



**THE
NJBG/SKYLANDS
VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**

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Welcome!

On behalf of myself and the NJBG/Skylands Association, Board of Directors and the Volunteer Committee, I welcome you to the Volunteer Program. Volunteers are important. They provide a valuable service to NJBG/Skylands in many ways. Without your support, it would be difficult to accomplish the many things we do here.

At Skylands, there are many opportunities for you to share your skills, passions and desire to help. There are opportunities in our specialty gardens, Skylands Manor house, garden tours, family woodland walks, gift shop, seasonal events, assisting in the office, and in other areas. Your energy and desire to be a part of this wonderful association is truly appreciated.

This Volunteer Handbook was created to provide you with valuable information so that your time here is productive, enjoyable and meaningful. Please remember, that should you have any questions during your time at NJBG/Skylands, please contact me.

Thank you for you for choosing to be a member of the Skylands volunteer community. We look forward to your participation in our association.

Sincerely,

Dania Cheddie

Dania Cheddie
Volunteer Coordinator
NJBG/Skylands
2016

NJBG/Skylands Mission Statement

The Mission of NJBG/Skylands Association is to stimulate a greater appreciation of the relationship between gardens and people through education, research, and the conservation of the natural and architectural heritage of New Jersey Botanical Gardens.

About NJBG

The New Jersey State Botanical Garden is a part of Ringwood State Park, New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry, Department of Environmental Protection.

The New Jersey State Botanical Garden at Skylands appears on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

History of the NJBG/Skylands Association

The New Jersey State Botanical Garden forms the heartland of a property that Francis Lynde Stetson (1846-1920) assembled from pioneer farmsteads here in the Ramapo Mountains. Stetson named his country estate "Skylands Farms" and maintained a stylish mansion of native granite, a working farm with more than thirty outbuildings, gardens and a vast lawn that also served as a nine-hole golf course. A prominent New York lawyer, incorporator of railroads and the U.S. Steel Corporation, he entertained such friends as Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, Ethel Barrymore and J.P. Morgan here at Skylands. He was a trustee of the New York Botanical Garden and chose Samuel Parsons, Jr., a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted, to lay out his estate.

Parsons, founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects and New York City parks commissioner, designed the grounds, drainage systems and roads. He later used photos of his Skylands work, including Swan Pond, to illustrate his book, *The Art of Landscape Architecture, Its Development and Its Application to Modern Landscape Gardening*, a definitive text (1915).

Skylands was sold in 1922 to Clarence McKenzie Lewis (1877-1959), an investment banker and also a trustee of the New York Botanical Garden. When Mr. Lewis purchased the property, he set out to make it a botanical showplace. The Stetson house was torn down, and the current Tudor mansion of native granite was built on the site. Lewis engaged the most prominent landscape architects of his day, the firm Vitale and Geiffert, to design the gardens around his new summer home. Feruccio Vitale (1875-1933), who specialized in private estates, included among his clients John Wanamaker. Alfred Geiffert (1890-1957) designed Rockefeller Center, the grounds of Princeton University, and the National Gallery of Art. Photos of their work illustrate an Encyclopedia Britannica article on landscape architecture.

Most of the trees now framing the house were planted at that time, including the magnificent copper beeches. Lewis stressed symmetry, color, texture, form and fragrance in his gardens. He wanted to appeal to the senses. For thirty years, Lewis collected plants from all over the world and from New Jersey roadsides. The result is one of the finest collections of plants in the state. Lewis had over 60 gardeners working in peak seasons.

In 1966, New Jersey purchased the 1,117 acres of Skylands from Shelton College, which had used it as a campus.

The Honorable Robert Roe, then commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development, said, "I regard the preservation of this area of the state as essential and a foremost opportunity to meet the Green Acres objectives." The Skylands Garden was the first property purchased under the Green Acres program.

In March 1984, Governor Thomas Kean designated the central 96 acres surrounding the manor house as the State's official botanical garden. It has been placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

NJBG/Skylands Volunteer Program Mission Statement

The mission of the NJBG/Skylands Volunteer program is to support the mission of the New Jersey Botanical Gardens Board while enabling the community of volunteers to develop and enhance their gardening skills, contribute to the gardens, and form rewarding friendships.

Volunteering at Skylands, The New Jersey State Botanical Garden

There are many areas of volunteer opportunities at Skylands, the largest and most active is that of gardening volunteers. Other volunteer activities include record entry, file and library maintenance, development of educational programs and materials, grant writing and fund raising, Geographic Information System mapping, carpentry, graphic arts and many areas of visitor interaction including seasonal public events. Volunteers who are interested in working in an area in which they are not experienced will receive training whenever possible. We provide training for all tour guides, including manor docents, gardens, wildflower, and family woodland hike leaders.

