

Demarest Nature News



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

www.demarestnaturecenter.org
Winter 2021 Vol. 48, No. 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to everyone who made Oktoberfest a big success this year, whether you volunteered, ate, shopped for crafts, canoed, built a bird feeder, or decorated a wood fairy. We had a great time and it sure seemed that you did too. The Demarest Nature Center is an all-volunteer organization that depends on the support of you, our fellow residents. We maintain the trails, sponsor nature activities in the schools, give a college scholarship, stage a photo contest, and more.

You help us by spending money at Oktoberfest and by your donations. You can put a check into the enclosed dues envelope or by going to this link on our website: <https://www.demarestnaturecenter.org/membership-donations/>.

Are you looking for opportunities to spend more time in nature, to work with friendly people, and to give back to your community? Consider becoming a member of our board of trustees. We will be electing members at our annual organizational meeting, which is open to all and will be held on Thursday, Jan. 13, at 7:30 p.m., either in person or by Zoom. (Haven't decided which yet.) To learn more, write to me at info@demarestnaturecenter.org.

The Demarest Nature Center is a magical place under fresh snow. Once you finish clearing your driveway after the next storm, head over to our trails and see for yourself. Take pictures for the photo contest!

See you on the trails, *Peter Coy, President*



LEAVE THE LEAVES

Besides providing animals with essential food and shelter, leaf litter acts as a natural mulch and insulator to fertilize, nourish and protect plants. As leaves decompose, by way of bacterial and fungal action, over time they slowly release nutrients into the forest soils. Fallen leaves are a critical nutrient source that preps the soil for future growth. The accumulated detritus also protects the forest floor from erosion by dispersing the effects of running water. Many wildlife species use the leaf layer as their primary habitat including salamanders, chipmunks, wood frogs, box turtles, toads, shrews, earthworms, millipedes, and thousands of insects species. If you remove all of your fallen leaves, there will be fewer of these insects in and around your yard and fewer birds too.

SOCCER NETS AND WILDLIFE

Sadly soccer nets can be deadly to wildlife. There is a simple solution to help prevent this. We hope our members can help spread the word. Please roll up the soccer nets when they are not in use. They can easily be rolled up and fastened with Velcro™ strips or ties to the top bar. It will prevent unnecessary wildlife suffering. We ask anyone who reads this to please be an advocate and be pro-active not only by spreading the word, but by participating. Convince your town to roll up all soccer nets at the end of the day, or better yet pick a soccer park near you and be the person to do the job at the end of each day. Thank you for your compassion.



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.

NATURE OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

From the time they are born deer face a number of obstacles in surviving outside hunting, ranging from habitat conditions, predators, off-leash dogs, weather extremes, collisions with vehicles, fighting, stress from the rut and disease. Deer are amazing fellow sentient beings that are often misunderstood. There are so many beautiful moments that you can experience from a distance in the presence of deer, for example, when a buck is rubbing his antlers on a tree. It's a moment you can experience in nature outside of books or a classroom. Bucks rub their antlers on trees to mark their territory, show their dominance, work off aggression, and intimidate other bucks. Buck rubs also serve as a communication signpost. Deer are known to be messengers.

Bucks go through a cycle of growing antlers, shedding the velvety coating on their antlers and then shedding their antlers on a yearly basis.

This is a beautiful part of nature that we are lucky to witness. I enjoy the moments out studying deer and learning more about their world. The more you know the better advocate you can be. Deer have touched my life in so many unforgettable ways.

Sadly, deer are often blamed for destroying forests/

trees. There are many factors that affect our forests like insect damage, acid rain, forest fragmentation, pollutants, disease, loss of soil fertility, animal browsing, invasive and other competing plant species, parasitic organisms, climatic and weather extremes, and over-development. The most dangerous, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), are insects and diseases. Also certain plant species are shaded out as trees mature and the forest canopy closes. Later successional stages are, by their very nature, less diverse.

For some people, they may want a solution to protect their trees from rubbing. The best way to protect your tree is to physically block off deer with a fence or tree guard. Plastic or mesh tree guards are a quick fix. They wrap right around your tree's trunk and prevent deer from rubbing up against the bark. Also you can wrap your tree loosely in chicken wire or burlap.

