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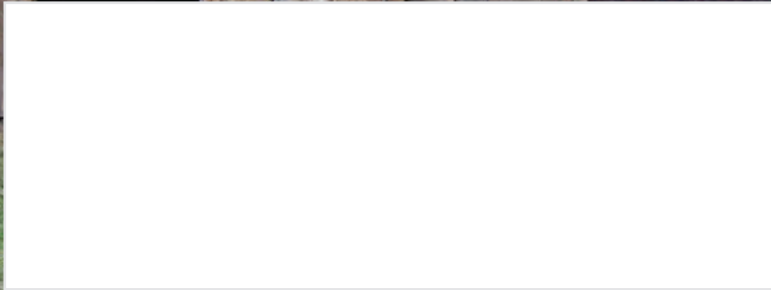
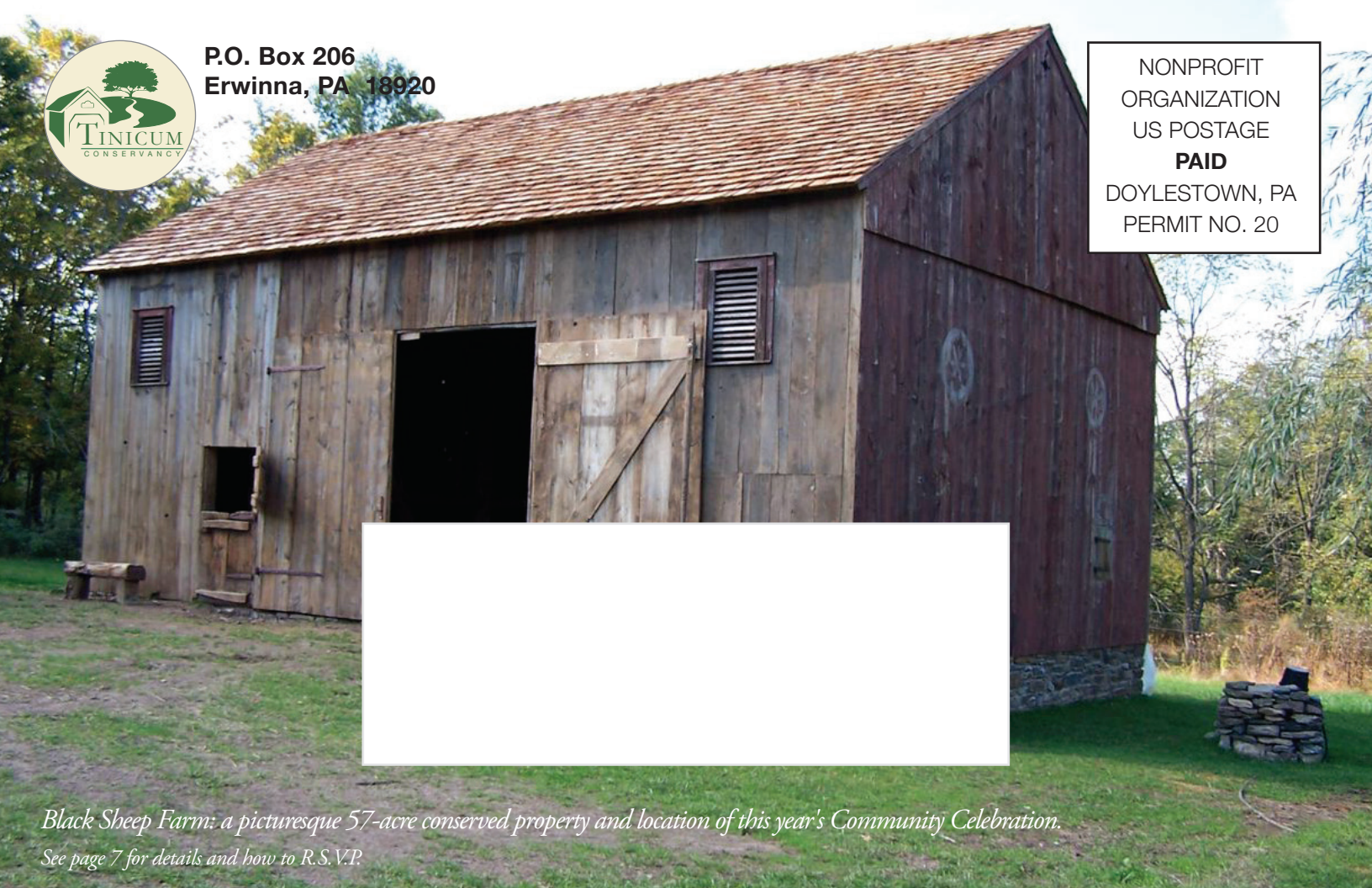
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# COMMON GROUND

