

THE LEGACY

NEWS from THE M.S. HERSHEY FOUNDATION | FALL/WINTER 2025 | ISSUE 40

History Meets Hollywood: How Hershey Historians Shaped the HERSHEY Movie

In early 2020, writers with Dandelion Media approached The M.S. Hershey Foundation and Milton Hershey School with a screenplay about the life of Milton S. Hershey, seeking feedback and collaboration. The writers asked for help filling in the details about Milton and Catherine "Kitty" Hershey's incredible lives, but were clear that they didn't want to create a documentary.

"Above all, the Foundation team wanted the film to maintain historical integrity," said Valerie Seiber, senior manager of collections and exhibits. "As curators and archivists, we love to tell the many stories of Hershey – his entrepreneurial and philanthropic spirit, and the enduring legacy of Milton Hershey School. We've often wondered why there isn't a movie about Mr. and Mrs. Hershey."

The Foundation's team of historians reviewed eight drafts of the screenplay over five years. "Throughout the process, we were in constant communication with the writers and producers," said Jennifer Henderson, senior archivist. "They appreciated our feedback on the scripts. When deviations had to be made, production staff always explained their rationales."

Fast forward to March 2025: the "stars" aligned (pun intended), financing was secured, locations were selected, and a crew of hundreds was employed to begin filming the movie. A group from the production, consisting of the director, producers, director of photography, production designer, set decorator and prop master, descended upon Hershey to review historic photos and artifacts. "These materials provided inspiration for how the movie would look," explained Seiber.



Finn Wittrock and Alexandra Daddario have fun with some young actors between takes.

"We shared an enormous amount of information with the designers – over a thousand images, documents and historic films in total," said Seiber. "They had about eight weeks to design, build and furnish sets, recreate chocolate-making equipment and create props for the actors to use."

Principal photography began in May and historians from the Foundation and Milton Hershey School were invited to be on set to observe and answer questions that arose during filming. "We've been asked to participate in various events over the years, but being on set for a movie was a new and unique experience," said Amy Zeigler, senior director of The Hershey Story Museum. "When I arrived on the first day, I was pleasantly surprised at the warm welcome I received from the crew. They were all kind, helpful, and genuinely interested in the story of Milton and Kitty Hershey."

"What surprised me most was the sheer number of people working on the film, and how they each had a very specific role," said Tesa Burns, archivist. "It was like hundreds of moving parts working together seamlessly to create movie magic."

As the film wrap date approached, members of the Foundation and production teams began discussions about what would happen to the sets, props and costumes. "The idea of a museum exhibit began to take shape," said Zeigler. "Our plan is to create a museum exhibit that will open around the same time the movie is released in 2026."

Before filming completed in June, the curatorial team began creating a list of items that would make an engaging exhibit and document the movie-making process. Props used

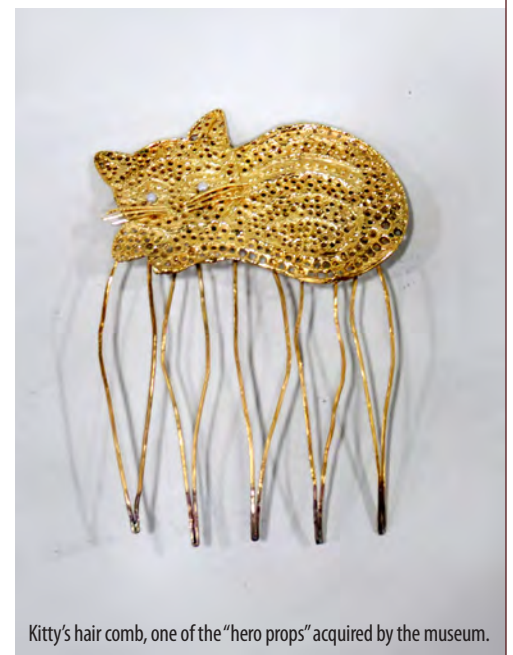
"Our plan is to create a museum exhibit that will open around the same time the movie is released in 2026."

by the actors in multiple scenes or at significant plot points, known as "hero props," will be preserved by the museum. One such hero prop is Kitty Hershey's hair comb, which was crafted by a jeweler in Pittsburgh.

"The most amazing thing was seeing Hershey history brought to life. Old packaging designs and bar molds were used to make historically accurate bars that I could hold in my hand," said Burns. *Continued on page 2*



Costume designer, Katie Irish, shows off a bed jacket worn by Alexandra Daddario as Kitty Hershey.



Kitty's hair comb, one of the "hero props" acquired by the museum.

History Meets Hollywood *continued fom page 1*

Much to their delight, several of the historians were used as background extras in the film. “It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” said Henderson. “When I began my career as an archivist, I never thought that would include being an extra in a movie!”

“I have a whole new respect for background actors,” said Zeigler. “It was a long, hot day in a corset, wool skirt, wig and hat, but it was an amazing experience. It was a fun mix of actors and non-actors who were just excited to be in a movie about Milton and Kitty Hershey.”

Working on the *HERSHEY* movie was an incredible experience. “The care and attention to detail that the production has



A candy selling tray used by Finn Wittrock as Milton Hershey.

shown with Milton and Kitty Hershey’s story are deeply appreciated,” said Valerie Seiber. “We are excited to share their story with the world.”



Specialized pails used to remove chocolate from a conche machine. Original artifact on left, prop pail on right.



Notebooks used during filming by young Milton (left) and adult Milton (right) to record recipes.

HERSHEY COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

100 Years of Mr. Goodbar



Mr. Goodbar advertisement, ca. 1930

During its first 30 years, the Hershey Chocolate Company sold two staple candy bars: Hershey’s Milk Chocolate bar (1900) and Hershey’s Milk Chocolate with Almonds bar (1908). It wasn’t until 1925 – exactly 100 years ago – that they would introduce something new to the lineup. This innovation was a classic bar that we still enjoy today: Mr. Goodbar.

This new bar, made with Hershey’s Milk Chocolate and peanuts, was formulated by plant chemist Samuel Hinkle, who later went on to lead the company. In his oral history interview, Mr. Hinkle shared his recollections:

We’d been experimenting with a peanut bar, peanuts being a popular product with the American people. We decided we’d better use the Spanish peanuts rather than the Virginia peanuts of the type that were being used by the Reese Company at Hershey. So we did... We called it roasted, but we really were frying them in deep fat and combining them with our milk chocolate, and we began to think about a name.

Mr. Hershey was the one that really came up with a name... someone said, “That’s a good bar.” And his hearing being a little bad, he thought they said, “Mr. Goodbar.” So he named it Mr. Goodbar.

In the beginning, the company wasn’t sure if Mr. Goodbar would be a success. The early packaging, therefore, doesn’t have the Hershey name on it; instead it simply says, “Distributed by the Chocolate Sales Corporation, Hershey, Pa., U.S.A.” It wasn’t until the early 1940s that the Hershey name appeared on the label.

Mr. Goodbar was first marketed as a “Tasty Lunch” because the peanuts in the bar added nutritional value. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, the slogan changed to “Quick Energy in Every Bar.”

