the seeds.

The Collection Process

Start out collecting just a few easy types; annuals are easiest, as they are the most prolific seed producers. Most flowers and herbs, as well as several vegetables are also good for beginners. Self-pollinating plants like tomato, lettuce, fennel, dill, angelica, poppies and sunflowers are good starters, as are beans and peas.

The amazing variety of flower seed heads and seeds.

Always harvest mature seed from your best specimens. Choose vigorous, pest and disease-free plants with characteristics you wish to preserve.

Self-pollinators like tomato, lettuce, fennel, dill, angelica, poppies sunflowers, as well as beans and peas, are good for beginners.

Rather than removing dead flowers, allow flowers and herbs to go to seed. Then harvest on a sunny, dry day. If pods tend to break open easily, hold a paper lunch bag around them while collecting.

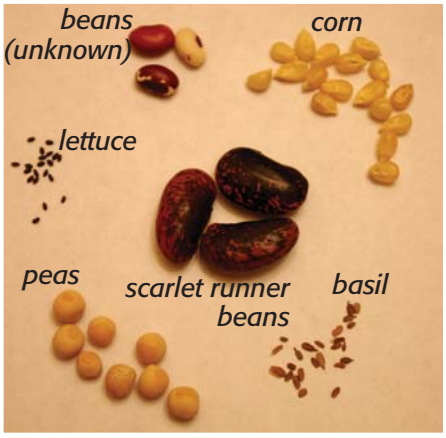
Fruit and vegetable seeds should be collected when they are at or just beginning to pass their peak but before decay has set in. Beans and peas should be harvested when the pods are brown and dry. The maturing seeds discourage further flower and fruit production; you may wish to wait until near the end of the season to save fruit for seed.

Saving seeds from F1 hybrid plants is not recommended. These plants were developed by crossing different parent plants, and their seeds are often sterile or do not reproduce true to the parent plant. Since some plants may be pollinated by wind or insects, over the years you are bound to have some surprises* due to cross-pollination. The results may be delightful or disastrous. If you want to keep your strains pure, it will be necessary to isolate those plants from other varieties of the same plant.

Winnowing*; separating the seed from the chaff, shown here with Sweet Hibiscus (Abelmoschus manihot)*

Cleaning & Drying

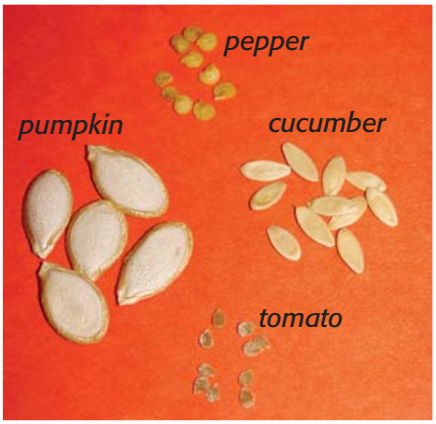
Spread the collected seed heads or pods on a screen or paper plate to allow them to dry thoroughly to avoid rotting or mold. When they are completely dry – they will break rather than bend – shake them in a sieve to remove chaff and litter. For very small seeds, you may place the pods in a paper bag to catch the seed, shake vigorously to dislodge the seeds, then put through the sieve. Collected seed pods may be stored in paper bags for processing during the winter months as long as you have a cool, dry, rodent-proof place to store them.



***Dry Process**. Seeds of legumes, corn and herbs are best left to dry on the plant.*

Seed from fleshy fruits (tomatoes, melons, squash, etc.) can simply be scooped out and spread out to dry, then packaged. However, better results will be obtained by a wet process that involves washing off any pulp and juice, then setting out to dry.

For optimal results, the fermentation method takes the wet process a step further to separate good seed from bad and kill any pathogens. Soak the seeds in a small amount of water for 1-3 days, stirring daily. The good seeds will sink to the bottom. Pour off the bad seed, debris and any scum; then rinse the good seeds, drain and set out to dry. This is best for tomato seeds which are disease-prone, and to remove the gel that surrounds each seed (which contains germination-inhibitors). Tomato seeds processed with the fermentation method may remain viable for 6 years or more, while tomato seeds simply dried usually are good for only 1-2 years.