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

*"Protecting our rural character and natural resources through community-based land conservation."*



*Black Sheep Farm: a picturesque 57-acre conserved property and location of this year's Community Celebration.  
See page 7 for details and how to R.S.V.P.*



## Ways to Make a Difference

### Leave a Legacy, Plan a Gift.

When you include the Conservancy in your estate plans, you help secure the future of our region's natural resources and rural character for future generations. Planning today extends your impact beyond your lifetime.

**Get Involved — Volunteer!** Tincum Conservancy would not exist without its volunteers. We need help with mailings, research, event planning, and more! If you prefer the outdoors, we need folks to take part in our River Road cleanups and as volunteer property monitors.

*Please contact Tincum Conservancy at (610) 294-1077 or email MFellk@tincumconservancy.org for questions and more information.*

### Double Your Impact with an Employer Matching Gift.

Maximize your Conservancy support with an employer matching gift. Many companies make it easy to double or triple the amount you donate! Check with your human resources department.

**Conserve Your Property.** Preserving your land is a lasting way to contribute to our community.

*Please contact our executive director, Jim Engel, at (610) 294-1077 or email jengel@tincumconservancy.org for questions and a confidential discussion about your options and opportunities.*

## JOIN TODAY

Your gift can make a positive impact to help protect your community for your family and future generations.

The Tincum Conservancy is a private non-profit organization that depends on charitable contributions to protect the environment, steward more than 5,000 conserved acres of land, and educate the community about our mission. Your support is essential to realizing our shared purpose.

Every gift makes a difference. Use the envelope provided inside or visit [tincumconservancy.org](http://tincumconservancy.org) to donate today. *Thank you.*

## Trail Work Set to Begin at 107-Acre Bridgeton Preserve

A bucolic tract just off River Road in Upper Black Eddy will soon have a 2-mile loop trail and signage, thanks to a collaboration among Tincum Conservancy, Bridgeton Township, Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and local volunteers.

It is the largest tract of preserved land in the township that is not privately owned.

The tract was purchased by Bridgeton Township in 2019 with substantial help from the Conservancy, which negotiated the purchase and helped secure \$600,000 in funding from the Bucks County Natural Areas program and the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania. Also supporting the endeavor was a private foundation.

Once home to a defunct granite quarry, the tract was abandoned for more than 50 years. Small ponds created by excavation dot the landscape, along with woodland areas, natural springs, palisades and a wealth of mature trees. Recreationists will share it with a variety of wildlife, including otters, frogs, salamanders, reptiles and birds.

"It's going to be a wonderful place for people to study nature, go on a hike and just enjoy themselves," says Jim Engel, Executive Director of the Conservancy. "When trails

are completed, visitors will have a chance to experience the many different aspects of this beautiful property."

Bridgeton Township Supervisor Roger Keller credits the Conservancy with playing a key role in acquiring what was then known as the Casillio property. "Tincum Conservancy understood every piece of the process and played the lead role in making the purchase happen. And they did it without our small township having to put up a great deal of money."