Mr. Goodbar is one of The Hershey Company’s most enduring products and has remained a favorite among many. Join us in celebrating 100 years of this classic confection!

Mr. Goodbar Packaging Through the Years



ca. 1927



ca. 1933-1935



1941



1960



1990



Today

Chocolate Lab From Cobwebs to Candy Canes...

The Chocolate Lab is Serving Up Sweet Fun!

Bring the whole family to The Hershey Story this fall and holiday season to create something amazing—and delicious—in the Chocolate Lab! Learn how cocoa beans are grown, harvested and processed into delicious milk chocolate in these hands-on, interactive classes.

These 45-minute classes are ideal for adults and children ages 5 and older. **Click here** for a daily class schedule. Tickets are available at The Hershey Story admissions desk on the day of the class on a first-come, first-served basis; space is limited.

Halloween Classes

Batty Bar

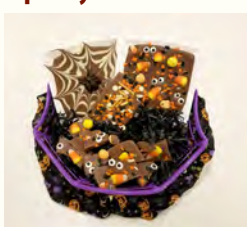
Mold your own chocolate bar and then customize it with your choice of Halloween-themed and traditional candy ingredients.

Chocolate Cobweb Creations

Create a creepy Halloween spider web using white and milk chocolate, then top it off with a dark chocolate spider!



Spooky Bark



Calling all Halloween candy lovers! If plain candy bars aren't cutting it for your spooky soiree, now you can double your Halloween fun with our Spooky Bark. Milk chocolate is melted and topped with pieces of your favorite Halloween candies.

Mummy Medallions

Create your own spooky trio of bone-chilling mummies out of scrumptious milk chocolate, a drizzling of white chocolate, and some candy eyeballs.



Holiday Classes

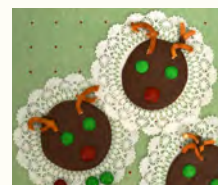
Candy Cane Bark

Layer milk chocolate with white chocolate chips and chunks of peppermint candy to create your own fresh candy cane bark.



Make a Very Merry Bar

Mold and customize your own milk chocolate bar using holiday add-ins and edible decorations.



Reindeer Medallions

Use milk chocolate and toppings to create your own edible reindeer trio.

Let It Snow Chocolate

Create your own deliciously edible winter scene using chocolate and snow-flake candy sprinkles.

Marshmallow Mischief

Dunk giant marshmallows in melted chocolate, then roll in holiday toppings. Finish by packaging your custom marshmallow treat in a holiday package to take home.

SAVE THE DATE!

Truffles for Couples
AT THE HERSEY STORY

Truffles for Couples

Friday, February 13 & Saturday, February 14
at 5:45 & 7:45 p.m.

Bring your favorite Valentine for an evening of decadence and hands-on delicious fun!

Learn more here.



Harvest Spice Cocoa

Available Now – October 13

Celebrate the fall season with the newest hot chocolate beverage, featuring Hershey's Milk Chocolate and a special blend of cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. It's fragrant, rich and delicious... enjoy this warm drink on a cool fall day!



Open Daily 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



From fruity African chocolate flavors to Indonesian chocolate with caramel overtones, come hone your skills as a cocoa connoisseur... or simply enjoy a taste of indulgence. Tastings at The Hershey Story is a delicious treat for your taste buds and the perfect way to immerse yourself in the sweet world that inspired Milton Hershey.



Comfy Cozy Cocoa

Available November 24 – December 31

Enjoy a cozy mug of Hershey's Milk Chocolate, topped with whipped cream and crushed peppermint - perfect for warming up on a chilly day! Served with a chocolate-covered pretzel rod for stirring.



THE HERSHEY STORY HAPPENINGS

Free Holiday Events AT THE HERSHEY STORY

Whimsical Winter Crafts
Saturday, December 6, 13, 20 & 27, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Kids, have some fun as you create a wintry craft in the museum's classroom. A different craft will be offered each Saturday. You can also try out some vintage toys and snap a unique holiday photo against a snowy Hershey scene. Free with admission.



AT THE HERSHEY STORY

Saturday, December 13 & 20, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Friendly, indoor snowball fights are the centerpiece of this holiday event! Kids can visit with our own friendly snowman, as well as create a wintry craft in our classroom. Chocolate Lab participants can make special winter-themed creations. Chocolate Lab classes require a ticket purchase; other activities are free. [Click here](#) for a detailed schedule. Free with admission.

2026 NEW YEAR'S EVE COUNTDOWN

Wednesday, December 31, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Celebrate New Year's Eve during the day at The Hershey Story! Kids can make some noise with "bubble-wrap stomps" at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Activities take place on the patio (weather permitting). Free with admission.

Sips & Sweets

An Evening in the Chocolate Lab

Thursday, November 13, 7 - 8 p.m.
Get ready for an evening of chocolatey fun! We're serving up three delicious handcrafted desserts, plus a specialty mocktail to sip while you snack. Along the way, you'll pick up a few fundamentals of dessert-making in this fun, one-hour class! Perfect for savoring sweets and sipping with friends! This BYOB night is for guests 21 and up.

Members: \$30; Non-Members: \$35
Space is limited; [reserve tickets here](#) starting October 6.



Calling All Scouts

Junior Girl Scout "Playing the Past" Badge Workshop
Saturday, March 7, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Enjoy a morning of hands-on activities at The Hershey Story! Girls will experience the many stories of Hershey through the eyes of girls and women who lived long ago. In addition to exploring the exhibits, scouts will play old-fashioned games and create two crafts to take home.
\$15 for Junior Scouts and \$15 per leader/adult chaperone. [Register online here](#) beginning December 15, 2025.



The Hershey Story Announces Annual History Contest

Our history

★★★★★

in your words

History Contest
for Young Writers

THE HERSHEY STORY
THE MUSEUM ON CHOCOLATE AVENUE

Open to all students in grades 5 through 8 enrolled in public, private or home school in Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry or York County.

Kids, write an essay, story or poem

Be creative

But be sure to check out the rules online

Don't forget about the science and health category!

The Hershey Story's 26th annual History Contest for Young Writers will open to entrants on November 1, 2025; the deadline for submissions is February 15, 2026. This contest encourages students to research and write about a historical topic that interests them. The categories are non-fiction, fiction, poetry and science & health. Students submit imaginative presentations of historical fiction, emotional and creative pieces of poetry, and often personal pieces of non-fiction. The contest is open to 5th through 8th grade students who are enrolled in a public, private or homeschool in Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties. Students must choose one category and may only submit one entry
[Click here](#) for more information and to view last year's winning essays.

THE HERSHEY STORY HAPPENINGS

Thank you, Museum Past Masters!



This summer, 18 students ages 12 to 16 contributed over 740 volunteer hours as they helped museum guests learn about the chocolate-making process, answered a variety of Hershey-related questions, and assisted with camp groups. The students also had the option of participating in special enrichment activities that focused on the roles of curators, archivists and Chocolate Lab staff.

