

# Demarest Nature News



Demarest Nature Center Association  
Box 41, Demarest, N.J., 07627

www.demarestnaturecenter.org  
Summer 2022 Vol. 48, No. 2

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is a great time to visit the Demarest Nature Center! It is full of natural beauty. The trees are now in full bloom, and our green Earth has revealed its majesty. The birds are singing, the leaves are growing, and the animals are foraging. The Nature Center has remained open throughout the pandemic, and we encourage you to explore the trails and the nature. We recently had our Canoe Day, Birdhouse Building Workshop, and also our inaugural Birdwatching event in the forest. We have some exciting events coming up:

- There was a free **Birdwatching event** on June 4th at 9:00AM. This guided walk was led by the Bergen County Audubon Society.
- We are also starting a new program called **Nature & Ecology Lecture Series**. Our first event is currently being planned for early June in the Demarest Train Station, featuring a talk about trees. Check out website for more details for this free event.

We provide a refuge for nature, and for the community. We are financed by member dues and events we put on. We are all volunteers, and we rely on your financial support to maintain the trails, keep the birdfeeders stocked, support nature programs for the community, etc. Please consider supporting these efforts. You can donate through the envelope that is attached in this semi-annual newsletter, or also by contacting us directly.

See you on the trails, *Stephen Tillack, President, Demarest Nature Center*

## THE TULIP TREE

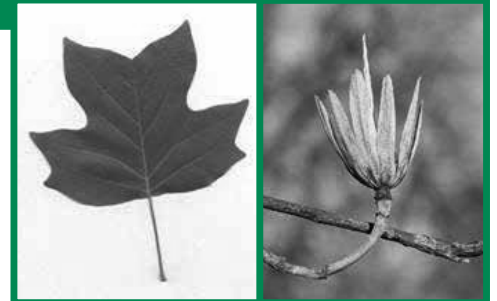
The poet Walt Whitman called the tulip tree “the Apollo of the woods.” A member of the Magnolia family, *Liriodendron tulipifera* is one of the tallest native hardwood trees in North America. Attaining heights of well over 100 feet, the tree is often identifiable by its straight trunk, often clear of branches two-thirds of the way up. The tulip tree is harvested for the wood commonly known as poplar (while also known as yellow-poplar, the tulip tree bears no relation to the true poplars, such as the cottonwoods, which are also found in our nature center). The long, branchless trunk is desirable in woodworking, as it provides an abundance of boards that are “clear,” or free of knots. Poplar wood is commonly used in woodworking and light construction (cabinetry and furniture making) due to its easy workability, smooth grain, and tendency to take paint well. The wood is also commonly used to make plywood and paper pulp.

Old-growth tulip trees can measure over four feet across and used to be known as “canoe wood,” as Native Americans would hollow out the large boles (trunks) to make dugout canoes.

The tree gets its name from the yellow/orange tulip-like flowers that are on show in late April/early May. The flowers can be difficult to appreciate on larger trees as they are high up and obscured by the large leaves. The four-lobed leaves are unmistakable. After the tree sheds its seeds in the fall, the seed capsules persist through winter. By looking high up, one can see the candelabra-like seed capsules that make for instant identification on the otherwise barren limbs.

Keep an eye out for this magnificent tree that is often overlooked but full of beauty and utility.

– Jeff Shaari, Friend of the Nature Center



**Your membership dollars allow us to continue to give back to the community and preserve and protect DNC's 55 acres of meadows, forests and wetlands.**

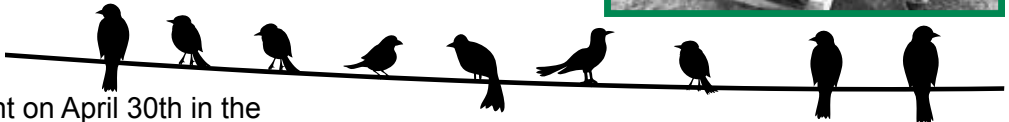
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## BIRDHOUSE & BIRDFEEDER BUILDING DAY

On April 23rd, we had our annual workshop on how to build birdhouses and birdfeeders at Wakelee Field. Kids learned how to use hammers to assemble the kits of their choosing. The diameter of the small hole determines which bird is likely to nest in the birdhouse. Larger holes are suitable for larger birds such as Blue Jays, and smaller holes are suitable for finches, goldfinches, or sparrows, among others. The kids will be able to watch the birds build a nest, hatch the young, and feed the young until they are ready to leave the nest. It was a great time for the whole family! – Steve Chen, *Trustee*



## BIRDWATCHING PROGRAM



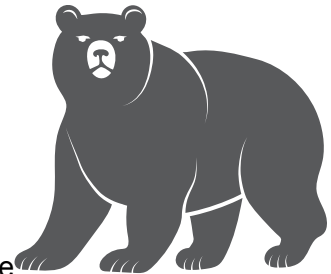
We had our inaugural birdwatching event on April 30th in the Demarest Nature Center. The birdwatching program was inspired by abundance of birds seen at the Demarest Nature Center during the National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Count in December 2021. Belted Kingfisher, two Pileated Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, and a Hairy Woodpecker were seen out and about despite cold winter weather. To encourage further study and appreciation of the diversity of birds present in our Demarest Nature Center, we launched a new birdwatching series to coincide with spring and fall bird migratory seasons. Please check our website under news and events for further details. – Jin Kupperman, *Trustee*