The preserve is currently accessible through a gateway opening on River Road just north of

*continued on pg. 2*





**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Neal Feigles, President
- Kelly Simcox, Vice President
- Peggy Enoch, Secretary
- Michael Kauffman, Treasurer
- John Clement
- John Courtney
- Debra Goldstein
- Jeff Keller
- Mark Manchester
- Mark Petty
- Wendy Ullman

**STAFF**

- Jim Engel, Executive Director
- Kelly Germann, Resource Protection Mgr.
- Scott Berman, Resource Protection Asst.
- Maria Fell, Office Manager

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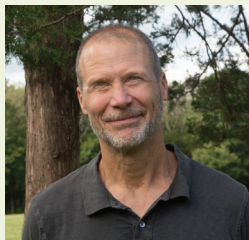
info@tinicumconservancy.org  
www.tinicumconservancy.org



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

The Tinicum Conservancy is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization established in 1992. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

# Neal's Nature Notes: The Power of Volunteers



I don't know about you, but I think there are few things more satisfying than lending a helping hand — to a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or even a local organization like the Tinicum Conservancy. During my decade of involvement with the Conservancy, I've been continually amazed by our volunteers and their level of dedication. There's always something that needs to get done, and whether they live in Tinicum, Nockamixon or Bridgeton, our volunteers are always eager to rise to the call — from our Board of Trustees to our River Road Clean-up crew, to our easement monitors and everyone in between.

However, an unsettling trend has emerged in recent years that has us thinking. According to the US Census Bureau, volunteering on both a local and national level has slipped by 23% — the steepest drop ever recorded. The actual causes for this decline are many, including the lockdown during COVID, time limitations, and the complicated process of aligning the skill sets of volunteers with an organization's needs.

As I'm sure you've guessed by now, the Conservancy hasn't been immune to this trend.

Finding new volunteers in the past few years has become more challenging, so that's why we've decided to dedicate this issue of Common Ground to our volunteers, highlighting all the rewards that come with helping an organization that has done so much to protect our community's natural environment, water quality and farming heritage.

New opportunities emerge all the time. Trail building, event planning, easement monitoring, office help, and photography, to name a few. Can you free up a few hours every month to help make a real difference?

Contact our office or visit our website to learn about the different ways you can help. Staff will work with your availability and look for opportunities that match your interests and skills.

The satisfaction of helping out can't be underestimated. It's why our volunteers continue to offer their talents and support. *If you don't already volunteer, isn't it time for you to give it a try?* —Neal Feigles

## Trail Work to Begin... (cont. from pg. 1)

Bridgeton Hill Road. An abandoned access road offers a safe and easy way to leave the sounds of traffic behind for an immersive nature experience. Already, strollers, dog walkers, runners, anglers and birdwatchers have discovered its beauty.

“Our vision is one of quiet and peaceful activities, where the primary focus is careful observation of the natural world,” says Keller. It's a place for moderate exercise, increasing your heart rate, and simply enjoying all that this beautiful part of the world offers for those willing to take a look.”

Establishing a public preserve on the site also increases the potential to connect with the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network,

a 300-mile stretch of trail segments through 13 communities from the Delaware River in Bucks County to the Appalachian Trail in Franklin County.

“That connection is probably many years away, but the opening of the Bridgeton tract and the popular excitement we expect to build should give it new momentum,” says Cait Handlin, Mid-Atlantic Trail Coordinator for the AMC.

Handlin and her team will coordinate the construction effort for a loop trail by cutting back vegetation, removing rocks, and clearing drainage structures. They're eager to involve as many community volunteers as possible.

“There's work that everyone can do to help

create the best and safest trails possible,” Handlin says. “Anyone interested in working with us this fall, on Bridgeton or any of our other trail-building activities, should visit the volunteer page at outdoors.org.”

Volunteer opportunities will also be posted by Tinicum Conservancy and Bridgeton Township, and flyers will be distributed at various local businesses.

Another idea that may be in the works is the creation of what's known as a “gnome path.” “Those tend to be created in secret,” Keller says, “often by moonlight.” Gnome caretakers wander the landscape looking for tree crooks and stump formations where gnomes can hide, waiting to be discovered. “Nothing is more welcome than the sound of children enjoying nature and discovering how much fun and enrichment it offers us all.”

Meanwhile, you can keep track of the preserve's progress. Watch for email blasts from the Conservancy as well as future issues of *Common Ground*, where we'll have more news about this recreational and ecological gem as it develops. —Dennis Lonergan

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### Getting Involved in the Bridgeton Preserve

Want to help out? Being part of trail-building efforts is a great way to leave a lasting mark on our community. Volunteers of any and all experience levels are invited to participate in clearing and maintaining the two-mile loop that will be the first trail to open at the 107-acre Bridgeton Preserve. Work is scheduled to begin in earnest this fall.