"Our Past Masters made the museum a much livelier place, and we thank them for their enthusiasm and dedication to this program," said Susan Hetrick, supervisor of education and public programs.

To apply for next summer's program, please **click here**. Online applications will be accepted beginning March 1, 2026.

THE HERSHEY STORY

THE MUSEUM ON CHOCOLATE AVENUE



**Join us for a special hands-on program,
just for homeschool and virtual learning families!**

**Wednesdays in October – 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2025
at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.**

All programs are the same.

Calling all Candy Chemists! Do you like fun experiments? How about tasty treats? Come explore the exciting science behind how sugar is transformed to create the sweet treats we love to eat! Discover the difference between physical and chemical changes, examine various crystal formations in food, and understand how some candy gets its sour punch. There will be candy taste tests and lots of hands-on activities. Plus, everyone will make their own science-themed chocolate creation to take home! Admission to the museum is included along with an educational scavenger hunt through the exhibits.

\$17.00 for ages 3 and over.

Ages 2 and under are free.

Advance registration is required here.

**Admission to the museum is included along with
an educational scavenger hunt through the exhibits.**

The program will last about an hour. The scavenger hunt takes about 45-60 minutes, so please plan on two hours for the full experience.

This program is for homeschooling families. Private programs are available for groups of 15 or more. Please contact Elizabeth Lindsay at elalindsay@hersheystory.org or 717.520.5588 with questions or to book a private program.

One Year Later, The Magic Returns to Hershey Theatre

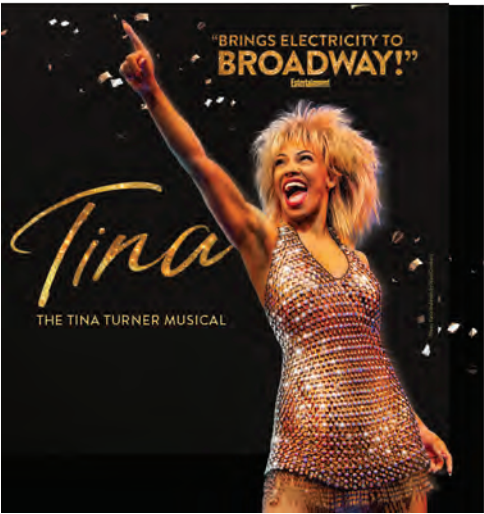
Hershey Theatre Gearing Up for a March 2026 Re-Opening

After a year-long renovation, Hershey Theatre is gearing up to welcome audiences back in March 2026. The historic venue has received a thoughtful refresh, including major infrastructure upgrades such as new air-conditioning and electrical systems, enhanced Wi-Fi connectivity, and improved parking areas. Guests will also enjoy brand-new seating and carpeting, blending modern comfort with the Theatre’s timeless charm.

“We are thrilled to re-open an even better Hershey Theatre in March with a great lineup of Broadway shows and other world-class performances,” said Don Papson, executive director. “We deeply appreciate the community’s support as we revitalize this iconic building, honoring Mr. Hershey’s legacy and ensuring its charm and beauty for generations to come.”



Tickets Available at HersheyTheatre.com



TINA - The Tina Turner Musical

March 24 -29, 2026

An uplifting comeback story like no other, *TINA – The Tina Turner Musical* is the inspiring journey of a woman who broke barriers and became the Queen of Rock n’ Roll. Set to the pulse-pounding soundtrack of her most beloved hits, this electrifying sensation will send you soaring to the rafters.

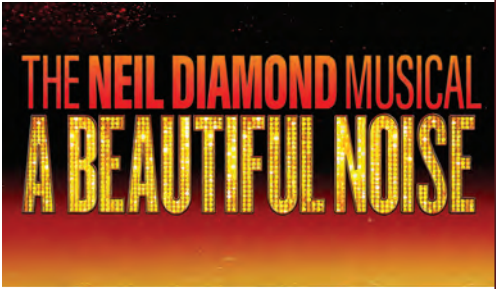
One of the world’s best-selling artists of all time, Tina Turner won 12 Grammy Awards and her live shows were seen by millions, with more concert tickets sold than any other solo performer in music history.

Featuring her much loved songs, *TINA – The Tina Turner Musical* is written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall.

& Juliet
April 14-19, 2026

Created by the Emmy®-winning writer from “Schitt’s Creek,” this hilarious new musical flips the script on the greatest love story ever told. *& Juliet* asks: what would happen next if Juliet didn’t end it all over Romeo? Get whisked away on a fabulous journey as she ditches her famous ending for a fresh beginning and a second chance at life and love—her way.

Juliet’s new story bursts to life through a playlist of pop anthems as iconic as her name, including “Since U Been Gone,” “Roar,” “Baby One More Time,” “Larger Than Life,” “That’s The Way It Is,” and “Can’t Stop the Feeling!”—all from the genius songwriter/producer behind more #1 hits than any other artist this century. Break free of the balcony scene and get into this romantic comedy that proves there’s life after Romeo. The only thing tragic would be missing it.



A Beautiful Noise,
The Neil Diamond Musical
June 30 - July 5, 2026

Created in collaboration with Neil Diamond himself, *A Beautiful Noise* is the uplifting true story of how a kid from Brooklyn became a chart-busting, show-stopping American rock icon. With 120 million albums sold, a catalogue of classics like “America,” “Forever in Blue Jeans,” and “Sweet Caroline,” an induction into the Songwriters and Rock and Roll Halls of Fame, a Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award, and sold-out concerts around the world that made him bigger than Elvis, Neil Diamond’s story was made to shine on Broadway and head out on the road across America.

Like *Jersey Boys* and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* before it, *A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical* is an inspiring, exhilarating, energy-filled musical memoir that tells the untold true story of how America’s greatest hitmaker became a star, set to the songs that defined his career.

ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS AT HERSHEY THEATRE



Steve Martin & Martin Short
March 14, 2026



Playstation The Concert
March 22, 2026



The Fab Four
The Ultimate Tribute
April 2, 2026



Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood
June 12, 2026

Tickets Available at HersheyTheatre.com

Crimes Against Plants



By Lois Miklas, Retired Educator, The M.S. Hershey Foundation and Penn State Master Gardener

As the weather chills and the nights lengthen, let's turn our attention to crimes and consequences that haunt our landscapes. Whether due to misconceptions, bad advice, or simply being overscheduled, we've all committed offenses against the plants in our landscapes. Though not exhaustive, here is a list of crimes against plants. Who among us is not guilty?



Reckless pruning of crape myrtle trees is dubbed "crape murder." Photo credit: Mandy L. Smith

Ruthless Lopping

Also called tree topping, this misdeed involves hacking off the branches of a tree or shrub at a single, specified length, usually to reduce size or to prevent the plant from encroaching on a structure or other landscape feature. The result of topping is usually a rapid growth of weak, upright branches called water sprouts. They are inferior to the natural branches on the tree/shrub and can cause the plant to become top-heavy and stressed as it labors to redistribute its resources. For more information on proper pruning techniques, see the **Penn State Extension article Don't Top Trees**.