## BEAR SIGHTING

There was a recent bear sighting in the area. Please keep in mind that bears are generally timid, nonaggressive, and afraid of people. If you see a bear in a residential area;

- Most bears are just passing through. Do nothing.
- Treasure the moment.
- Take a picture. Most people are thrilled to see one.
- Don't feed the bear!
- Don't corner the bear.
- To discourage them; you can use basic aversive conditioning techniques. Start intense and vary your tactics.
- Examples of basic aversive conditioning: Wave your arms, open an umbrella, stomp your feet, yell, use air horns, shake coins in a tin can, banging pots and pans, turn on garden hose, blow whistles, make loud noises, etc. Be creative.



## FAWN RESCUE

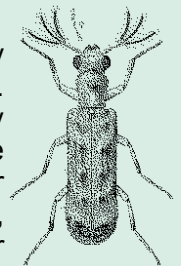
This fawn was rescued and reunited with mom. An animal's best chance for survival is with mom.

– Mark Nagelhout  
*Trustee & Certified Animal Control Officer*

Black bears are important and help the environment. Black bears eat the larvae of insects, such as Eastern Tent caterpillars that defoliate ornamental trees. Bear scat is a natural fertilizer. Their scat also contains the seeds from the fruits and plants they eat. These seeds help regenerate the forest understory. Black bears help keep the forests continually growing with new oxygen -cleaning plant life, which is vital for forest health.

## INVASIVE INSECTS WILL KILL 1.4 MILLION URBAN TREES BY 2050

Over the next 30 years, invasive insects will kill 1.4 million urban trees in the United States, a new study finds. Wood-boring species like emerald ash borer have the most invasive style of feeding on trees. Wood-boring species feed on the parts of trees responsible for supplying nutrients, and they can effectively cut off a tree's 'circulation' in a process known as girdling. This is much more deadly than feeding on the leaves of a tree, which trees can tolerate even in really high amounts without much mortality. Another thing that increases the risk of an invasive insect is whether it feeds on common tree species like oaks, maples, or ash trees. Because there are so many of these trees, those insects can have a much larger impact. <https://www.treehugger.com/invasive-insects-kill-million-trees-2050-5271729>



## HOW TO COMPOST AT HOME

There are many different ways to make a compost pile; we have provided the following for general reference. Helpful tools include pitchforks, square-point shovels or machetes, and water hoses with a spray head. Regular mixing or turning of the compost and some water will help maintain the compost.



### BACKYARD COMPOSTING

- Select a dry, shady spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.
- Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.
- Moisten dry materials as they are added.
- Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
- Optional: Cover top of compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years.

### BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

- Enriches soil, helping retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Encourages the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material.
- Reduces methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.

## GROUNDHOGS BENEFIT OUR ECOSYSTEM



It is so rewarding to help rehabilitate injured and orphaned wildlife. While working with wildlife you are provided an intimate and close up look into their lives. It is important to advocate on their behalf.

Groundhogs provide benefits to the ecosystem. When groundhogs dig, they help aerate soil. Roots, like all other parts of the plant, have to respire, taking in oxygen and emitting carbon dioxide. In unturned soil, roots deplete their limited oxygen while CO2 accumulates, making it hard for them to breathe.

When groundhogs dig their burrows, they expose deep, compacted soil to the atmosphere, feeding them oxygen that sustains roots. As long as the tunnels remain, oxygen will keep coming into the soil and helping plants.

A groundhog's burrowing also helps nutrients mix into the soil. Every year organic matter accumulates on top of the soil. This material is full of carbohydrates that organisms such as worms and mites need to survive. At the same time, other nutrients like iron, calcium and phosphorus gradually get leached from the topsoil as rainwater pulls them deeper. When a groundhog digs its burrow, it delivers organic matter deeper, providing food for microorganisms, and brings minerals to the surface—where plants reuse them.

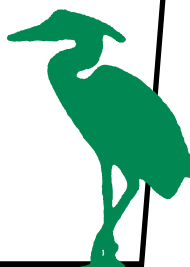
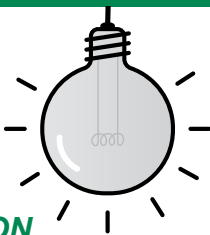
Groundhogs provide food for coyotes, foxes, hawks, and eagles. Their burrows give shelter to amphibians, reptiles, smaller rodents, and even larger animals such as foxes.

Kim Nagelhout – *Trustee*

## DID YOU KNOW?

### SOME FUN FACTS ABOUT OUR MASCOT, THE GREAT BLUE HERON.

- Great Blue Herons look enormous in flight, with a six-foot wingspan.
- Both parents take turns incubating the eggs for 4 weeks.
- In flight, a Great Blue Heron usually holds its head close to its body with the neck bent.
- The young can first fly at about 60 days old.



