

MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION & AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

SPRING 2024

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the Spring Edition of our newsletter created by the volunteer members of the Agricultural Advisory Council and Open Space Preservation Council, who are working on many ongoing farmland preservation and open space projects for the greater good. Within an hour to the major metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia, Millstone Township is truly a unique setting with its rural character and abundance of natural and cultural resources.

Millstone Township proudly showcases its endeavors in farmland preservation and supports a diverse agricultural industry. Approximately 50% of land in Millstone Township continues to be actively farmed today, land which boasts some of the best prime soils across the Garden State for agricultural viability. This key component to any farm is the reason many farmers choose to establish their agricultural operations within the township.



The desirable land hosts a true array of farms which highlight traditional grain and crops, vegetables and fruits, equine and livestock production, nursery and horticulture operations, beekeeping, herbs, exotic produce, pick your own operations, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and agritourism. Millstone Township agricultural products are actively marketed across the county, state and country under Grown in Monmouth and Jersey Fresh marketing and branding initiatives.

With such a multifaceted agricultural industry in the township, the significance of farmland and open space preservation cannot be overlooked. Preservation initiatives assist not only the farmer and landowner but directly impact the many residents who call Millstone Township home. The benefits of farmland and open space preservation correlate with a healthy environment, control of urban sprawl, support of public recreation projects, protection of water quality and natural resources, and simply providing a superior quality of life. Further, our local township and county park and trail systems provide opportunities in all seasons to enjoy the outdoors and offer forms of recreation such as hiking, biking, horseback riding and fishing



With challenges to the viability of farms and the pressures on remaining unpreserved open space, the time to preserve as much land within the township is at a critical crossroads. We ask our residents to continue in their support of the important work of the volunteer members of both respective Councils. There is no better time than the present to preserve our farmland and open space for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Amy Lynn Butewicz (Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Council)

Facelift for America's 250th Birthday 1776-2026

The Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties (FMTHRP) has applied for and been awarded the New Jersey Cultural Trust Preservation Grant in the amount of \$40,000.00 to restore five (5) of the ten (10) stained glass windows at the Clarksburg Cultural Center, Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church, listed on the State and National Registers. "The restoration is funded by the New Jersey Cultural Trust with project assistance by the New Jersey Historic Trust." The stained-glass windows are American opalescent colors of stained-glass that light up the Sanctuary space and display inscriptions of local families who donated the windows.



The stained-glass windows have had various repairs over the years leading to the loss of some of the original art glass. The stained-glass windows continue to deteriorate, and restoration is needed before more of the original art glass is lost. Upon inspection there is evidence of bowing at the bottom of the stained-glass panels, broken glass, broken solder joints, dried out/missing cement, dried out glazing compound, and many poor repairs with mismatched glass. On the exterior, the lead and solder joints have oxidized. J & R Lamb Studios, an Accredited Professional Member of The Stained Glass Association of America, has been hired as a specialist to remove the windows, completely restore with an emphasis on conserving as much of the original stained glass as possible, reassemble with new coming, restore quality new lead comes matching the original profile, and reinstall with vented protective coverings of laminate glass.



The church was built in 1844 on land that was donated by Rev. Bowman and serviced the community as their religious and social center. Today the building is very much as it was in the mid-nineteenth century. There was no indoor plumbing or electric. The outhouse was outside in the back. Around the turn of the 1900s brought some changes that made the community proud: the addition of the bell, donated by Mrs. Charles Allen and the donation of the stained-glass windows by families in the congregation. In the mid-1900s electricity and heat were added. Today there is still no running water or bathrooms. The adjacent cemetery is the final resting place of many of the community's settlers.



You may have noticed a small red building being constructed next to the church. Another grant awarded to Millstone by the Monmouth County Open Space Grant program is funding the construction of a visitors center with the following amenities: ADA bathrooms, a small

office/meeting room, a cyclist repair shop and an additional parking with ADA parking spaces.

The Grand Re-Opening will kick off the 250th Celebration of the Birth of our Nation with a lecture/cultural arts series in 2025-2026. A special photography and map exhibit will be on display highlighting historical places and happenings over the last couple of centuries. Watch for special programs and events to be coming here for your enjoyment.



Think Before You...Plant!

Spring has finally made its long awaited arrival and with it comes the desire to replant our gardens and landscape our properties. However, did you know that some plants are more of a nuisance than a benefit to our environment? Invasive species plants do exist and truly are more of a detriment. Under Federal Executive Order 13112, an “invasive species” is defined as a species that is: 1. Non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration; and, 2. Whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.



