

# THE FALL 2021 CONSERVATIONIST

## **Your Voice Matters**

Our small part of the world in Radnor Township is filled with incredible natural resources and open space. We enjoy high tree canopy coverage, countless parks, gardens and arboretums close by, streams and creeks running through Radnor – many of these places are cared for by the township, educational institutions and churches. On both public and private land, we are faced with aging trees that require maintenance (just like our homes). When parcels of land are sold or developed, there

is a direct impact on our local environment, the ecosystem, and the people who live here.

Large stand of mature canopy trees fill Fenimore Woods Park

It is hard to keep up with all of the projects and tree related activity going on within the township, but it is important to stay engaged if you want to be an advocate to protect natural resources, while still retaining the character of our local environment. I encourage you to come to a township meeting to hear what your Board of Commissioners, Shade Tree Commission, Parks & Recreation, Environmental Advisory Committee, Zoning and Planning are working on. It's important that tax paying residents have a voice in what happens in your community, because your opinion matters.

Fenimore Woods Park Renovation Project is being redesigned because a group of concerned neighbors rallied together to ask for a more collaborative process that places highest priority on the tree canopy at this unique wooded park (Friends of Fenimore Coalition). Community input is critical to shape this project and others that will come up in the future. Help shape the future of Radnor Township by speaking up and sharing your voice or getting involved in a friends group, non-profit board or township committee.

Gretchen Groebel

Radnor Conservancy, Executive Director

Acher Srockel



Volunteers help at our Free Tree Giveaway

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Radnor Conservancy P.O. Box 48 Wayne, PA 19087 610-688-8202 radnorconservancy.org

Interested in volunteering, being a Summer Intern, or serving on our Board? Contact us at ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org

# **Connecting With Nature, Our Fall Fundraiser**

On September 18, Radnor Conservancy held an in-person gathering in Wayne, PA to celebrate our mission: To preserve and enhance Radnor's open space and natural assets through engagement with and education of our community in sustainable environmental stewardship. It was a lovely evening to reconnect, face-to-face for the first time since 2019. Funds raised go to purchasing trees for our community, environmental initiatives, and educational programs in Radnor Township. If you are interested in being a sponsor or participating as a Planning Committee member for next year's fundraiser, please contact Gretchen Groebel at ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org.

In addition, if you would be interested in hosting this event, please contact Gretchen. Given the number of beautiful properties in our Township, we are so grateful when we are able to hold our fundraiser at somebody's home!



Lisa Borowski, AnnaMarie Jones, Avery Rome, Maggy Myers, Gretchen Groebel, Elaine Schaefer



Tom and Donna Anfuso



Meg Shreiner, Michael Shreiner, Kaylee Spinrad, Steve Shreiner



Liz and Florian Egg-Krings, Susan and Jonathan McEvoy



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## Special Thanks to all of our 2021 Sponsors

Liz and Kevin Duffy Deborah Fitzgerald-Correll Sue and Jeff Goggins Lyn and Harry Groome Lynn and Bruce Hernandez Dr. Pamela J. Jensen

Laura and Jamie Luker Robin Mann Liz and John Negrey Marla and Peter Neeson Katrina and John Ogilby Gerry and John Tuten

















# 500 Trees Find New Homes in Radnor by Gretchen Groebel

We successfully had over 220 families pickup native shade trees at our Annual Free Tree Giveaway the weekend of October 23 & 24. Special thanks to ALL of the volunteers who came out to lend a hand (I could not have done it without you), including Shreiner Tree Care for helping with tree selection advice, loading trees into cars and Radnor Township Public Works Department for helping me unload 500 trees. In 2019, we unveiled an initiative to give away 500 trees per year over a three year span. This is the third year and we are very proud to have helped put over 1500 trees in the ground in Radnor Township. Over a 12-year span we have given away over 3500 trees to residents for free.

We are committed to the long-term health of our local environment. Keeping the tree canopy green in Radnor Township is crucial to help keep our air and waterways clean, provide important habitat for animals, mitigate stormwater runoff and provide a more tranquil beautiful place to live.

Octoraro Native Plant Nursery in Kirkwood, PA was our supplier of the container grown trees.