There are weekend gardening opportunities the third Sunday of each month during the gardening season. Weekend garden volunteers meet on the third Sunday at the Carriage house at 1:30. Please note that it is an Association rule that, for safety reasons, volunteers never work alone.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

GARDENING OPPORTUNITIES: WORKING IN THE GARDENS

Volunteers assist in the upkeep of the many beautiful gardens here at Skylands. Learn while you help in planting, weeding, deadheading, and pruning, as well as checking for plant labeling and garden problems, including insects and plant diseases. Area leaders are available on volunteer days to provide guidance and answer questions.

THE ANNUAL GARDEN

This is the only garden at Skylands where the plantings are mainly annuals. The eye catching displays change not only through the season but from year to year.

THE PERENNIAL BORDER

A photographer's delight, the perennial border consists of eight beds planted with perennials of every kind including bulbs, shrubs, roses, groundcovers, vines and trees. The colorful floral display changes from season to season attracting hummingbirds, butterflies and other pollinators. Join the enthusiastic team effort to regularly weed, deadhead, prune and plant as volunteers enlarge and enhance Mr. Lewis' original cutting garden.

THE HOSTA/RHODODENDRON GARDEN

The Rhododendron garden gives us a brilliant display of flowers from spring through summer. The garden also hosts a large collection of hosta that range in size from miniature to gargantuan. They sport a variety of foliage in shades of blue, green and yellow, along with white and gold variations. Volunteers work to identify and map the many cultivars, as well as maintain and mulch this spectacular garden.

THE MORaine GARDEN

New Jersey is home to many moraines, rocky deposits left by melting glaciers in the last ice age. Mr. Lewis created this interesting garden to reflect that landscape type, planting it with ground hugging alpine species that thrive on rocky slopes, with water seeping beneath. Volunteers working in this garden maintain the streams, weed and fill in plants as needed.

THE OCTAGONAL GARDEN

The rock garden surrounding the Octagonal Pool was designed so that the many dwarf plants are at optimal viewing height in waist high raised stone wall beds. The garden has been carefully restored and the tiny plants are nicely displayed. Volunteers ensure these little jewels are maintained and the garden remains weed free.

THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN

This pleasant and relaxing garden holds many wonders, as well as an opportunity to “Look, Listen and Reflect”. As a volunteer maintaining this delightful area, you will see flowers and plants pop through the natural woodland gardens as the seasons progress: ferns, delicate wild flowers which change by season, including many spring blooming Japanese primroses and colorful flowering shrubs that offer berries to birds in the fall. The garden includes a frog/turtle/dragonfly friendly bog loved by children and volunteers alike.

THE LILAC GARDEN

More than 200 lilacs, planted in the 1920's grace one of Skylands favorite gardens and the pride of NJBG. Join the team effort to regularly weed, deadhead, prune and mulch the beds. Volunteers may be found in the Lilac garden every Wednesday morning from April through October. There are several Lilac Saturdays, when a Master Gardener gives lessons in Lilac

care followed by hands on experience in plant maintenance. Adopt and care for a bed that will be “yours” to maintain and love. Peak bloom is Mother’s Day weekend, when there is a special Lilac day and volunteers have the opportunity to greet visitors and brag about “their” fragrant beauties.

THE SUMMER GARDEN

This lovely little garden was originally the site of a rose garden planted by Mr. Lewis. Over time the roses were replaced by day lilies, which put on a colorful show during summer months. Summer annuals, varying from year to year, complement the daylilies and you can count on a cheerful display of daffodils in the spring. Volunteers weed to maintain this garden’s beauty.

THE ALL AMERICAN SEED SELECTION GARDEN

This unique garden is planted with annual flowers grown from seeds provided by the All American Seed Company. Planted by state workers, it is maintained by volunteers. An informative August program describing the planting is given for the public.

THE GREENHOUSE

Volunteers maintain plant inventory, propagate and divide plants, pot, label prune, deadhead plants to be sold at the annual spring plant sale. There is volunteer work in the greenhouse year round.

NON-GARDENING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MANOR HOUSE TOURS

Trained docents lead tours of Skylands manor. Tours occur on selected Sundays and are approximately 45 minutes long. Volunteers interested in becoming docents will receive specialized training.

FUND RAISING/GRANT WRITING

Interested volunteers assist the Fund Raising/Grant Committee to research, develop and write fund raising programs.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) MAPPING

The GIS system helps define spaces in the gardens. The plants within these spaces are identified and precisely located. The plant and location information is entered into a database, which is used to generate garden maps. Volunteers map the location of gardens, trees and plants to assist the GIS team as needed. Special training is provided.