## THANK YOU DEMAREST DPW

The Demarest DPW helped the Nature Center move one of our trail signs so it was not lost to erosion.





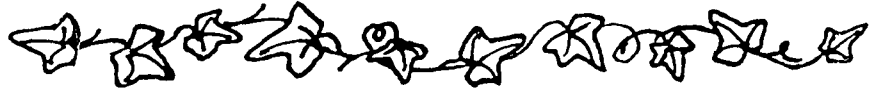
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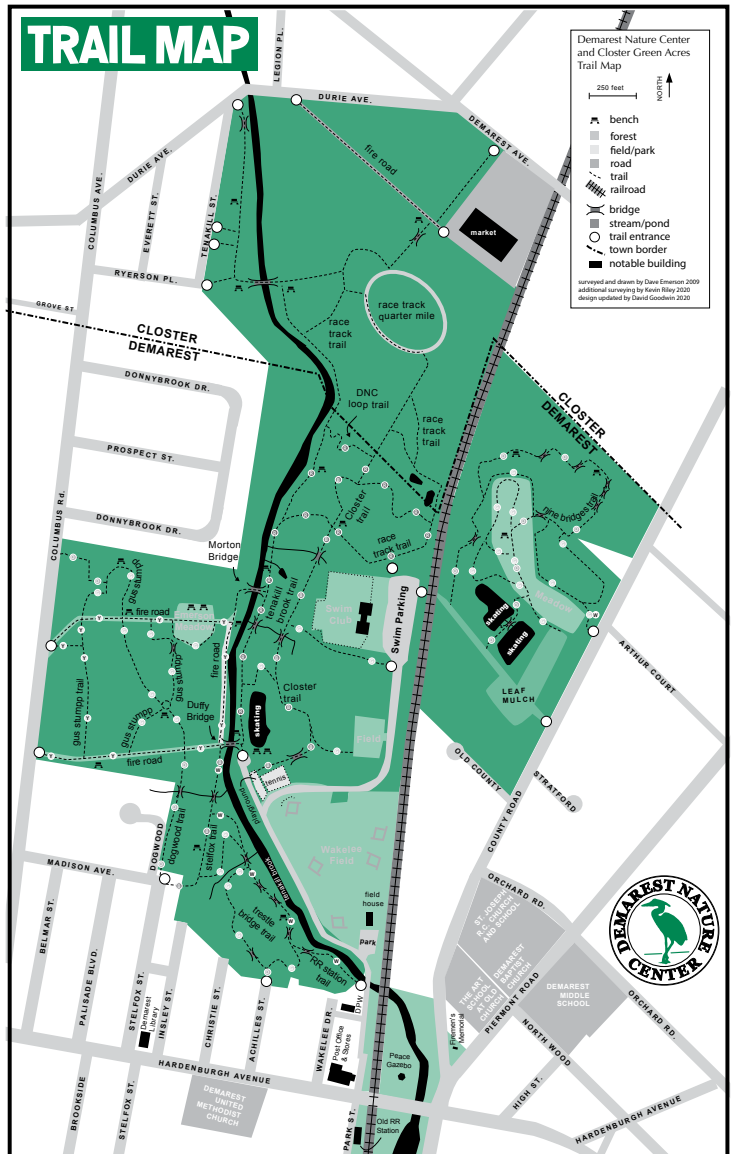
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**breadwinner**

carrier of past trials,  
giver of human necessity,  
to grow with the generations you feed.  
surplus of thousands,  
ancestor of time and tribulations,  
weighted with the roots that heed.  
betrayal of siblings and betrayal of cousins,  
sought against each other by birth.  
to praise something over the other,  
and be guilted towards the common greed.  
I envy your evolution and I resent our reversion.

Irene Lourbas - *Trustee*



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**NATURE WALK &  
CLEANUP DAY 2022**

What a time! Another successful Nature Walk and Cleanup Day! The DNC was thriving with about 30 eager participants to the guided Nature Walk. Our guide, Marc Gussen, led a delightful, entertaining and educational walk through the DNC trails. Marc discussed the different types of trees and plants. He covered such topics as: invasive species, and why water accumulating in various areas is beneficial. It was a little cold and it started to rain. Yet it was a great time.

After the Nature walk was clean up time. The volunteers grabbed bags and tongs and headed to different section of the DNC to pick up trash and debris. Adults and kids alike enjoyed contributing to the cleanliness of the woods. Different volunteers brought back heavy bags full of trash, including remaining wooden pieces of an old sign, paper, plastics, and metals of different kinds. All was brought to the main trash pile with big smiles and fun stories of how and where those items were found.

Todd Smith - *Trustee*

[www.demarestnaturecenter.org](http://www.demarestnaturecenter.org)

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**We are a 501(c)3!** There is no greater feeling than supporting a worthy organization. The Demarest Nature is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. This means that your donations are tax deductible. Your donations support all of our educational programs, scholarships, events and the continued preservation of our green space. Consider a gift to the Demarest Nature Center as an investment in the future of our community. Of course, it goes without saying, or with saying in this case, that we are not offering tax advice by the above statement. Contact any of our trustees if you would like more info.