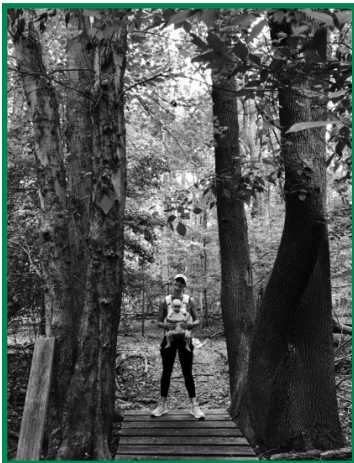
It's easy to coexist and share this world with wildlife.

Kim Nagelhout, *Trustee*



2021 JOHN C. GOODWIN PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

GRAND PRIZE



"Nature Heals Through Pandemic"
Maureen Bennett-O'Connor

FIRST PLACE/ADULT



"The Shell of Life"
Richard Harris

BENEFITS OF NATURE

I love everything about deer, even their poop. Some people complain about deer droppings. Many don't realize the ways you can use deer poop to benefit your yard. The old saying is you are what you eat. Deer eat plants and grass, so feces can be put into flower gardens or compost, recycling the nutrients. Deer droppings consist of a high amount of nitrogen content, and when these droppings fall on the grass, they supply a considerable amount of nitrogen to the grass. This will considerably improve the health of your plants.

Deer poop can also be turned into manure and used as a fertilizer. Why waste money on buying expensive manure and fertilizer, when you can easily make your own? Using deer poop as fertilizer has been around for quite a while. Simply letting the droppings sit in your yard is going to act as a source of nourishment for the grass and the plants, but make sure it's not all concentrated in one area. When gardening most people wear gloves, especially if there is poison ivy around. If you do choose to handle deer droppings to use in your lawn or beds, always wear gloves. Wash and disinfect all tools you use to handle it, and wash your hands thoroughly when finished.

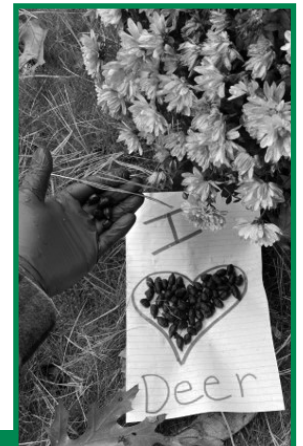
We can also look at this as a way to be outside in nature. Cleaning or raking up deer poop can be a good source of exercise and lead towards a healthy mind and body. Cleaning up deer poop is similar to cleaning up dog poop. If you don't have a dog look at it as shoveling snow. Property maintenance is necessary throughout the year. This includes mowing the lawn, cleaning up some leaves, shoveling snow, and for some cleaning up deer poop. Deer poop can easily be cleaned up with a rake and shovel and then disposed in a garbage can.

Deer are just giving us a great excuse to go outside and get some exercise. We can also be one with nature.

It seems trivial to complain about deer poop when people are fighting cancer, children are being bullied, pets being neglected and wildlife being brutally murdered for a trophy - the thrill of the kill.

The human race needs to be better and more understanding.

Kim Nagelhout,
Trustee



VOLUNTEERING AT THE NATURE CENTER

Volunteers are just ordinary people with extraordinary hearts. They offer the gift of their time to teach, to listen, to help, to inspire, to build, to grow, to learn. They expect no pay, yet the value of their work knows no limit. They've known the unexpected joy of a simple hug. They've planted tiny seeds of love in countless lives. Volunteers are just ordinary people who reach out and take a hand and together make a difference that lasts a lifetime.

Connor LaRaia from Boy Scout Troop 1345 in Dumont completed his Eagle project at the Demarest Nature Center by laying metal lath non-slip surfaces on all the bridges and boardwalks that needed them. This consisted of 3183 feet of lath (10½ football fields length). With the help of fellow scouts and Troop leaders he led the project by cutting the lath to size, fastening it to the wood planks using 33,000 staples over 6 weekends. He was able to raise the \$2,100 for this project by having a carwash and by utilizing a GoFundMe page. Connor hopes that the improvements will make a trip to the Nature Center more enjoyable and safer for the visitors.