THE GIFT SHOP AND VISITOR CENTER

This is where the most visitor contact takes place. Volunteers work as sales people and/or greeters. They stock, price, organize and maintain stock inventory in the store. The Gift Shop is open Sundays and during special events from April through December.

THE LIBRARY

The Association maintains an extensive gardening library. Volunteers file library materials, shelve and inventory books, magazines, photographs and other library materials.

OFFICE SUPPORT

Volunteers assist the Volunteer Coordinator as needed with membership mailings, record keeping and file maintenance. Computer skills are helpful for this area.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO VISUAL

Volunteers with experience in these areas record and take photographs of the gardens and special events.

PROGRAMS, SEASONAL AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Volunteers assist with regular monthly and special programs by greeting guests, collecting tickets, serving refreshments and distributing literature during the programs. Volunteers also help with pre-program planning, set up and post program clean up.

SEASONAL EVENTS:

SPRING:	Volunteer Luncheon Plant Sale
SUMMER	Concert Series Craft Fair
FALL	Harvest Fest Bulb Planting
WINTER	Wreath Making Holiday Open House

TOURS AND FAMILY WOODLAND WALKS

When weather permits, Skylands' volunteers offer hour-long garden walks every Sunday at 2 PM, May through October. Wildflower walks are given on five designated Saturdays and family woodland hikes are given the third Sunday of the month, May through September. Skylands' First Day hike, honored throughout the US at all National Parks is on January 1st. Volunteers greet guests at the Carriage House before walks or hikes. Special training is provided to hike and walk guides.

Volunteering at Skylands, the New Jersey State Botanical Garden, gives anyone who loves gardening or history an opportunity to pursue their passion in a beautiful setting while helping preserve one of New Jersey's most opulent botanical gems.

Volunteer Policies and Guidelines

Attendance

Please inform the volunteer leader of planned absences. Call the office to report unexpected absences at **973-962-9534** or **973-962-7527**. If no one is available, leave a message on the answering machine and the message will be forwarded to the contact person.

Ending Volunteer Service

- Dismissal-Volunteers who fail to follow NJBG/Skylands volunteer policies and guidelines may be subject to dismissal from the Volunteer Program. Prior to such action, the volunteer may discuss this action with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Resignation-Volunteers may terminate their service at any time. We ask that you inform the Volunteer Coordinator and provide a reason.

Dress and Appearance

As an NJBG/Skylands volunteer, you are a representative of this public garden. Attire should be appropriate. When selecting clothing, consider volunteer location and weather conditions. When working in the gardens, giving garden tours and family walks, you may want to include, bug repellent, sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, and closed shoes. During the summer, we tend to wear lighter clothing; please be sure to wear appropriate attire.

First Aid, Injury, Illness or Accident

If you become injured, or suspect that you may have an injury related to your volunteer duties, it is your responsibility to speak with a supervisor at the Park immediately. They will provide you with the proper forms to fill out and guide you in the process of submitting them.

Location of **First Aid Kit**: Carriage House bathroom and volunteer shed

Identification

All volunteers must wear an NJBG identification badge while on duty. NJBG identification badges can be obtained from the shed, the Carriage House office, or where you sign-in. Badges must be returned at the end of your work session.

Inclement Weather

Your safety is important. Always use your best judgment in deciding whether it is safe to travel. If you are unsure about work on a given day, call the office (**973- 962-9534**) or your Volunteer Leader.

Interacting with Park Visitors

One of the best rewards as a volunteer is the opportunity to interact and share your expertise with park visitors. It is important to remember that you make an impression to the park visitor – you represent not only Skylands, the State Botanical Garden, but the State Park Service. Your service and attitude can influence the enjoyment of the park's visitor's trip.

You have the right to ask visitors to follow park rules and to stop any activity that damages park property, such as tree climbing and picking flowers and plants.

Dogs and their handlers represent the biggest violation. Suggest to the visitor that they walk their pet at the Shepherd Lake or Ringwood Manor sections as “**no pets are permitted in the Garden.**”

Media Policy

Volunteers should refer all media inquiries and matters to the Volunteer Coordinator or office staff.

Parking

Volunteers are required to park their vehicles in the back of the Carriage House **or** Parking Lot A. Volunteers who work in the lilac garden can park in Parking Lot B.

Personal Property

Keep personal property with you at all times. Volunteers are encouraged to leave valuable property at home.