Please consider becoming a member or donating online so we can continue to fund this important initiative. Go to RadnorConservancy.org









Happy tree recipients



Volunteers: Cheryl Tumola, Eric Janson, Lisa Borowski, Frank Perras (back), Anne Murphy (back), Matt Polli (Shreiner), Betsy Michau, Henry Richmond-Boudewyns (Shreiner)

# Fantastic Fungi

#### **FANTASTIC FUNGI DOCUMENTARY REVIEW**

Fantastic Fungi, an award-winning documentary on Netflix, sheds light on the fantastic workings of these strange organisms. Life on Earth would be much different without members of the fungal kingdom, which can do everything from breaking down waste to providing food and blighting crops. By forming symbiotic relationships with other organisms, fungi thrive while sharing nutrients and other substances with their host. The film, directed by Louie Schwartzberg and narrated by Brie Larson, dives into this unusual and still mysterious world. Excerpt By Erin Blakemore for *The Washington Post* (Aug 2021)

## Land Use Planning In Radnor by Cheryl Tumola

Most individuals recognize the benefits accrued by judicious planning to protect their assets; the same is true of our communities. Radnor has planned for its future by adopting guidelines for growth and preservation since the 1960s. Comprehensive Land Use Planning is one of the reasons the Township has remained an extremely desirable area in which to live and work. We have taken measures to preserve our "Green Country Town" by directing growth and maintaining our neighborhoods. We have strengthened our tax base by designating areas for uses which provide tax ratables which do not burden our infrastructure with needs for services and we have accommodated the region's needs by supplying it with transportation hubs and access to highways.

Just as with our personal goals, from time to time our Land Use goals need to reflect the current situation. Much has changed after the 1960s; since then there have been changes to the Township's Comprehensive Plans in the 1980s and 2000s when we commissioned new plans and outlined new goals and recommendations appropriate for our then conditions and development pressures. Change is constant, so in order that our policies continue to reflect our vision we should examine our policies to design a path toward sustainability. That is what a new Comprehensive Plan will do for us BUT your input will be needed! We are hopeful the Township budget for 2022 will provide funding for this. Once it does, get involved. Guide our growth.

### Native Groundcovers as Lawn Alternatives by Katharine Startup

Looking to reduce your lawn or struggling to grow turfgrass in parts of your yard? There are many perennials that provide nearly year-round interest and groundcover, requiring little water beyond normal rainfall once they are established and only the occasional weeding. Consider the following native plants as possible lower maintenance alternatives to lawn:

- Barren strawberry, Waldsteinia fragarioides, has glossy leaves that form an evergreen mat and produce yellow flowers in springtime. This low growing perennial takes time establishing but it adapts well to most soil types in dry shade and can also tolerate sun if the soil stays moist.
- Creeping sedge, Carex laxiculmis, forms clumps of foot-long, thick, blue-green leaf blades and thrives in moist shade. After it has bulked up in size, it is easy to divide and spread around the garden.
- Pennsylvania sedge, Carex pensylvanica, makes delicate swaths of thin, light green leaves, creating a soft highlight in dry shade. This low, spreading sedge looks right at home under trees and woodland areas.
- Tufted hair grass, Deschampsia cespitosa, forms short, dark green clumps that send up tall stems with tufts of creamy flowers in summer. This cool-season grass performs well in sun to part shade and average to wet conditions.
- Prairie Drop Seed, Sporobolus heterolepis, is a tough mounding grass with glowing leaf strands and airy summer flowers that smell of buttered popcorn. This warm-season grass tolerates drought and a wide variety of soil conditions, including clay.









Prairie Dropseed, Sporobolus heterolepis

Barren strawberry, Waldsteinia fragarioides

K. Startup in Chanticleer's Gravel Garden

# Native Magnolias by Nicole Juday Rhoads

The Magnolia genus is large, with over 200 species native to the Americas as well as Asia. The Asian species are what we think of as the harbingers of spring – medium to large trees smothered with pink or white fragrant blossoms in April. But native magnolias have their own, more subtle charm, with the additional benefit of having plentiful wildlife value in the fall, when their conelike fruits ripen to expose orange or red seeds that songbirds strip before heading south.