Shape Shifting

Not every shrub was meant to be a ball, a topiary, or even a hedge. Nor do we all have the time to con-tort shrubs into geometric shapes through consistent pruning. This type of pruning encourages dense leaf growth only on the outside of the shrub, shutting off light and airflow to the inside branches, encouraging insect pests and diseases on the interior of the plant. Boxwoods, yews, and holly lend themselves to being pruned in geometric



shapes or as a formal hedge. But most shrubs have a naturally relaxed shape and can become downright unsightly if pruned severely into a ball or hedge.

Burying Alive

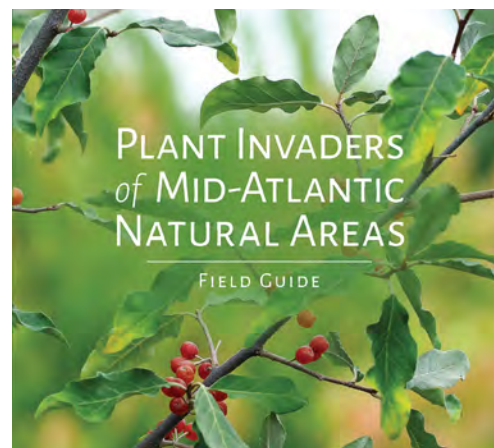
The effects of planting a tree or a shrub too deeply may take years to appear, but they will eventually cause failure and death. When planting a woody plant, the root flare at the base of the trunk should be visible above the ground. Burying trunk wood below ground interferes with its ability to translocate gasses, water and nutrients. In addition, roots too deep underground will struggle to the surface, growing in an unnatural pattern and perhaps even girdling the tree. It is thought that mulch piled up around the base of a tree or shrub can have the same effect, plus it may shelter damaging rodents. To read more and find out how this error can be remedied, see the Penn State Extension article **Are My Trees Buried Too Deep?**



Improper Potions

When using pesticides (including herbicides), make sure that you have identified the target correctly and chosen a product labeled for that purpose. If you use a pesticide not designated for the pest or plant in question, use more than is directed, or use it at a greater strength than instructed, you are actually violating federal law. The labels on pesticides are the result of years of research by the EPA to safeguard the environment and are legal documents.

Similarly, using household substances as pesticides because you think they are safer is a misguided belief. These concoctions have not been tested for their environmental effects. Dish soap, household vinegar, salt, boric acid, hairspray, bleach, gasoline—don't even think

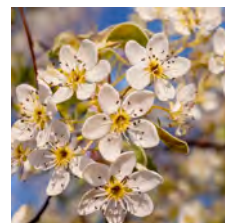


about applying any of these to kill insects or weeds! You may have even found this out the hard way by seeing their detrimental effects on unintended victims. For further explanation of why using home remedies is not recommended, see **Are Home Remedies a Good Solution? Penn State Extension Says No!**

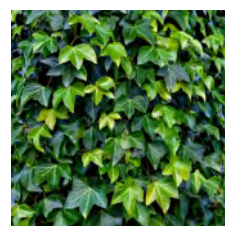
Inviting In Villains

You don't have to feel guilty about having non-native plants in your landscape; remember, there is a difference between non-native and invasive. But there are plants that have been masquerading as good guys while wreaking havoc in natural areas. These once-valued landscape plants have been added to the Pennsylvania Noxious Weed list, which bans them from sale in PA: Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), and privet (*Ligustrum* spp.). Several sterile varieties of Japanese barberries have been exempted from the list. Though they have not been placed on Pennsylvania's list of banned plants, be cautious about harboring butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), common periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), miscanthus grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*), and non-native honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.). Though once landscape favorites, these plants are all known to take over and degrade natural ecosystems. For an excellent resource that lists invasive plants and positive replacements, see **Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas**.

Even if you have committed a crime against plants, nature is forgiving. Amend your ways; go forth and garden without guilt!



Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)



English ivy (*Hedera helix*)



Common periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Where Beauty Meets Biodiversity: The Story of Hershey Gardens' Meadow

A renewed interest in biodiversity and ecology has led to the rise of meadow gardens—landscapes that appear wild and effortless but are, in reality, carefully designed and thoughtfully managed. Each meadow is tailored to its regional climate, native plants, and insect populations, serving as a living example of ecological balance.

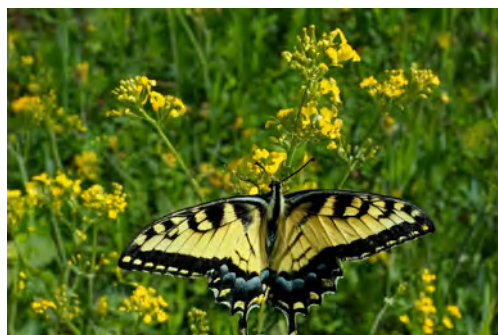
The meadow at the entrance of Hershey Gardens was created in 2016 alongside the construction of the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory. “We wanted to showcase native wildflowers that attract birds and pollinators,” explained Deb Wiles, director of horticultural operations. “At the same time, we needed to stabilize and maintain a very steep slope in a way that was both sustainable and beautiful.”



Visible from Hersheypark Drive and Hotel Road, the sunlit south-facing hill is planted with a diverse mix of native grasses, annuals and perennials. These plantings not only prevent erosion but also create a thriving ecosystem that supports bees, butterflies,

moths, birds, and countless other insects.

Guests often wonder why the meadow isn't mowed when flowers fade. “In order to encourage the best bloom and provide food and habitat for migratory birds and overwintering insects, we will wait until spring to mow,” said Wiles.



This allows species such as woolly bear caterpillars (*Pyrrharctia isabella*), Luna moth (*Actias luna*) and swallowtail (*Papilio* spp.) to overwinter in the soil or leaf litter, while native bees find shelter in hollow stems. Migrating birds feast on the seed heads of black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), aster (*Symphyotrichum* spp.) and purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), using the bare stems as perches before their journey south.

“By waiting to mow, we allow these creatures to complete their life cycles and ensure the ecosystem continues to thrive,” added Kaitlin Dannenberg, education associate. “The plants have a chance to self-seed, and many will regenerate after mowing, thereby continuing to provide food and shelter for animals

and insects over successive seasons.”

Despite its natural appearance, the meadow requires attentive care. Invasive weeds and tree seedlings must be removed, and certain species are occasionally replanted to maintain balance. Still, its sustainability is remarkable: the meadow fertilizes itself through decaying plant matter and relies on rainfall for irrigation.

“The result is a regenerative landscape that is not only visually stunning, but also ecologically vital,” said Wiles.



The Science of Fall Colors

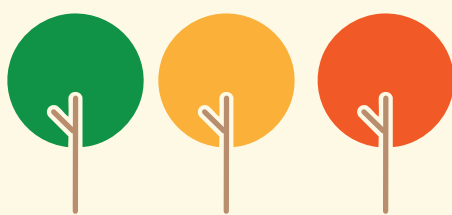
Scientists have worked to understand the changes that occur in trees and shrubs during fall for many years. Although, they don't yet understand all of the details, they do know enough to explain the basics. Three factors influence fall leaf color: leaf pigments, length of daylight and weather. As days grow shorter, and nights grow longer and cooler, biochemical processes in the leaf begin to paint the landscape with nature's fall color palette.