Many invasive plant species are successful at disrupting local environments because of their production of large quantities of seed and the ability to thrive on disturbed soil. Often, invasive plant seeds are distributed by birds, wind, or unknowingly humans allowing seed to move great distances. Other invasive plant species have aggressive root systems that spread long distances from a single plant. These root systems often grow so densely that they smother the root systems of surrounding vegetation. Some invasive plant species are even able to produce chemicals in their leaves or root systems which inhibit the growth of other plants around them.

The impacts of invasive plant species are significant. According to the US Forest Service, invasive plant species have contributed to the decline of **42%** of U.S. endangered and threatened species, and for **18%** of U.S. endangered or threatened species, invasives are the main cause of their decline. Invasive plant species compete directly with native species for moisture, sunlight, nutrients, and space which leads to a decrease in overall plant diversity and degradation of wildlife habitats. The establishment of invasive species in an ecosystem also results in poor quality agriculture lands, degraded water quality and increased soil erosion. These impacts change nature's balance on which all species depend for survival.



Russian Olive

Recognizing the impact of invasive plant species to local habitats and ecosystems, our own Millstone Township created an Invasive Plant Species Ordinance (Township Ordinance 3-4B). The specific plants identified in the ordinance include: BAMBOO of the Running (monopodial) or Clumping (sympodial) varieties as well as Canadian Thistle, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Garlic Mustard, Japanese knotweed, Japanese Stiltgrass, Purple Loosestrife, Russian Olive and Water Chestnut and shall include the plant and any cutting, flower, seed, root, or other plant part. The ordinance includes guidelines for confinement and removal on private property as well as issuance of citations and penalties to be imposed should remediation of the property not be completed.

It is our goal as stewards of the land to reduce, minimize or totally eliminate the potential impact of invasive plant species across private and public properties. Remember, invasive plants are everyone's problem. Spread the word, not the invasive plants!

Growing Your Best Tomatoes



We all know it's a great experience to grow and harvest your own vine-ripened tomatoes. N.J. residents are lucky to have soils and climate perfectly suited to growing our most popular vegetable. Sadly, many backyard growers struggle to grow their own tomatoes. After growing tomatoes commercially for 40 years, I have some tips on how, what, where, and when of successful tomato gardening.



There are many types and characteristics of tomatoes. These include cherry, grape, plum, cluster and slicing globe fruit. A blend of sweetness and acidic flavors can tempt the palette. A rainbow of colors are pleasing to the eye. Red, yellow, pink, green, purple and white tomatoes are all available. You can choose from modern hybrids or old heirloom varieties. I have some recommendations helpful in choosing which tomato variety to grow. Pick a modern hybrid over an heirloom variety. Hybrids often have built in disease resistance. Look for the letters VFN on the plant tag. Verticillium [V] wilt and Fusarium [F] wilt are soil borne diseases while Nematodes [N] are microscopic worms in the soil. Pick determinate [short growing] varieties over indeterminate [taller growing]. They are easier to grow. Some of my favorite varieties are Sun sugar Cherry [best taste], Primo Red [best early], Rutgers250 and Red Deuce [best globe slicing], Brandy Boy [best hybrid heirloom] and Mt. Magic [best cluster].

Start putting in your tomato transplants in May after the threat of frost is over. I like to make my first planting of determinate tomatoes in mid May and a second planting in mid July. This gives me vine-ripened fruit from July-October.

As in real estate, location, location, location is an important consideration for your tomatoes. Full all day sun with no shade is a must have. Well drained soil with no standing water for long periods of time is critical. Aged compost and pulverized limestone are important additions to your soil. To be successful limestone should be added to achieve a PH [soil acidity] of 6.0 to 6.5. Space your tomato plants 1.5 feet to 3 feet in the rows and 5-6 feet between the rows. If doing container tomato plants, it's best to use a 5 gallon pot or larger. In Millstone, we grow a lot of deer and they love tomatoes as much as we do. I recommend 8 foot fencing for protection. Staking or caging is needed to keep the fruit off the ground while making it easier to harvest. If you have the room to rotate your garden area every 3 years it will pay dividends in disease and pest reduction.

When it's time to plant, I suggest using a plastic or paper mulch over your soil to prevent weeds from taking over your garden. I recommend a balanced fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphate, potassium and micro-nutrients for feeding your tomatoes. A tablespoon of Miracle-Gro mixed into a gallon of water once a week should be sufficient.