Photo Release

Photographs of volunteers at work may be taken to use on the website, brochures, and other promotional materials. If you do not wish to have your photo used, please inform your Volunteer Leader or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Professional Conduct

As an NJBG/Skylands volunteer, you are a representative of the association. Volunteers should maintain a professional demeanor with garden visitors, staff and each other. Volunteers are expected to adhere to NJBG/Skylands rules, policies and guidelines. Should an issue/conflict arise between a volunteer and a staff member, a volunteer and another volunteer, a volunteer and a Volunteer Leader, all attempts should be made to resolve the issue between you. If this is not possible, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator. We want to ensure that the work environment is pleasant for everyone

Recording Volunteer Hours

Keeping track of the valuable time given by our volunteers is very important to us. In order to maintain current and accurate records, you will be asked to sign in when you arrive, and sign out when you leave. We keep very detailed record of our volunteers and the State is very impressed with the total volunteer hours that we turn in every year. When working during a special event, follow the event attendance procedures.

Please be sure to record your time on the appropriate form in clear handwriting, using the name on your application and on the day worked. Sheets are posted in the volunteer shed and in the Association office.

Safety Guidelines

Volunteers are expected to follow the same safety procedures as regular staff. The best way to prevent injuries and accidents is to follow safety guidelines.

- Never operate equipment you have not been trained to use or without proper approval.
- Report any unsafe condition immediately.
- Volunteers are prohibited from driving State-owned vehicles.
- If you have any allergies, for example to insect stings, please inform your volunteer leader.
- There may be some plants and animals that are potentially hazardous in the park. Be sure to inquire about how to deal with those situations.
- When working outdoors, always keep yourself hydrated. Water is available in the Carriage House kitchen.
- Always work with another person, never work in the gardens alone.
- Always carry a cell phone with you.

Volunteer Application

Please fill out the Volunteer Application form, indicating areas of interest, availability, and any special skills you possess that might be useful in your role as a volunteer. This will help us determine the best position for you. Please report any change of address or phone number to the office.

Volunteer Orientation

Once you have been accepted as a volunteer, an orientation will be set up with the Volunteer Coordinator to provide you with an overview of the volunteer program and review the NJBG/Skylands Volunteer Handbook. We request that you read the Volunteer Handbook thoroughly so that you get a better understanding of our mission, history and goals.

Next, you will meet with the Volunteer Leader for the area to whom you have been assigned. The area supervisor will review the requirements of your volunteer assignment and provide you with training.

Volunteer Hours

There are volunteer opportunities available throughout the year. Volunteers, who work in the gardens, work from April through October, on Wednesdays, from 9:00-12:00. Greenhouse volunteers work throughout the year and through the week. For some volunteer assignments, hours and days may vary. For additional information, contact the office at **973-962-9534** or **info@njbj.org**.

Volunteer Recognition and Benefits

- Invitation to our Annual Volunteer Luncheon. For volunteers with 50 or more hours, there is no fee. For less than 50 hours, a fee is charged. In addition, we have a pot-luck-lunch in the fall.
- Free admission to events when volunteering for those events.
- Rewarding, beautiful natural environment.
- Invitation to special workshops.
- Use of NJBG/Skylands Library
- NJBG/Skyland volunteer shirt after contributing at least 50 volunteer hours in one year.

NJBG/Skylands Board of Directors and State Personnel

Skylands Association Board of Directors, 2015-2016

Dorothy Gall, President
Schuyler Jenks, Treasurer
Dorothy Dobek, Recording Secretary
Debra Bryant
 Dania Cheddie
 Raymond Edel
 Kathryn Holmes
Jean Neri
Terry Valenta

Frank Dyer, Vice President
Andy Noll, Vice President
Maja Britton
Nancy Cochrane
 Vivian DeMarco
 Pat Grossi
 Debra Manfredonio
Darlene Nowak
 Sonja Vieth

Skylands Association Non-Board Staff

Millicent Ansley, Greenhouse
Jay Gustowarow, Concerts
Eileen Hammond, NJBG/Skylands Office

David Chopko, Hosta
Richard Tjoa, Website

Carriage House Office

Mailing address: P. O. Box 302, Ringwood, NJ 07456
Street address: 2 Morris Road, Ringwood, NJ 07456

Phone #1 (main) 973-962-9534
Phone #2..... 973-962-7527
Fax..... 973-962-1553
Email info@njbq.org
Website www.njbq.org

State Workers

Superintendent - Eric Pain
Grounds Building, Supervisor - Rich Flynn

Ringwood State Park

Information ... 973-962-7031
Fax..... 973-962-2247
Direct Line.... 973-962-2240
EmailRSPSupt2@verizon.net
Regional Office 973-786-5210

Ringwood Post Office 973-962-6211
Ringwood Police 973-962-7017

Notes