There are three types of color pigments or sugars involved in fall color:

Chlorophyll: Gives leaves a basic green color. It is necessary for photosynthesis, the chemical reaction that enables plants to use sunlight to manufacture sugars for food.

Carotenoids: Produces yellow, orange, and brown colors in such things as corn, carrots and daffodils, as well as rutabagas, buttercups and bananas.

Anthocyanin: Gives color to such familiar things as cranberries, red apples, concord grapes, blueberries, cherries, strawberries and plums. They are water soluble and appear in the watery liquid of leaf cells.



Trees in temperate zones store these sugars for the winter dormant period. Both chlorophyll and carotenoids are present in the chloroplasts of leaf cells during the growing season. Most anthocyanins are produced in the fall, in response to bright light and excess plant sugars within leaf cells. As night length increases, chlorophyll production slows down and then stops. This is when the carotenoids and anthocyanin that are present in the leaf are unmasked and show their colors.

In early fall, in response to the shortening days and declining intensity of sunlight, leaves begin the processes leading up to their color change. The veins that carry fluids into and out of the leaf gradually close off as a layer of cells forms at the base of each leaf. These clogged veins trap sugars in the leaf and promote production of anthocyanin. Once this separation layer is complete and the connecting tissues are sealed off, the leaf is ready to fall.

The amount and brilliance of the colors that develop in any particular autumn season are related to weather conditions that occur before and during the time the chlorophyll in the leaves is dwindling. Temperature and moisture are the main influences.

A series of warm, sunny days and cool, crisp but not freezing nights seems to bring about the most spectacular color displays. During these days, lots of sugars are produced in the leaf but the cool nights and the gradual closing of veins going into the leaf prevent these sugars from moving out. These conditions spur the production of the brilliant anthocyanin pigments: reds, purples and crimson. Because carotenoids are always present in leaves, the yellow and gold colors remain fairly constant from year to year.

The amount of moisture in the soil also affects fall colors. The countless combinations of these two highly variable factors assure that no two fall seasons can be exactly alike. A late spring, or a severe summer drought, can delay the onset of fall color by a few weeks. A warm period during fall will also lower the intensity of autumn colors. A warm wet spring, favorable summer weather, and warm sunny fall days with cool nights should produce the most brilliant fall colors.

A Living Tribute: Korean Fir Planted in Memory of Valerie Rowe

The M.S. Hershey Foundation recently honored the memory of a beloved colleague and friend, Valerie “Val” Rowe, with the planting of a beautiful tree in Hershey Gardens’ Japanese Garden.

Val, a lifelong Hershey resident, was the daughter of Lawrence and Olga Rowe, both of whom also have trees dedicated in their honor within the same garden. To celebrate Val’s life and her love of family and community, a Korean fir was planted near her parents’ trees.

The tree was donated by family friend Bob Good, owner of Good’s Tree & Lawn Care. Known for its pyramidal shape and striking, silvery-blue needles that curl to reveal shimmering undersides, the Korean fir is both fragrant and beautiful. The surrounding garden bed has been planted with red twig dogwood, Japanese aucuba, tree peonies, blue gamma grass, hostas, Japanese painted ferns, and blue hydrangeas, creating a peaceful setting.

Val’s professional career reflected her creativity. At The Hershey Company, she played a key role in developing a thriving direct-to-consumer business, shaping new products and the company’s holiday catalog. Later, at The M.S. Hershey Foundation, she revitalized the retail shops at Hershey Gardens and The Hershey Story Museum. Her talent for product development was inspired



by her father’s career at the H.B. Reese Candy Company and Hershey Foods Corporation, carrying forward a family legacy of innovation. Beyond her professional achievements, Val was treasured for her kindness, warmth and humor. She was a devoted mother to three children and took great pride in her family, especially her role as “Gram Cracker” to her three grandsons, Asher, James and Reese.

The Korean fir now stands as a living tribute to Val’s spirit—rooted in love, surrounded by beauty, and forever part of Hershey Gardens.



The Korean fir tree features bright purple cones, which stand out against its lush green needles.

Seeds of Support: Hershey Gardens Shares Harvest with Local Families in Need

More Than 700 Pounds of Produce Donated To Cocoa Packs

Hershey Gardens is proud to continue its commitment to supporting local food-insecure families, donating over 700 pounds of fresh produce, grown in its Hoop House, to Cocoa Packs. From spring through fall, staff and teen volunteers harvest, weigh and pack weekly donations before hand-delivering them directly to Cocoa Packs’ food distribution line.

Cocoa Packs provides supplemental food and other support to local children in need to enhance their overall wellness. Each week, they create packs that include milk and eggs, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Our fresh produce provides nutritional balance, supplementing non-perishable items and other donations from community partners, while also strengthening our community connections,” said Rebecca Lawrence, education and public programs manager at Hershey Gardens.

In addition to harvested produce, Hershey Gardens donated more than 200 live plants—including tomatoes, peppers, cantaloupe, kale, watermelon, zucchini, spaghetti squash, and beans—along with growing instructions to help families start their own gardens. “Families and volunteers at Cocoa Packs shared how much they value not only the fresh produce, but also the joy of planting and growing alongside their children or grandchildren,” said Lawrence. “It means a lot to them that the food is grown and



Volunteers help harvest, weigh and pack the donated produce.

harvested right here in their community.”

Donations have included unique fruits and vegetables not always found in grocery stores, such as pawpaws, heirloom tomatoes and specialty squash. Each item is paired with recipes and tips on how to prepare and identify ripeness.

“Many visitors are surprised to learn that much of the food is actually planted by local students in our Green Thumbs program,” said Lawrence. “More than 3,300 students participated during the 2024–2025 school year.” While planting seeds, these students learned hands-on lessons about soil composition, companion planting and host plants. “Teachers then received photos of the students’ crops as they grew throughout the season,” said Lawrence.

Hershey Gardens also contributed 71 pounds



Produce is grown in the Hoop House, which is located in The Children’s Garden.

of produce from the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Flower and Edible Vegetable Trial Gardens, located in the Seasonal Display Garden. Recent plant trials featured new varieties such as the “Candy Cane Chocolate Cherry” sweet striped pepper, the “Liberty Belle” yellow bell pepper, and the compact “Baby Jack” eggplant. Ratings from the trial program, which are available **here**, are used to help commercial growers and gardeners decide what to grow or sell.

“It is a privilege to expand our Hoop House and Student Garden program while giving back to the community,” Lawrence said. “Through this work, we honor Milton and Catherine Hershey’s legacy of philanthropy and community enrichment.”

To learn more about Cocoa Packs, **click here**.

Fall Gardening for Birds in the Mid-Atlantic Region

By Ember S. Jandebeur, Dauphin County Master Gardener

As summer concludes, many gardeners are preparing their outdoor spaces for both migrating birds and those that remain for the winter.