HELPING DARK-EYED JUNCOS THIS WINTER

Dark-eyed juncos are one of the most abundant forest birds of North America. These creatures have the amazing ability to survive our winters by feeding on plants that offer a banquet of seeds, berries and nuts. You may spot dark-eyed juncos by walking around open, partially wooded areas with understory for cover.



Sadly, when a mantle of snow blankets the landscape, conditions can become harsh even for juncos. Seeds and berries covered with ice and snow prevent juncos and other birds from eating. We can help juncos and other birds endure our cold winter months by making sure our landscapes include lots of plants that provide food and cover. We can also set out a bird feeder and build sheltering brush piles.

Don't forget to check our website under events for the next birdhouse and bird feeder building day fundraiser. www.demarestnaturecenter.org

THE JUMP ON INVASIVE WORMS

Invasive bugs and plants get a lot of attention. Most of us have seen or heard about the spotted lantern fly, bamboo, stink bugs, knotweed among others. We don't typically pay attention to the things we don't see however. This includes the invasive "jumping worm" who spends a lot of time out of sight below the surface.

Jumping worms are an invasive species native to Asia. They have been found in over thirty states including NJ.

These exotics devour organic matter more rapidly than their European counterparts, stripping the forest of the layer critical for seedlings and wildflowers. Jumping worms grow twice as fast, reproduce more quickly, and can infest soils at high densities. In areas of heavy infestation, native plants, soil invertebrates, salamanders, birds, and other animals may decline. Jumping worms can severely damage roots of plants in forests, nurseries, gardens, and turf. By disturbing the soil, jumping worms help facilitate the spread of invasive species and interfere with natural nutrient cycling. You can tell the difference between a jumping worm and a less destructive European earthworm by examining the worm's collar. Jumping worms have a collar that is milky-white, relatively close to the head, and flush with their bodies.

Here's how you can help prevent their spread:

Look for dark soil that looks like coffee grounds.

Check your soil, compost, tools, boots, and plant roots.

HALLOWEEN PARADE

The Demarest Nature Center participated in the annual town Halloween Parade/Fall Festival. The Demarest Nature Center President, Peter Coy, was in costume and Sophie Borys, age 5, of Demarest got creative with our nature coloring sheets. It was a fun day and we enjoyed working with the Demarest Recreation Committee. We will be back again next year.



Clean everything of worms and egg casings before transporting.

Check for jumping worms or egg casings when buying soil, compost, or plants.

The NJ Forest Service is asking individuals who find a jumping worm or who see signs of a Jumping Worm invasion to send pictures to its forest health email at foresthealth@DEP.nj.gov.

Mark Nagelhout, *Trustee*



DEMAREST NATURE CENTER ASSN.

Borough of Demarest

P.O. Box 41

Demarest, N.J. 07627

www.DemarestNatureCenter.org

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Paramus, NJ
07652
Permit No. 230

ECRWSS

POSTAL PATRON

DEMAREST, N.J. 07627



THE CRAFT SHOW AT OKTOBERFEST 2021

Many thanks to all the volunteers, vendors and shoppers for making our fundraiser a success.



Board of Trustees

Peter Coy
President

Todd Smith
Vice President

Scott Lasky
Treasurer

Laura Nelson
Recording Secretary

Teddy Lourbas
Oktoberfest Crafter Relations

Kim Nagelhout
*Newsletter Editor & Creator of
Event Flyers*

Mark Nagelhout
Website Management

Sadettin Tuysuzoglu
Database Management

Richard Jaretsky
Steve Chen

Patricia Chen
Venecia Smith

Steve Tillack

Theodore Alevrontas

Irene Lourbas

BOY SCOUT TROOPS

In September, Boy Scout Troop 1345 worked on a Scouting project in the Demarest Nature Center.

Connor LaRaia was the leader on this project.



Simeon Correa, a Boy Scout from Troop 63, was a helpful volunteer who enjoyed making cotton candy at Oktoberfest.

Volunteers help make our world a better place.



JANUARY AND FEBRUARY: Ice skating parties as conditions permit.
To be on our email notification list, write to info@demarestnaturecenter.com.

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.

www.demarestnaturecenter.org • email: info@demarestnaturecenter.org