***Wet Process**. This is best for seeds collected from fleshy fruits like peppers, squashes and melons.*

Seed Storage

Once seeds are cleaned and thoroughly dry, transfer them to an envelope or other container for storage. Be sure to label the packet with plant name, variety if known, and the date collected. Some people like to place the packet in the freezer for 2-3 days to kill pests.

Seeds will keep best if stored in a cool, dry place in an air-tight container like a glass jar, to which you may add a packet of silicone or powdered milk to absorb moisture. Some seeds like parsley, onion and sweet corn should be used the first year. However, most seeds will keep for about 3 years, and some will keep even longer (although viability decreases over time).

Most seeds keep for about 3 years, some longer, although viability will decrease over time.

To test for viability, place about 10 seeds on a wet paper towel inside a baggie and set aside. After a week or two, you will see how many of the seeds have germinated and will know approximately what percentage of seeds in that packet are viable.

For more detailed information on saving seeds, especially the more difficult species, there are several reference books in the Horticultural Library at Deep Cut Gardens. Or, visit the following resources online:

- **seedsavers.org** – Seed Savers Exchange (archived webinars available)
- **seedsave.org** – International Seed Saving Institute
- **seedambassadors.org** – The Seed Ambassadors Project
- **nativeseeds.org/index.php/resources/seedsaving** - Native Seed/SEARCH
- **theseedsite.co.uk** – The Seed Site

*An example of a surprise might be if you plant the seed from a large, sweet pepper that was pollinated by small, hot pepper plant, you may get a plant that produces a large 'somewhat' hot pepper.

Match this Purple Coneflower in bloom to its dry seed head on the previous page.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FLOWERS?

Were you able to guess the flower species from the close-up view on the back cover? If not, here they are in full size, with identification.

Daffodil

Morning Glory

Mountain Laurel

Thistle

Crocus

Tulip

Summer Events

Daylily Day at Deep Cut Gardens

Saturday, June 29, 10am-2pm

Presented by the Monmouth County Park System and the Garden State Daylily Growers. Free horticultural advice, displays, garden design ideas. Free Admission/Free Parking

Day Lilies

Jersey Shore Rose Society 41st Annual Rose Show

Saturday, September 14

See the many varieties of our national flower. Information on the selection and care of roses. Garden and Rose Show tours. Watch as roses are prepared for exhibition (8am-10am); entries will remain on exhibit for the public after judging is complete at 12:30pm. Free Admission/ Free Parking

Bonsai Day

Sunday, September 15, 12:00-4:00pm

The Deep Cut Bonsai Society & Deep Cut Gardens invite you to enjoy the Bonsai experience! See demonstrations and exhibits and talk to the experts. Visit Deep Cut Gardens' Jane Scott bonsai collection. Free Admission/Free Parking

Bonsai Day

COMING THIS FALL...

The Great Fall Perennial Plant Swap

Saturday, September 28, 10am-2pm

It's the gardening event of the season! It's Fun – Free – Easy! Bring your plants in 1-qt, 1-gal or 2-gal containers and trade them in for different plants of the same size. Houseplants may also be exchanged, but no annuals, please. Please label all plants. Call 732-671-6050 for more information.

It's Time To....

July ✓

- Take note of any gaps in your garden, which plants you will want to divide in the fall or next spring. If you aren't keeping a garden journal, consider starting one.
- Check plants for insects/disease and use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods for dealing with problems. (Visit the Deep Cut Horticultural Library to learn more.)
- Apply/replenish mulch to conserve water and suppress weeds.
- After bloom has finished, dig and divide irises, lily of the valley, Oriental poppies and bleeding hearts.
- Water thoroughly before and after transplanting container-grown plants.
- To keep vegetable gardens producing, harvest ripe produce regularly and ensure plants have water weekly. Water deeply, early in the day, and try to keep water off the leaves.
- Start seeds for fall crops: beans, peas, summer squash, cabbage family.
- Keep lawns at least 3" high and do any watering in the morning, deeply, and less frequently, for a stronger, healthier lawn.
- Consider donating extra produce from the vegetable garden to a local food bank.