To sign up or learn more, contact Tinicum Conservancy Executive Director Jim Engel at (610) 294-1077 or email [jengel@tinicumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tinicumconservancy.org)

To suggest a formal name for the new Bridgeton Preserve, send your suggestion to [rkeller@bridgetontwp.org](mailto:rkeller@bridgetontwp.org)

**Legend:**  
 - Bridgeton Open Space Preserve Property (Yellow outline)  
 - Municipality Boundaries (Red outline)  
 - Parcel Boundaries (Thin grey lines)  
 - Waterways (Blue lines)

**Parcel Information:**  
 03-003-109 +/- 81.23 acres  
 03-003-111 +/- 28.836 acres

**Disclaimer:** This map is not a survey. The information imparted with this map is meant to assist Natural Lands Trust, Inc., in describing the placement of certain retained, reserved, or excluded rights and to calculate acreage figures. Property boundaries, while approximate, were established using the best available information, which may have included: surveys, tax maps, field mapping using GPS, and/or orthophotos. Natural Lands Trust, Inc. makes no representation as to the accuracy of said property lines (or any other lines), and no liability is assumed by reason of reliance thereon. Use of this map for other than its intended purpose requires the written consent of Natural Lands Trust, Inc.

**Natural Lands**  
 1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063  
 610-353-5587 | [natlands.org](http://natlands.org)

**2015 Aerial Photography**  
 BRIDGETON OPEN SPACE PRESERVE  
 Tax ID: 03-003-109 and 03-003-111 (+/- 110.07 acres)  
 Bridgeton Township, Bucks County, PA

**TINICUM CONSERVANCY**  
 PA, Box 306, Levittown, PA 19010

**Highlands Trail**

**Proposed Trail in Bridgeton Township**

Map labels include: Riegelsville-Milford Rd, Delaware River, Spring Garden Rd, Trails End Ln, River Rd, Ringing Rocks Park, Skyline Dr, Bridgeton Twp, Ringing Rocks Ln, Highway Ln, Fairview Ln, Rocks Rd.

### STAY CONNECTED WITH NEWS & EVENTS

- Sign up for email news at [tinicumconservancy.org](http://tinicumconservancy.org)
- Like us on Facebook
- Follow us on Instagram



# Volunteer Highlight! Conservancy Welcomes New Board Members



Earlier this year, Tincum Conservancy elected two community members to our Board of Directors.

**John Clement** has been a Conservancy volunteer for more than ten years, most notably as designer and webmaster of [tincumconservancy.org](http://tincumconservancy.org). He keeps that popular portal up to date with events, news, announcements, background and other content so every visitor has a smooth and satisfying experience. He also manages the Conservancy's social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, and co-designed (with former Board member Hellyn Sher) the Tincum Conservancy logo and preserved land signs.

John came to Tincum in 1999 when he and his partner bought the abandoned 1870 Uhlerstown schoolhouse. "It was in utter disrepair, with no heat or plumbing to speak of, and holes in the exterior walls big enough to poke your head through," he recalls. "We spent the next seven years renovating it, and I still consider it my finest Tincum accomplishment."

John is also a licensed, full-time realtor in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and secretary of the Tincum Township Planning Commission, on which he has served since 2019. He loves gardening, music, art, and animals. He currently lives on a 7-acre preserved property with his husband of 40 years.

"What distinguishes Tincum from the majority of other Townships in the area is its commitment to preserving nature — you see that on both a community and municipal level. I was really impressed with that when I first came here, and I really wanted to be a part of it in some way."

Among his favorite spots in Tincum is a path to the Giving Pond north of Schneiderwind Farm & Nursery. The 90-acre water and fishing hole was reclaimed from earlier quarry activity on the site. It's been there for years yet is still unknown to many. "It's very peaceful there."

Also joining the board is **John Mark Courtney** of Nockamixon Township. John came aboard in January.