The most beneficial action you can take for birds is to plant host plants for caterpillars, as these are the primary food source for bird broods. Therefore, if your goal is to attract birds to your yard, consider their dietary needs. After their broods have left, local birds and migrants will require other food sources.

A variety of berry-producing plants will offer a rich food supply. In my South Central Pennsylvania yard, serviceberries (*Amelanchier* spp.), cranberry viburnum (*Viburnum trilobum*), other viburnums, and raspberries all bloom from late summer to early fall. Elderberries ripen much earlier; my elderberry bushes are relentlessly de-berryed by birds as soon as they are ripe, which is quite a spectacle! If you enjoy cedar waxwings, planting a hawthorn tree will attract them for its berries.

For seed-eating birds, dedicating an area to native grasses that produce edible seed heads can provide food, nesting materials, and hiding spots. Examples of such grasses



Various coneflowers; the soft purple native is preferred.

include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), and purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*).

Several beautiful flowers also produce seed heads that foraging birds enjoy. The largest and most striking are seed-producing sunflowers. There are many varieties to choose from; just ensure that the type you select will produce seeds, as some sunflowers have been genetically altered for aesthetics rather than utility. Coneflowers are highly sought after by

goldfinches, and you'll hear their distinct "per-chik-ori" song as they arrive to feed. *Tithonia* spp. (Mexican sunflower), though not native to the Mid-Atlantic but to North America (Mexico), initially attracts a wide array of butterflies and hummingbirds. It eventually goes to seed, providing food for seed-eating birds. *Rudbeckia* spp. (black-eyed Susans) will eventually develop dry seed heads that seed-eaters appreciate. Zinnia, cosmos, asters, and goldenrod all produce valuable seeds for fall foragers. Asters, being a late bloomer, also offer much-needed nectar.

In summary, aim to cultivate a diverse selection of trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses that yield nectar, berries and seeds. If you plant it, they will come. Happy gardening and birding!

Have a garden question? Contact the Penn State Extension Master Gardeners of Dauphin County at dauphinmg@psu.edu or call 717-921-8803. Penn State Extension is dedicated to translating scientific research into real-world applications and education. Educational content, such as articles, videos and online courses, can be accessed anytime, anywhere at the **Penn State extension website**.

Curious Minds at Work: Volunteers Put Nature to the Test



Easton and Anuska studied butterflies to determine if they could remember food sources.



Volunteers welcomed guests to Marvelous Monday.



Sia, Colton and Nandita experimented with insect-eating plants.

Each summer, Hershey Gardens Volunteers can be seen eagerly staffing the Zoology Zone Cart, lending a helping hand with family activities during Marvelous Mondays, and assisting gardeners in the Hoop House and Gardens. But this summer, the Volunteers also embarked on something new!

"Approximately half of our youth volunteers chose from a suggested list of experiments to replicate, or they created their own experiments," said Kaitlin Dannenberg, education and public programs associate. "These Volunteers then presented their findings to our guests at the last Marvelous Monday on August 4."

So what did these curious young scientists discover?

- Will heat or food motivate our Madagascar hissing cockroaches to come out of their safe dark place? Jacob and Braydon quickly found the answer: food, much more than heat, lures these creatures out of their safe zone!
- Hannah and Cara tested the use of common kitchen waste such as coffee grounds and banana peels, to

see if they had an impact on tomato plant growth. The result? It was a tie!

- Sia, Colton and Nandita closely examined the insects consumed by the pitfall traps of our carnivorous, insect-eating plants. They found that the pitcher plants at Hershey Gardens mostly consumed isopods.
- Using the butterflies in the Butterfly Atrium as their subjects, Easton and Anuska provided butterflies with a choice of water, nectar, Gatorade or nothing by placing different bowls into an enclosure with the butterflies for two days. They then observed the butterflies to see if they remembered food sources by recording how many times the butterflies drank from each bowl in a 30-minute period. On the third day, they changed all of their bowls to water but found butterflies consistently went to the bowl that had previously held nectar.
- Payton conducted a birding survey throughout the Gardens and assessed where to find different types of birds. She found the highest population of diversity and abundance in the Rock

Garden and Arboretum. Payton's work will contribute to a bird list to share with our guests this fall and winter.

- Does music affect plants? That was the question that Swarna, Linnaea and Camy were tasked with answering. These three young musicians recorded themselves playing classical music using wind and string instruments and then played their recordings to runner beans. The beans that received music played on wind instruments grew longer shoots and germinated sooner! Parent Priscilla Mimiren, commented that "they learned a lot about the challenges of trying to control various variables and how to explain weird results. It was an excellent exercise in data analysis and interpretation. And they were thrilled to find a way to combine their interests in science, music, and gardening!"

We appreciate this past summer's Volunteers and their work and research. We look forward to next summer's group of eager young volunteers!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

All events are included in admission; free for members of Hershey Gardens.
Not a member? Join Now!

Please check HersheyGardens.org for event updates.

Demonstration of Nature Journaling

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Drop in to see a demonstration of nature journaling techniques, ask questions of a seasoned nature journalist and review materials in our nature journaling kit available to check out during your next visit. Demonstration located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory.



Intro to Forest Bathing with ANFT Forest Therapy Guide

Lauren Berg

Saturday, October 11, 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

\$30 for members, \$35 non-members

Online registration required [here](#).

Forest bathing is a guided experience that invites participants to slow down, engage their senses, and cultivate a deeper connection with the natural world. Inspired by the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku, forest bathing has been shown to reduce stress, boost immune function, and enhance overall well-being.

During the walk, your guide will offer embodiment-focused “invitations,” which participants can use as a guideline, recognizing that each individual has a unique path to follow. Invitations are followed by a time to gather, listen and share, during which all expressions are welcome. The walk will end with a light tea tasting.

The walk will include changes in grade and walking surfaces as you may go off the main paved path and onto wood carpet or grass. Shoes with good tread are recommended. As this walk will be held outdoors, please dress for weather conditions and bring a water bottle. Rain or shine.



Saving Nature at Home with Dr. Desiree Narango

Thursday, November 6 at 7 p.m.

Location: The Hershey Story Museum

Dr. Narango will speak about her research studying how residential landscapes and gardening practices influence wildlife habitats. She will compare how native and non-native plant species vary in supporting species interactions, as well as the relationship between plants and insects and why insects matter to birds. Plus, learn small steps you can take to improve and restore habitat for wildlife at home. Due to conservatory construction, this lecture will take place at The Hershey Story Museum in downtown Hershey. RSVPs are not required.

Bonsai Demonstration with the Susquehanna Bonsai Club

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Gain insight into the techniques and artistry of the living art of bonsai. Members of the Susquehanna Bonsai Club will actively demonstrate techniques in branch selection, wiring and shaping the growth of woody trees and shrubs. Demonstration located in The Children’s Garden.