Of the native magnolias, several species are



Magnolia grandiflora seed pod

particularly well-suited to the home landscape. The Sweetbay, *M. virginiana*, is a lovely, open small to medium sized tree that can tolerate moist soil and shade but is also happy in sun. The delicate green foliage has a silvery underside that is beautiful when the leaves flutter in a breeze. Three-inch white flowers with a lemony fragrance appear in May and June. Some specimens are semi-evergreen, while others lose all their leaves, exposing smooth pale gray bark throughout the winter.

A similar plant in every way except for scale is the Bigleaf Magnolia, *M. macrophylla*, whose leaves and flowers are an order of magnitude larger than its genteel relation. While some gardeners may consider this tree too coarse, its huge two-feet long leaves and ten-inch flowers are true showstoppers and lend a tropical, perhaps even prehistoric, feel to the landscape.

And among the relatively small number of deciduous evergreen trees is our beloved *M. grandiflora*, the Southern magnolia. Historically this tree was difficult to overwinter in our region, but hardy cultivars such as "Edith Bogue", "Bracken's Brown Beauty", and "Little Gem" allow Pennsylvania gardeners to appreciate the glossy green, brown-backed foliage and stunning large white flowers year after year.

The flowers of native magnolias emerge after the foliage has come out and over a longer period of time than their Asian cousins. While they may not stop traffic, their multiple attributes make them valuable to almost any garden, all year long.

# Winter Dormant Season Is Ideal to Prune Most Trees & Shrubs by Steve Shreiner

You may be surprised to learn that your landscape trees and shrubs have already produced next spring's buds, which generally happens by September. Avoid



Winter apple tree pruning

pruning next spring's flowering shrubbery unless heavy pruning is required for size reduction or rejuvenation.

When trying to develop a desired branch structure or create a more attractive or defined shape, it is easier in the winter without the presence of leaves. Removing deadwood, without the presence of healthy buds, is more easily recognized

during this time. Dormant pruning reduces the likelihood of damage caused by insects and diseases. Pruning cuts/wounds will close over or compartmentalize sooner when the plant awakens in the spring. Trees and plants do not heal with regenerative cell tissue, they actually wall off or compartmentalize wounds and keep growing.

When the unfortunate occasion occurs and a tree must be removed consider scheduling during the winter months when access into your landscape is easier. Ground conditions are less impacted with colder temperatures and less rainfall. Landscape beds are less active with perennials and flowers now dormant. Cleanup is easier without the abundance of leaves. Most tree services often offer off-season pricing. Getting the heavy tree work out of the way during the winter months open up the opportunity for spring time planting.

Regardless of the season, always follow good pruning guidelines and use clean sharp tools to avoid tearing or crushing the plant stem. So, bundle up and head out into the garden and enjoy winter's beauty.

# **Radnor Township Trail Projects**

It takes an incredible amount of negotiating, perseverance, and funding to bring a trail project to completion. Our hats off to Radnor Township Engineer, Steve Norcini and his department, Township Staff, past and present Board of Commissioners, all of the trail consultants, contractors, and designers who have focused on the completion of these projects.

#### **TAP Trail (Transportation Alternatives Program):**

This series of trails provide a 5-mile north/south circuit route through almost all of the Township with connectivity to Haverford Township, creating a nearly 7.6-mile on/off-road bicycle and pedestrian route. A portion of the TAP trail connects the Radnor Trail at Radnor Chester Road with Radnor High School and the Radnor SEPTA Train Station (mostly on road and sidewalk connectors). These spurs are part of the greater Greenways Open Space Plan, which enhance pedestrian and bicycle useability, improve access to public transportation, create trails that serve a transportation purpose, offer a safe walk to school route, and promote safety and mobility in our community. This project is near completion. Currently, the Township is developing a punch list for the remaining actions, the most visible of which is the planting of the remaining trees, which will occur November. Consultant: Simone Collins Landscape Architects