A specialist in native plants, John is founder and owner of Kind Earth Growers LLC, a native plant wholesaler. After completing his B.S. in Environmental Design from Delaware Valley University, he pursued his passion for environmental stewardship and growing native plants at Bowmans Hill Wildflower Preserve and then at Aquascapes Unlimited, where he was head grower and operations manager for 20 years.

After moving to Nockamixon Township in 2007, John joined and eventually chaired the Nockamixon Open Space Committee and was directly involved in the preservation of many key properties in the township. He was also a participating artist in the annual Artists of the Gallows Run, where proceeds were raised for land preservation in the Gallows Run watershed.

John's free time is spent with his wife Erin, and their Australian cattle dog, Jackson. Home is three acres of mature oak, hickory and maple forest in the Beaver Creek watershed, a native landscape they are actively rewilding for maximum ecological benefit. He is passionate about keeping preserved land safe from being swallowed by invasive plants.

"In Nockamixon, a lot of land has diabase geology that was never plowed under, leaving a variety of unique plants underneath," says John. "Unique to Nockamixon and Tincum, we share similar geological formations: one is a landscape of shale where cedar and red maple flourish, and the other is a boulder-filled landscape of diabase and rich soil."

While both Johns bring considerable experience to the Conservancy's leadership,

each admits to having things to learn to make the most of their opportunity — proof that becoming a volunteer requires only a love of our mission and the beautiful place they call home.

John Courtney, for example, admits to needing to learn more about the financial benefits of open space, the different tax benefits offered to people who donate their land or place it in a conservation easement. "Those are things I'm still cloudy on."

As for John Clement, "I have a lot of experience working with non-profit organizations, but zero when it comes to conservation. I know almost nothing about the legal and operational intricacies of land preservation, but I'm enjoying the chance to learn more from my colleagues."

Please feel free to reach out to Jim Engel at [jengel@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tincumconservancy.org) to find out about volunteer opportunities.

— Dennis Lonergan



## Volunteer Coordinator

Do you enjoy interacting with people and inspiring others? Help take the Conservancy to another level by engaging potential volunteers and connecting them to their greatest skills and interests.

*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*

Contact Conservancy's Executive Director Jim Engel at 610-294-1077 or [jengel@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tincumconservancy.org)

## Event Assistant

Calling all party animals and social butterflies! We need your help planning and coordinating the Conservancy's public events and gatherings, such as our annual Community Celebration, our Outdoor Movie Night, and more.

*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*

Contact Jim Engel at 610-294-1077 or [jengel@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tincumconservancy.org)

## Tincum Conservancy and the River Road Clean Up Crew WANT YOU!!

Twice a year, our enthusiastic volunteer team and intrepid leaders, Linda and Trevor McNeill, share camaraderie and together tidy up our adopted 2-mile section of River Road. Fully supported by PADOT, DCNR and Tincum Police for supplies and safety. Join our team on September 9, 2023!

Contact Linda at [lmcneill51@gmail.com](mailto:lmcneill51@gmail.com) or Trevor at [environs@epix.net](mailto:environs@epix.net) for info.

## Office Assistant

Come help us keep the heart of the Conservancy going strong. A wide variety of opportunities exists for almost anyone here at the Conservancy office. Help with mailings, filing, computer inputting, distributing newsletters and many other important and rewarding projects.

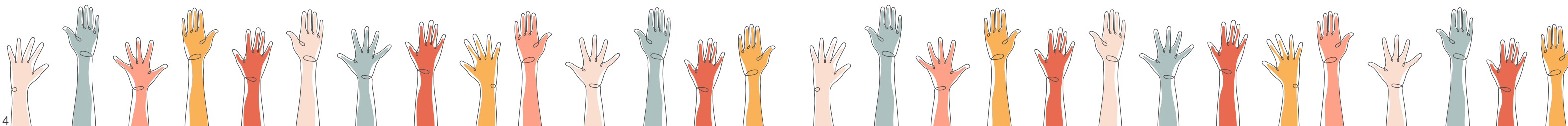
*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*

Contact Maria Fell at 610-294-1077 or [mfell@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:mfell@tincumconservancy.org)

## Easement Monitors

Interested in volunteering outdoors? We are required by our National Land Trust Accreditation to monitor every conservation easement property on an annual basis. We're always seeking volunteers to help us achieve our goals. Comfort with hiking, talking to neighbors and simple computer skills a must.