Pumpkin Palooza

October 18, 19, 25 & 26, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pumpkin Palooza returns for all things pumpkin! Kids, come in costume and trick or treat at four Hershey’s candy stations, enjoy over 300 painted pumpkins, a unique 14-foot “pumpkin tree”



and the perfect photo backdrop of pumpkin mosaics! Plus, stop by to see if you can “handle” the Creepy Creatures Gallery! Guests can also enjoy food trucks and hundreds of mums on display, including a colorful 9-foot mum tree. [See the full schedule of events here.](#)



Sponsors:



Celebrate the Holidays at Hershey Gardens

Holiday Hours: Open daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with the following exceptions:
Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day;
Open 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Christmas Eve

The Christmas Tree Showcase

Friday, November 21 through
Thursday, January 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey
Conservatory

Our signature holiday event features colorful tree displays with twinkling lights; each unique tree is created by a talented local designer. Guests will enjoy a pair of 14-foot and 8-foot poinsettia and tropical trees! The historic Hersheypark Comet coaster car is back for family photo ops and the Butterfly Atrium will be decorated for the holidays!



Thomas Davis
PNC
Sponsors



Visits with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus

Santa Claus

Saturday, December 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Garden Cottage

Storytime with Mrs. Claus

Saturday, December 20 at 11 a.m.
Garden Cottage



Student Christmas Tree Showcase

Friday, November 21 through Thursday, January 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Enjoy dozens of creative ornaments made by local school students on display on live Fraser fir trees in the Garden Cottage.

Calling All Kids! Crafty Christmas Creations

November 22 & 29; December 6, 13, 20 & 27, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Perfect for kids of all ages. Join in the fun of creating your own holiday craft, inspired by nature. Located in the Education Center in The Children's Garden.

Winter Wreath Workshops

Friday, December 5 at 10 a.m., Saturday, December 6 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and Sunday, December 7 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Celebrate winter by creating a beautiful and festive wreath, perfect for the holidays! Using fresh limbs, twigs and pods pruned from the Gardens, participants will learn how to create a stunning, long-lasting 24-inch wreath for their door or table. All supplies and materials are provided. Led by Hershey Gardens Education Programs Staff. Members: \$55; Non-members: \$65. Registration required here, beginning November 1.



Santa and His Reindeer Use This Special Sleigh... Only When They Come to Hershey, PA!

It's Hersheypark's Comet coaster car, of course! Bring the whole family to Hershey Gardens and sit in it for the perfect holiday photo op!

Located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory
Friday, November 21 through Thursday, January 1,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Winter Bird Watch

Saturday, January 17, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Feeding the Birds
Saturday, February 14, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Love is on the Wing; Bird ID and Mate Selection

Bring the whole family—and your binoculars—and learn to identify the various birds that call Hershey Gardens home during the winter. Each Saturday we'll walk you through Project Feederwatch, take you on a unique guided bird walk and provide additional information about identification and feeding. For the youngest birders, additional bird family crafts and activities will be offered in the classroom. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. In partnership with Quittapahilla Audubon Society. Registration is required by calling 717.508.5968.



NEW! Winter Wednesdays Family Series:
Winter Animal Adaptations

January 14, 21, 28, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Each week meet new "friends" at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart and engage in family activities that explore how animals and plants survive winter. We'll compare and contrast native species to our Zoology Zone species, discuss winter survival, and when seeds are sleepy over winter. Activity located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory and the Education Center.



Live Feedings at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart
Fridays, January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, 12 to 12:30 p.m.
Watch our insectivores receive a special nutritious snack, while learning about our predatory insects, frogs and arachnids.

Dried Floral Arrangement Class
Saturday, February 7, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Join us to create your own dried floral arrangement to bring beauty to your home in the winter months. We'll use an assortment of dried specimens such as seed pods, florals, grasses and greens to learn about color, form and texture when creating an arrangement. Class held in the Education Center in The Children's Garden.
Led by Kaitlin Dannenberg, education associate
Members: \$65; Non-members: \$75
Registration required here, starting December 15.

ECO-FICTION BOOK GROUP



Join us quarterly to explore works of eco-fiction, nature, and environment-oriented literature, which often include a human element. It is not necessary to attend all sessions—please join whenever you can!
New participants are always welcome. We encourage you to read each month's selections prior to the meeting to fully participate in the discussion. All sessions are located in the Garden Cottage and will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m.



New for 2026, we will be pairing a non-fiction read with the fiction selection each quarter.
Friday, October 24: *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh
Friday, January 23: *There are Rivers in the Sky* by Elif Shafak and *Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames* by Lara Maiklem
Save These Dates! Check HersheyGardens.org for book selections.
Friday, April 24 | Friday, July 24 | Friday, October 23
To register, please email Kaitlin Dannenberg at kadannenberg@hersheygardens.org

The Annual Orchid Show & Sale
Takes a Hiatus in 2026

Due to construction of the Rose Garden Pavilion, the Orchid Show & Sale will not be held in 2026. The show will return in 2027, bigger and better than ever!



CELEBRATE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR
IN 2026!

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with us! Each week we'll explore a different activity. The Butterfly Atrium will be decorated to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Plus, discover the cultural significance of our Asian butterfly, moth, insect and plant collections!



Winter Wednesdays
February 4, 11, 18 & 25, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Bring the family and interact with Asian species like our mossy frog, jungle nymphs, walking sticks, and more at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart. Engage in family activities that celebrate traditions like making seed envelopes, learn about Chinese calligraphy and create lanterns. Located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory and the Education Center.

- February 4: Plant Asian greens
- February 11: Discover calligraphy and paper cutting
- February 18: Create a red seed envelope
- February 25: Make a paper lantern

Lunar New Year Celebration
Sunday, February 22, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Join us for guided garden tours that highlight indoor and outdoor Asian collections and bring the whole family for fun activities to celebrate the Year of the Horse!



Activities include:
Guided garden tours at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
Create a good luck seed envelope, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Music by the Chilin' Quartet, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Tropical bonsai exhibit by the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Art Show & Display
"For the Love of Art" by the Hershey Area Art Association
Friday, February 13 and Saturday, February 14, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
February 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This dazzling display of art will feature work by members of the Hershey Area Art Association. Pieces for purchase will include woodworking to prints, acrylic and oil, jewelry and more. Located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory.

Turn Your PA Tax Dollars Into Educational Opportunities!

Your Business Can Receive Significant Tax Credits While Supporting The M.S. Hershey Foundation’s Educational Programs

What is the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program?

Offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), this program allows businesses to receive significant tax credits when they contribute to qualified educational improvement organizations such as The M.S. Hershey Foundation. Funding from the EITC program allows the Foundation to bring increased educational opportunities to thousands of children every year, thereby continuing its mission to provide educational and cultural enrichment to the residents and visitors of Hershey.

This program only funds “innovative educational programs” that are pre-approved by the DCED. It does not fund general operating expenses.

The EITC program amends the Pennsylvania Public School Code to authorize tax credits for businesses that make contributions to educational improvement organizations (EIO).



Apply Today!



Applications and guidelines are available on the **DCED website**. The EITC Offices must receive the application on or after July 1, not before.

For more Information, please contact:
Pennsylvania EITC Program
Department of Community & Economic Development
717.346.8005
Or
The M.S. Hershey Foundation
Zoe Pecchio at 717.520.5581 or
Zojpecchio@mshersheyfoundation.org

What is an educational improvement organization (EIO)?