As your tomatoes grow you'll need to inspect your plants for insects and diseases. Bacterial and fungal diseases can pop up especially in wet weather. A physiological disorder you are almost sure to see is blossom end rot. This is a blackening on the bottom of your first ripe tomatoes. This is due to a lack of calcium in your fruit. To prevent this, keep your soil well-limed and do not let your plants dry out. A great service for solutions to any of these problems is your county Agricultural Extension office in Freehold.

After all your hard work, you can enjoy your first large tomato sliced onto sourdough bread with, of course, mayonnaise, salt and pepper! Happy Tomato Growing!!



There's a New Fair in Town

Join us June 30, 2024 for the first NJ Ag Fair of the season, the Stars and Stripes Ag Fair. Hosted by the Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties, the fair will be held for the second year at the historic Thomas Baird Homestead, 24 Baird Road, Millstone.

Celebrating our 23rd year, this event features cattle, goat, sheep, poultry, rabbit, small animals and herpetology competitions for youth under the age of 21. Exhibitors travel from as far away as Arkansas to compete and to enjoy the flavor of this fair. Although the competitors are fierce in their preparation, they are often seen jumping in to help a fellow competitor. Some exhibitors are as young as two years old. If they can control their animal, they are welcome to enter the ring.

"INDOOR FARMING" ***In your own yard***

Farmers across the county having been looking for ways to grow vegetables more efficiently. One of these ways would be to extend the growing season, earlier and later, to grow more. This has become essential due to the rising cost of farming. One of these ways would be to grow in high tunnels. High tunnels, very similar to greenhouses, would provide this extended season, but unlike greenhouses that use tables, benches and have high energy costs, high tunnels are used to grow in the ground directly, protecting the plants and maximizing the energy of the sun.



This allows farmers to plant about two months earlier and to continue about two months later. Sometimes, depending on crop choice, plant through the winter. Such crops like lettuce, spinach, kale, swiss chard, arugula, beets, and others can be grown through the winter under cover. This lets farmers grow and sell year-round when otherwise it would be impossible.

Many farmers here in Millstone are taking advantage of this opportunity and are very successful. To learn more about how homeowners can take advantage of this new farming method in their backyards, go to "high tunnels for homeowners", and start your own extended season in your backyard. Your family will enjoy the fresh vegetables on your own table!



"A Weekend In Old Monmouth"
at The Baird Homestead
Self Guided Tour

Saturday, May 4, 2024 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Sunday, May 5, 2024 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

More info call 609-915-3444 or
609-290-8229

www.visitmonmouth.com

Join us for the first NJ Ag Fair of the season...

STARS AND STRIPES AG FAIR

June 30, 2024

Thomas Baird Homestead

24 Baird Road, Millstone Township
10:00 – 4:00

www.starsandstripeslivestock.com
609-290-8229

Cattle, Sheep, Goat, Poultry, Small Animal, Herpetology
and Rabbit Shows

Free Admittance and Parking

TOWNSHIP OF MILLSTONE

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COUNCIL
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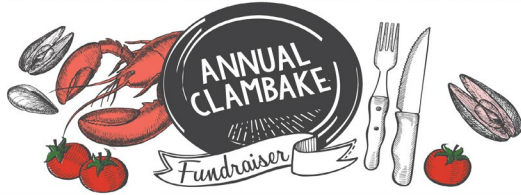
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JUNE
2
SUNDAY

AT WAGNER FARM PARK
4 BAIRD RD. WAGNER BLDG.
Eat In or Take Out

1st seating 2nd seating
1:00PM - 3:00PM 3:30PM - 5:30PM

TICKETS
Adult - \$55
choice of 4
child - \$15
choice of 2
EXCLUDES LOBSTER

**SUNDAY JUNE 2, 2024
WAGNER FARM PARK**

Dine In or Take Out

Adult - \$55.00 (choice of 4)

Child - \$15.00 (choice of 2 –excl. lobster)

- Lobster with ear of corn
- 6 Shrimp Cocktail
- 6 Roasted Clams
- 6 Clams on 1/2 shell
- 12 Steamers
- Hot Dog
- Hamburger
- BBQ Pork Sandwich with coleslaw
- Beef Kabob

Tickets must be purchased in advance by May 26th

To purchase tickets, contact:

Andrew DeFelice, 470 Stagecoach Rd. Millstone Twp. NJ 08510

Phone: 732-446 4249 X1601 Email: a-defelice@millstonenj.gov

Make Checks Payable To: MILLSTONE OPEN SPACE TRUST