Contact Kelly Germann at 610-294-1077 or email [kgermann@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:kgermann@tincumconservancy.org) to inquire if this is the opportunity for you.





# Kelly's CORNER: Dissuading Deer, Creatively



As I write, bejeweled redbuds and luminous dogwoods are awakening to flaunt their bright-eyed splendor, the morning air is lively with the fresh, organic scent of warming earth, and I grin my annual surprise at the novel pinkish strip on the back of my winter-pale neck. Like many of you, I am bursting to put my hands to soil and nurture beautiful growing things. Spring is always such an optimistic and inspiring time of year!

However, along with this buoyancy comes a dose of reality: Onward goes the eternal struggle to prevent deer from munching everything to the ground, along with the quest for a pleasing pallet of deer-proof plants that don't need a high-security, chain-link prison fence to survive. But with a little planning, a few facts (and a little fiction) plus a dash of ingenuity, we can attain a good measure of satisfaction.



They have poor memories for that yucky thing they nibbled last week, but they're less likely to completely demolish something unpleasant. Instead of "deer-proof" think "deer-resistant."

2. Your dog doesn't matter. Sure, the first few times your dog barks and gives chase, deer will scatter. But they'll be right back, and your dog will wear out long before the deer tire of chewing your favorite daylilies.

3. Planting deer favorites among non-favorites won't perplex them. They will ultimately discover the impatiens and hosta you think you hid like chocolate easter eggs among your poisonous poppies.

4. Deer will come right up to your deck, patio and windows. Planting close to home won't dissuade them from a quiet midnight snack. And eventually, your midday comings and goings are no match for the lure of your luscious roses.

5. Speaking of roses...deer WILL eat your

thorny roses and your prickly evergreens (including holly). Particularly the newest, most tender parts.

Once you accept the myths, we can focus on the facts.

There are four major characteristics of deer-resistant plants. They are: Herbal-scented, fuzzy-textured, poisonous and fine-textured. (I focus here on flowering plants, but these traits work for shrubs and trees, too).

1. **Herbal-Scented.** Deer love your sweet lilies and hosta but not plants that release strong herbal or citrus scents when crushed or cut. This includes most of our garden herbs such as anise, basil, borage, chervil, chives, fennel, hyssop, lavender, mints, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme. Other strong scented plants deer avoid: allium, beebalm, echinacea, garlic, geranium, wild ginger, lilac, marigold, monarda, perennial salvias and yarrow.

2. **Fuzzy-Textured.** Sure, deer will readily chow down on thorny roses, but they don't like fuzzy in their mouths. Try ageratum, blanket flower, brunnera, coleus, lambs' ear, lamium, lungwort, rudbeckia, and spirea.

3. **Poisonous.** For obvious reasons, deer learn to avoid plants that contain toxins, like bleeding heart, daffodils, foxglove, hellebore, iris, larkspur, milkweeds, monkshood, peony, poppies, and sumac. (Of course, if you have small children or curious pets, these may not be good choices for your garden.)

4. **Fine-Textured.** Deer favor your most succulent plants because they provide the most bang for their buck (pun intended), while fine-textured plants are a lot of work to consume and don't have the same nutritional

*oomph.* Try amsonia, aster, astilbe, clematis, coreopsis, dianthus, wood and ostrich ferns, Jacob's ladder, liatris, shasta daisy, and zinnia. Of course, fencing is always an option, but use anything less than 4' high and deer will simply spring over it. If your fence is right up against your garden edge, deer can easily lean over to nibble your plants. Fences should be at least 5' high and about 2' away from your plantings, making it harder for them to step or simply reach over. If you have a very large area, such as an orchard or large vegetable garden where clear landing spots are obvious, creativity won't help you: you'll need a fence at least 7' high.