#### Radnor Trail Eastern Extension:

The trail extension work that is currently underway, will extend east of Radnor-Chester Rd. to PennDOT's Interstate 476 limited access right-of-way and Martha Browns Woods. Once complete the trail extension will be a key segment of the future 22-mile-long Valley Forge to Heinz Refuge Trail. Although trail design has largely been completed, the Township must first address the remediation of arsenic which was found at the site during the design process. *Consultants: Campbell Thomas & Co* 

#### Harford Park Trail:

A multi-use trail that connects Radnor SEPTA Train Station, Radnor Memorial Park and Radnor Elementary School, paralleling the corporate center to Harford Park / Creutzburg Center. The project is complete, including the installation of fencing to provide additional privacy for neighboring residences. *Consultants: Meliora Design, LLC* 

#### • Darby Paoli Multi-Use Trail:

This proposed trail will connect the Willows Park, Skunk Hollow, Saw Mill Park and 71 acres of former Ardrossan Estate. The project has been separated into various segments, some of which are designed. The Township is determining the best approach to implement the project, including the application of grant funding. *Consultants: Natural Lands, Meliora Design, LLC and McMahon Associates* 

Left: TAP Trail along Radnor Chester Road that connects to the Radnor Trail Right: TAP Trail along King of Prussia Road and Radnor High School



#### FINDING THE MOTHER TREE BOOK REVIEW

In *Finding the Mother Tree*, Suzanne Simard demonstrates how storytelling can ignite something science alone cannot. The author takes us through her career in the forests of North America, working on plantations to identify links between crop yields, herbicide use and species diversity. In carrying out these initial studies, she goes on to discover that trees communicate underground through a complex web of fungi, and at the centre of this web, an individual known as the "mother tree" helps to coordinate a powerful network that heals, feeds and sustains the other members of the forest. This book has, at its centre, a simple tale of a woman who follows her intuition, views compassion as a strength, and dares to see the world differently. It is also a reminder to listen to our wilder selves, and to remember, with humility, how little we know of the complexities of the natural world. Excerpt By Tiffany Francis-Baker for *The Guardian* (May 2021)

# Canopy Loss and the Crucial Need for its Replacement by Ken LeRoy

Every day log trucks roll along the streets of our community loaded with massive tree trunks. Every day we lose canopy cover in our township as our mature trees decline, become hazardous, and require removal. While the Spotted Lantern Fly garners our attention, Emerald Ash Borers (EAB) are burrowing under Ash tree bark and killing untreated Ash trees in North America. Oak trees, especially Pin and Red Oaks, have been declining for the past thirty years due to a bacterial infection known as Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS). Our mature canopy trees are declining and dying due to these and other factors.



Logs at the Yard

We were so concerned about this that we initiated, and help fund, a Tree Canopy Conference At Haverford College in cooperation with the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania to alert our communities and to encourage tree planting to help replenish the Canopy. "Remove a tree – plant a tree, or trees"

Consider replacing large shade trees with trees that will grow large enough to provide shade and other ecological benefits that large trees offer. Replant the dead Ash trees with Kentucky Coffee trees that have a similar form to Ash. Replant the dying Pin Oaks with Willow, White, and Swamp White Oak trees that really perform in the landscape.

Replant with trees that will be our future canopy cover: Maples, both Red and Sugar; London Planetrees; disease resistant American Elms; Tulip-trees; Beech trees; Blackgums; Sweetgums. Plant for diversity and performance.

Investing in tree planting pays dividends over time as that 2" diameter tree increases in girth, spread, and height to become a contributing member of our community tree canopy.

# Native Plant Focus: Rose Milkweed for Your Garden by Christina Peters

Nature-minded people know that the monarch butterfly needs our help, and that it relies exclusively on milkweed to feed its caterpillars. But what milkweed to plant? Common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, is great if you have a lot of wild space. But it's an aggressive spreader, grows 3-6 feet tall (and sometimes to 8), and requires full sun. Tropical milkweed, *Asclepias curassavica*, is a striking plant that's easy to find in nurseries. It's not native to our region, though, and there's evidence that it interferes with the monarch's migration patterns, so it may be doing more harm than good in local gardens.