August ✓

- During dry spells, water your compost bin to keep it active.
- Fertilize late summer and fall flowers. Give your roses their last feeding of the season by Labor Day.
- Plant transplants of cabbage-family crops and sow late crops of radishes, beets, lettuce, kale, spinach, and turnips into September.
- Order spring-flowering bulbs for planting and forcing.
- Start planning for Deep Cut's Fall Perennial Plant Swap, Sept. 24.

September ✓

- Fertilize lawns late this month. Now is the best time to reseed or renovate.
- After mid-month, leave some spent roses to produce hips and induce dormancy.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs in groups or drifts for best effect next spring. If rodents have been eating the bulbs, sprinkle a layer of grit or gravel below and above the bulbs when planting.
- Acclimate houseplants to lower light before bringing them indoors this month.
- If you haven't already done so, remove diseased foliage from perennials, before it gets hidden by autumn leaves.
- Early in the day, harvest herbs for freezing or drying. Dig and pot some to grow inside through the winter in a cool, sunny spot; allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings.

Nature Corner

Knock, Knock! Who's There?

Sam Skinner, Park System Naturalist

Most of us have heard the familiar tap-tap-tap from nearby woods and recognize this knocking as a woodpecker at work on a tree. These highly-specialized birds have many interesting features that allow them to drill holes in the hardest bark without getting a headache or head injury.

A Bird's Gotta Eat!

First and foremost, the infamous knocking is to obtain food, but it may also be a territorial warning or mating call. Many folks think the woodpecker is destroying the tree, but in fact the woodpecker may be protecting the tree by eating the insects that cause damage.

This Balsam Fir at Thompson Park shows the tell-tale 'stripes' of holes made by the Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker. This bird will eat the sap and the insects that are attracted to the sap.

To find an infested tree, the woodpecker will tap and then listen for activity inside. If it does not detect movement, it will move on to another spot or another tree. In other words, the tree is already under attack from insects before a woodpecker even starts to work. Woodpeckers are omnivores and opportunistic eaters. While their main diet includes insects and insect larvae, they will also eat arthropods (spiders, centipedes), seeds, nuts and fruits. Prey is taken from inside live or dead trees and from crevices in the bark.

A Sassafrass tree at Huber Woods Park with the distinctive oval/rectangular holes made by a Pileated Woodpecker.

Built to Hammer Away

A woodpecker's anatomy is specially designed to handle the constant repetitive knocking motion; their bills can strike the tree at 13-15 miles per hour (up to 100 times a minute)

- Head and body are aligned, the force is absorbed by strong neck muscles
- Skull is made of spongy, air-filled bone that acts like a shock absorber (brain is tightly packed inside so it will not rattle around)
- Tongue and its stabilizing bony support on some woodpeckers can wrap around the top and back of the skull and anchor at the base of the eye socket, offering added cushion
- Chisel-like bill has cells on the tip that are rapidly replenished
- Transparent third eyelid protects the eyes from popping out of the head
- Extremely long, sticky tongues, with little hairs along the length or even a barb at the tip to help pull out insects and grubs
- Stiff, strong tail feathers support their weight as they climb and cling to trees
- Zygodactyl feet—two toes pointing forward, two toes pointing backward—help woodpeckers hold steady when hammering

Woodpeckers of Monmouth County

The Tiny Woodpecker: Downy

At around 6" tall, with a 12" wing span and weighing only 0.95 ounce, the Downy is our smallest woodpecker. It has a large white patch in the center of its back, checkered black and white wings, and white underside. The Downy Woodpecker's bill is smaller than the width of its head. It can be seen at feeders year-round.