**Fact:** Deer will only jump over a fence if they can clearly see a safe place to land on the other side. You can use this behavior to your advantage by creating visual obstacles inside your garden so a jumper cannot see a clear landing spot. Try using raised beds, vertical lattice or towers, sculpture and mobile art, boulders, wind chimes, a birdbath, low walls, and various visual layers of plants and shrubs. This is also a good reason not to leave a lot of open space between plants. Plus, dense planting helps prevent weeds, uses less mulch, conserves moisture... but that's another article!

**Fact:** As a prey animal, deer don't like unexpected movements, sounds or touches, so you can easily create behavioral deterrents around your garden. For example, a motion-detecting water spray, which combines movement, sound and touch, can be effective. Just be careful where you aim it. You don't want to accidentally soak your mail carrier or your mother-in-law (unless that's your idea of entertainment).

Farmers used to hang tin pie pans that catch a light, move unexpectedly in the breeze, and make a light banging sound together. Reading about this in Farmer's Almanac, I tried a version at home: With high-strength fishing line stretched tight between corner stakes, I strung the steel lids from dozens of pull-top cat food cans in groups of two to

three all around the perimeter of my flower garden. At three feet off the ground, the deer couldn't see the fishing line and would walk right into it, creating not only an unexpected touch to their legs, but also the unexpected sound of the steel lids clanging. This method worked wonders for three years running. It was also a fun conversation starter with neighbors walking by.

There are (or you can make) giant balloons designed with giant owl eyes that bounce and weave on the breeze with unpredictable movement. These were designed for farmers to deter birds from fruit trees but work on deer too.

**Fact:** Deer don't like strong scents like foul, malodorous sprays and sprinkles made with urine, blood, etc. These definitely work, but they're expensive and need to be re-applied often. Plus, they deter us humans as much as the deer. What's the point of a garden so stinky that you can't enjoy it? A google search will reveal some desperate recipes that are downright harmful to wildlife, like ammonia-soaked rags and capsaicin (hot pepper) mixtures. Just don't. If you want to try something less repelling to humans, bits of strongly odiferous soap (like Ivory or Irish spring) hung in stockings around your garden work, and there are garlic and/or mint concoctions that work well, too. Regular reapplication is key.

Ultimately, if you really want to garden in harmony with deer, you'll have to get creative. Deer will get used to just about anything given enough time, so your best bet is to keep them guessing. Move your mobile sculptures occasionally, try a new noise maker, or change the direction of your water spray. Hang soaps in stockings for a few weeks and then switch to something minty, or trade them out for something flashy that moves around in the wind. And of course, let the dog out to bark and chase every once in a while, if only for the fun of it!

## Save the Date!

RSVP for these events to: mfell@tinicumconservancy.org or 610-294-1077

### Volunteer Thank You Picnic Thursday, June 22nd 5pm-7:30pm

Where: Tinicum Conservancy Office, 965 River Road Erwinna PA

It's time to honor all of you who volunteer for the Conservancy. Come one, come all. We'll provide the food and drink and you just need to bring a smile and a chair to sit on. RSVP required.

### Outdoor Movie Night

Friday, July 14th arrive 8:00pm

Movie starts at 8:45pm

Location and movie selection TBA

Back by popular demand. Bring your wine and cheese, or your popcorn and soda, plus lawn chairs or blankets. Come enjoy a summer evening outdoors at a beautiful, conserved property and share an inspiring environmentally themed movie on a giant outdoor screen with your family and friends. Family friendly. RSVP required.

Rain date: Saturday, July 15th

### Annual Community Celebration

Saturday, Sept. 23rd 3pm-5:30pm

Where: Black Sheep Farm

Property hike at 2pm

FREE and open to all but you must RSVP. (See info above.)

It's that time again to celebrate our conservation successes. Meet new and old friends and neighbors while enjoying delicious appetizers and refreshments. This year's event will be located at Black Sheep Farm, a picturesque 57-acre conserved property on Stover Park Road. Rain or Shine. Watch for your invitation in August. Just need to bring a smile and a chair to sit on. RSVP required.

#### First, a few myths:

1. There's no such thing as a "deer-proof" plant. If deer are hungry or curious enough, they will try anything. More than once.