EIOs are non-profit organizations that have been approved by DCED for participation in the EITC program. To become an EIO, the non-profit must apply to the DCED to show how their programs improve the educational opportunities for children. The Hershey Story, Hershey Gardens and Hershey Theatre have been designated eligible EIOs.



What businesses are eligible?

Businesses authorized to do business in Pennsylvania who are subject to one or more of the following taxes:

- Personal Income Tax
- Capital Stock/Foreign Franchise Tax
- Corporate Net Income Tax
- Bank Shares Tax
- Title Insurance & Trust Company Shares Tax
- Insurance Premium Tax (excluding unauthorized, domestic/foreign marine)
- Mutual Thrift Tax
- Malt Beverage Tax
- Surplus Lines Tax

Why should your business give?

Tax credits equal to 75% of your contribution, up to a maximum of \$750,000 per taxable year. Credits can be increased to 90%

of the contribution, if your business agrees to provide the same amount for two consecutive tax years. Tax credits may be applied against the tax liability of a business for the tax year in which the contribution was made. Plus, you are helping support The M.S. Hershey Foundation’s educational programs at Hershey Gardens, The Hershey Story Museum, and Hershey Theatre.

When does the tax credit program begin?

Tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to an Educational Improvement Organization:

May 15 – June 30: Business applicants who have fulfilled their 2-year commitment and wish to reapply to renew their 2-year commitment.

May 15 – June 30: Businesses who are in the middle of their 2-year commitment.

July 1: All other businesses including initial applicants and those applicants wishing to submit an additional application on top of their previously submitted 2-year commitment.

How do businesses apply for the tax credit?

The process is simple. Pennsylvania businesses can begin applying for EITC credits through the Enterprise eGrants System. DCED no longer requires applicants to mail the signed signature page.

The **business application guide** explains the process of applying. Tax credit applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis by day submitted. All applications received on a specific day will be processed on a random basis before moving on to the next day’s applications. Applications will be approved until the amount of available tax credits is exhausted.



63 West Chocolate Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033 | 717.298.2200
MSHersheyFoundation.org

*The M.S. Hershey Foundation is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit educational and cultural organization.*



*Funding for The Hershey Story is supported
by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical
and Museum Commission, a state agency funded
by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

The M.S. Hershey Foundation Board of Managers

James W. Brown, Chair
M. Diane Koken
Maria Kraus
Jason Wolfe
Michelle Figlar

Donald C. Papson
President and Executive Director



170 Hotel Road
Hershey, PA 17033
717.534.3492
HersheyGardens.org



63 W. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033
717.534.8939
HersheyStory.org



15 East Caracas Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033
717.534.3405
HersheyTheatre.com



63 W. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033
717.533.1777
HersheyArchives.org



We Salute Our Veterans on Veterans Day

**Tuesday, November 11,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

All veterans receive free admission
to the Museum Experience at The
Hershey Story Museum and free
admission to Hershey Gardens on
Veterans Day. Please present
Military ID. Guests of veterans
receive \$3 off admission.

We thank you for your service!

Meet the Mossy Frog: Camouflage So Convincing, It Blurs the Line Between Animal and Plant

By Jody Santos, Manager of Conservatory Habitats

Hershey Gardens is proud to be home to a remarkable species of frog that takes camouflage very seriously. So seriously, in fact, that you may not be able to spot it even while staring right at it from only a foot away. That's because for *Theloderma corticale*, the elusive Vietnamese mossy frog, blending in is truly a matter of survival.

The Vietnamese mossy frog is more than just a beautiful curiosity – it's a perfect illustration of how form follows function in nature. Its skin texture, coloration and behavior all combine into a single, effective anti-predator strategy, one of nature's most convincing disguises.

Aptly named, the beautiful and fascinating mossy frog has perfected the art of camouflage as a plant mimic, spending daylight hours inactive and concealed, vanishing almost entirely against mossy and rocky surfaces along the streams near which it lives. Disguising itself as a clump of moss and lichen, it makes invisibility a survival strategy.

Theloderma, from the Greek, means "nipple skin" and corticale refers to a resemblance to the outer bark layer of a tree. With their mixed, patchy coloration of greens, browns and greys, the bumpy, warty, bark-like texture of their skin, their ability to flatten themselves against rocky surfaces and conform to crevices, mossy frogs seem to disappear right before their adversaries' eyes. They blend perfectly into the mossy plant life surrounding the mountainous freshwater streams that they call home. But even expert-level masters of disguise are sometimes discovered, and in these cases mossy frogs have a further line of defense: they curl tightly into a ball, playing dead, hoping to convince an aggressor that they are nothing more than an unappetizing clump of moss.

Range and Habitat

Vietnamese mossy frogs are native to high-altitude evergreen forests in northern Vietnam, southern China and parts of Laos. Cool alpine streams framed by limestone outcroppings and surrounded by moist, verdant woodland is the ideal habitat in which mossy frogs thrive. They are semi-aquatic, spending a large amount of time in the water or at its edge, but possess the sticky toe pads of tree frogs, making use of the tree canopy as well.

Reproduction and Diet

Adults range in size from 2.75 inches from snout to vent for males and up to 3.5 inches for females, who are not only longer, but heavier-bodied. Males are the vocal members of the species, and their soft hooting call can be heard during morning and evening hours of the breeding season as they attempt to locate and entice mates. Eggs are laid on branches or leaves overhanging the stream below, and the newly hatched tadpoles fall into the water to begin their metamorphic journey from tadpole to adult frog over a period of several months.

Mossy frogs are nocturnal, emerging at night to hunt the insects and other invertebrates that make up their diet. Really any bug that they can fit into their broad, gaping grin is fair game.



Welcome Fern!

Meet Our Mossy Frog
and See Her New Home

Hershey Gardens' female mossy frog "Fern" has been on limited public display since 2022, making appearances on the Zoology Cart and in Pumpkin Palooza's Creepy Creatures Gallery each October. She is not able to be on display in the Butterfly Atrium due to extreme temperatures which would be harmful to her, as the Atrium can reach temperatures of over 80 F. Her ideal healthy temperature range is from the high 60s to the low 70s F. The Educational & Horticultural Wing of the Conservatory usually remains between 70- and 72-degrees year 'round, making it an ideal environment for Fern. Beginning this fall, look for her in her newly designed paludarium (a terrarium with a built-in water feature) in the Educational & Horticultural Wing. Test your powers of observation as you try to distinguish Fern from the mosses and other plants in her new home!

Conservation Status

Rounding out their self-defense capabilities, Vietnamese mossy frogs are reputed to "throw" their voices up to 13 feet, making their location even more difficult to pinpoint for predators and researchers alike. Indeed, it is because of elusive behavior such as this, along with their secretive nature and flawless camouflage, that accurate population numbers are difficult to estimate. The IUCN Red List places *Theloderma corticale* in the category of Least Concern, and it is listed by CITES as Appendix II, meaning it is not currently endangered, but may potentially be jeopardized if trade and habitat destruction are not controlled.