Note the large white back patch on both. The Male Downy Woodpecker has a red patch at the back of the head (nape), the female does not.

The "Mis-labeled" Woodpecker: Red-Bellied

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is very vocal and can be heard calling at all times of the year. This bird is 9.25" tall, has a 16" wing span and weighs about 2.2 ounces. This bird is recognized by a bright red stripe on its head and the black and white barring on its back, but is named for a red patch of feathers on its belly that is usually obscured, except during breeding season.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker, note the Zagodactyl feet.

The Shy Woodpecker: Hairy

The Hairy Woodpecker is a not-so-common, year-round resident. It has very similar markings to the Downy, but is larger and more timid. The Hairy Woodpecker is 9.25", with a wingspan of 15" and weighs about 2.3 ounces. The best way to tell the two apart is the Hairy Woodpecker's bill is much larger, longer than the width of its head. Hairy woodpeckers will visit bird feeders, but not as often the Downy or Red-bellied.

The Hairy Woodpecker, note the longer beak vs the similar looking Downy.

The Large Woodpecker: Pileated

The "Woody the Woodpecker" cartoon character is thought to have been inspired by this year-round woodpecker. If the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is indeed extinct (there have been sporadic reports, but none substantiated), the Pileated is the largest woodpecker in North America. At 16.5", with a wing span of 29" and weight of 10 ounces, it is generally the size of a crow. These birds are recognized by their size and striking red crest.

Pileated Woodpeckers mate for life, and NJ numbers have been increasing over the past few years. We now have reported sightings in at least 7 Monmouth County parks: Hartshorne Woods, Huber Woods, Tatum Park, Deep Cut Gardens, Holmdel Park, Thompson Park and Clayton Park.

The Unique Woodpecker: Flicker

The Northern Flicker is a summertime visitor that usually migrates south for the winter– but may stay if weather is mild. This medium-size bird is 14", with a wing span of 21" and weighs about 6 ounces. It is unusual in that it can be seen probing the ground for insects like a robin, or banging on a tree like any other woodpecker. It also has unique coloring: a brown body with black spots and a black bib or crescent with very bright yellow under the wings.

Both sexes of Flicker may have a red "V" shaped patch on the back of the head, but only males (left) will have a black malar or mustache.

The Uniform Drill Pattern Woodpecker: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Sapsuckers cannot extract insects from inside a tree. Instead they drill orderly rows of neat, evenly spaced holes horizontally across the trunk, then eat the sap and insects that get stuck in the sap. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is considered a migrant in Monmouth County and is usually seen in the fall and spring. This is a small to medium sized bird about 8.5" tall, with a 16" wing span and weight of 1.8 ounces. Look for the black, white and red patterned face with a red forehead patch.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have a red forehead patch; males (left) also have a red throat, females (right) do not.

The Most Striking Woodpecker: Red-Headed

This former breeder in Monmouth County, now considered uncommon, has a striking appearance: black back and wings with a white breast and belly, and a solid, crimson-red head. It is 9.25" tall, has a 17" wing span and weighs 2.5 ounces. They have been seen storing live grasshoppers by wedging them so tightly into a crevice that they cannot escape, then returning later for a meal.

The unmistakable red-headed woodpecker.

The next time you hear knocking in a nearby tree, take a moment to see which one of our specialists is at work. Remember, they are not destroying trees, but doing a service by ridding the tree of unwanted guests. If you ever have one tapping on your house, take it as a warning there may be an insect working just under the surface.

GREEN HERITAGE

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PARK SYSTEM

FLORAL PERSPECTIVES

Can you identify these flowers from an extreme, up-close view? (Answers p. 8)

Come to the Fair and get a glimpse of the county's best flowers in the Home & Garden Competition: Wednesday-Sunday July 24-28, 2013 at East Freehold Showgrounds: $7 (children 12 & under free!)

MONMOUTH COUNTY FAIR

Visit www.monmouthcountyparks.com