I've had great luck with rose (also called swamp) milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, with its showy and fragrant deep pink or white flowers. Despite its common name, it does not require a wetland – just steady moisture during the growing season. It grows in clumps with relatively shallow roots, so it won't spread in the way common milkweed does. It is not as tall as common milkweed, ranging from 2-4 feet, and can be cut back in June to keep its height lower. It tolerates shadier sites as well. It's also easier to find in nurseries than it used to be!

If you plant rose milkweed for the monarchs, remember that success means they're getting eaten. That means plant several specimens together for those hungry, hungry caterpillars. A companion planting like a native aster or goldenrod nearby will camouflage naked stems. Good luck!



Monarch butterfly on Rose Milkweed

For more, visit sites like Project Milkweed: <u>xerces.org/milkweed</u> and Twelve Native Milkweeds for Monarchs, The National Wildlife Federation Blog: <u>blog.nwf.org/2015/02/twelve-native-milkweeds-for-monarchs/</u>

# Help Winter Wildlife and Give Yourself a Break from Fall Yard Work! by Lorna Atkinson

Fall is the time of leaf clearing and tidying our yards, but taking a break from being too tidy can help our local wildlife. Doug Tallamy, in his book *Nature's Best Hope*, describes how most caterpillars do not pupate on their host plants, but drop to the ground in the fallen leaves, and he advises us to "treasure our leaf litter". Leaf litter can be used as a mulch on your flowerbeds, allowing the caterpillars to pupate and creating a foraging habitat for birds in winter. Frogs, salamanders, and other invertebrates also like to overwinter among damp leaves.

Leaving seed heads, and refraining from cutting back dead plants in your borders until the spring, provides food and shelter for birds and other insects and animals. All kinds of insects will crawl inside dry plant stems left standing in the garden. Our yards can be important wildlife habitats, and by resisting the urge to be tidy, we create spaces for wildlife to shelter and overwinter, making our yards more interesting for us to enjoy in the process!

Going beyond leaving dead plants and piles of leaves, think about building a log pile or a stack of bricks for insects and bees, and have fun creating winter homes for wildlife in your yard. You'll be glad you did when the spring comes!

Top: Leaf litter shelters moths and butterflies until the adults can emerge Bottom: New York Ironweed seed heads provide winter food for birds





# Fungi Are Talking by Laura Luker

When walking in the woods, look down – there is a lot of communicating going on. Did you ever know that fungi have a way of communicating with each other as well as other organisms around them? Finding a mushroom is like finding a little treasure or a gift – just for you. Once you start looking for these hidden beauties you will find others. It becomes somewhat addicting.

In Pennsylvania, mushrooms are plentiful especially in late Summer and Fall. They come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors. Look at their caps, stalks, and gills. Beyond their strange beauty, they have many functions. Fungi decompose the dead, provide food, and more interestingly, communicate with organisms below.

What we see on the surface is the fruit or the mushroom. The fungus is the entire organism. Below the soil is a network of threads or roots called mycelium. The mycelium spread throughout the wood's floor

connecting plants, transferring water, carbon, nitrogen, and other nutrients and minerals. This network of fiber optics has come to be known as the 'wood-wide web' or 'common mycorrhizal networks' (CMN). The mycorrhizal network help plants and trees communicate when there is disease, harming, and even competition. Plants release chemicals through these networks to combat plants that are under attack by an invader. Some plants or trees can show favoritism, by donating through these fibers more nutrients and water to others in need. We tend to view nature as the ultimate nurturer, but under the surface, it can be both competitive and harmonious.

Fungi are more intelligent and beneficial than we humans are aware of. So next time you are walking in the woods, remember that you are a guest, go slow, look low and make a connection with the fungi in your environment.







Orange mycena Red chanterelle Ruby bolete

# **Welcome, New Board Members**



#### Tara Humenik

Tara Humenik moved to Bryn Mawr in 2012 from South Jersey. She is the proud mother of two daughters, Isabelle and Ava. Tara and her girls love to walk the numerous trails in Radnor Township with their favorite being Skunk Hollow Trail. In her spare time, Tara enjoys playing tennis, paddle, needlepointing and reading. She is a Member at Large in the Holy Child Parents' Auxiliary, library coordinator at Holy Child, home room parent and a Girl Scout Troop Leader. Tara is a former VP in Human Resources and earned her Masters Degree from Rutgers University.



#### Jonathan McEvoy

Jon joined the Radnor Conservancy Board in April of 2021 and is a member of the finance committee. Jon and his family live in Wayne. He is married to Susan (Hirtle) and they have two daughters, Eva (8) and Georgia (5). Jon works in Investment Management at Morgan Stanley. He has a B.A. in political science from Dickinson College and a M.B.A in finance from Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management.



#### **Kathryn Murphy**

Kathryn Beaumont Murphy is counsel at Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr, where she is co-chair of the firm's K-12 Schools Practice Group and a member of the Higher Education Practice Group. Kathryn grew up in Summit, N.J., and is a graduate of Princeton University, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and Boston College Law School. She, her husband, and two children, ages 13 and 11, moved to Wayne from the Boston area in 2017. She enjoys hiking in the Willows, weekend walks through Chanticleer, cooking, reading, and the family's new Cavapoo (quarantine) puppy.



#### Marla Neeson

Since moving to Radnor Marla has been involved both formally and informally with various community organizations – with particular passions being Environment/Conservation and Education. Marla comes from an agricultural background, having primarily grown up in the Midwest. Her love of nature is a deep family value going back generations, nurtured on trips to the family farm, hiking/camping trips throughout my life, and gardening and canning with her grandmother as a young child. At home in Wayne you'll frequently find her in the yard planting, pruning, transplanting, and attacking the never ending weeding!



#### Tyler Ridgeway

Tyler is the director of Kreischer Miller's Human Capital Resources group, which is frequently recognized as a leading retained search firm for privately- held companies in the Greater Philadelphia region. Tyler joined Kreischer Miller in 2001. Prior to working for Kreischer Miller, Tyler was an associate attorney with a local law firm specializing in business law, litigation, estate planning, and tax, with a concentration in sports management. B.S. – Labor & Industrial Relations, Pennsylvania State University and J.D. – Villanova University School of Law

#### ONCE UPON A PINE TREE **BOOK REVIEW**



Once Upon A Pine Tree By Lynne Samson (local author). A delightful story about the adventures of pine trees as they go through the holidays with families and then to the compost heap where they have their own party, finally dissolving into the earth re-emerging as soil and flowers. A hopeful story with an environmental message from the perspective of a tree. 100% of proceeds goes to tree planting efforts.

# **Regulations on Tree Removal** in Radnor Township

- No more than five (5) trees can be removed during a calendar year under 30" diameter at breast height (DBH) without a clearing permit and appearing before the STC.
- No tree 30" or greater (Heritage Tree) can be removed without a clearing permit and appearing before the STC.
- If any Heritage Tree is deemed hazardous a Hazardous Tree Removal Form shall be submitted from a state licensed arborist with the proper documentation (i.e. photos of hazardous conditions) for determination and approval of its removal.
- Tree companies are required to be registered with the Township.
- No trees in a commercial district can be removed without first obtaining a clearing permit and appearing before the STC.
- All subdivision, land development and grading projects require Clearing Permits and review by the STC.



## Special thanks to ALL of our community partners.

Please consider Radnor Conservancy in your year-end giving plans. Your donation is fully tax deductible.

# **Become a MEMBER TODAY!**

Name: Address: \_\_\_\_

Email (please):

### **Membership Levels**

☐ Eco Pups - \$20.00 ☐ Trailblazer - \$250.00 ☐ Young Friend (30 and younger) - \$40.00 ☐ Conservationist - \$500.00 ☐ Individual - \$75.00 ☐ Steward - \$1000+  $\square$  Family - \$125.00  $\square$  Memorial Gift or Honor Someone Special (any amount) - \$ City, State and Zip:

☐ Please let us know if you are interested in upcoming programs and events.

Please make checks payable to Radnor Conservancy and mail this form to Radnor Conservancy, P.O. Box 48, Wayne, PA 19087 or visit www.radnorconservancy.org to join online.

Radnor Conservancy is a 501(c)3 corporation. Your donation is fully tax deductible. The official registration and financial information of Radnor Conservancy may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. EIN #81-0605339