The Story of Laurelwood...
Begins with Dorothy and John moving to Pines Lake in the 1930s.

"We won’t be surprised when Dot is hailed as one of the foremost artists of the day."
- She would go on to create Laurelwood with her artistry.

Dorothy’s high school yearbook.
John’s family owned Country Club ice cream
Dorothy Knippenberg (mother nature)
A visionary among us...

Dirt roads, forest views, and the concept of a community yet to be created... that was Pines Lake in the 1930’s when newlyweds John and Dorothy Knippenberg arrived here from the city of Paterson. John was a graduate of West Point and Dorothy a graduate of Pratt School of Design. Although gifted in the traditional mediums of paints and brushes little did Dorothy know then that the natural beauty of Pines Lake would become a special muse for her artistic spirit during the next 3/4 of a century - and counting!

The young Knippenbergs owned a tract of land running from present day Vale Road to the land upon which Pines Lake School now stands. As more and more land became subdivided for housing and schools John and Dorothy had the foresight to strike an arrangement with the Township regarding a 30 acre parcel bounded by Collfax Road, Vale Road and Pines Lake Drive East. This particular parcel, (now known as Laurelwood Arboretum,) would be gifted to the Township as a public garden at a future date.

And so it was, beginning in the late 1930’s, that Dorothy began expressing her creativity by “designing with plants.” At that early time the future Laurelwood Arboretum was merely an inspiration nurtured by soil, rain, and no doubt a lot of Bengay. Every plant one now sees is the result of Dorothy’s planned masterpiece. As with all works-in-progress changes have been made over the years; shrubs have been transplanted to a more hospitable exposure, clippings taken, rootings made, more seedlings sown....continued on page 15
Dorothy, 6th from left, an early and integral member of the Pines Lake Garden Club
They build a home on the property
John and Dorothy
John and Dorothy purchase 30 acres in 1949 and begin Laurelwood Gardens, a wholesale rhododendron and azalea nursery.
Property improvements are begun:

- Building a pond
- Planting fields are created
Greenhouses are built

Cold frames
Vegetable garden
1963 Knippenbergs enter agreement with Wayne to donate property upon their passing.
Dorothy in the News
John next to a rhododendron
Volunteers help improve the property

Eagle Scouts help build 1st bridge
Dorothy and Alex Fadynich near 1st bridge after construction.
Dorothy and her truck
First notice board is a scout project.
Scout Projects

Building 3rd Bridge

Second Bridge
John Knippenberg dies in 1984. Town puts out a call for volunteers to help maintain Laurelwood. Local groups begin adopt-a-spot.
1996 Passaic Master Gardeners begin volunteering.
Area maintained by Pines Lake Garden Club
Soroptomist Club presents Dorothy with an award
Grace Tardiff (on left), early volunteer, and memorial to Grace.
Pines Lake School group visit, 2001
2003 - Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum created to support the Arboretum

Several friends of Laurelwood Arboretum
Township mourns loss of Dorothy Knippenberg

BY DEBRA WINTERS
Staff Writer

Wayne – Remembered fondly for her peaceful 30-acre botanical haven, Dorothy Knippenberg of Wayne died June 26. She was 96. This is a huge loss to our community. She was a gem. What her and her husband John did for Laurelwood Gardens will forever be enjoyed by thousands and thousands,” said Mayor Scott Rumana.

Knippenberg attended Pratt Institute in New York City where she studied design. She also wrote advertising for Meyer Brothers in Paterson before she joined her late husband, John Knippenberg, at their well-known family business, County Club Ice Cream Co., in Paterson, designing logos for the company.

During the 30s, the Knippenbergs purchased 30 acres of property in the Pine Lake section of Wayne, which would become the site of one of the most prominent gardens in the area, a vision Dorothy saw through until her final days.

The arboretum, known for its rhododendrons and azaleas, later became part of the township parks system in 1996, and has been preserved by Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum, a non-profit association since 2004.

Mrs. Knippenberg fell and fractured her hip in early December 2005, and according to her friend Nancy Posnjak, of Wayne, she was in rehab and then went home to recover but never quite regained full strength. Prior to this, she could be seen everyday working in the arboretum — if not physically, she would be going around checking things out.

“She always stayed optimistic, always looking at a blue sky even if there were clouds,” said Posnjak.

Following her fall, Knippenberg would get rides through the arboretum on days she wasn’t up for walking. Her last visit to the arboretum was about a week before her passing when plans for...
Name changed from Laurelwood Gardens to Laurelwood Arboretum in accordance with Dorothy’s wishes.
2007 Agreement between Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum and Wayne Township to maintain the property.
First project – Sensory Garden, idea initiated by the Wayne Lion’s Club

This special place funded by the Passaic County Open Space Commission, Lions Clubs of Wayne and West Milford, Wayne Township, and Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum. Probably 2009.
Sensory garden arbor
Sensory Garden
2011 Memorial gazebo built, donated by Isobel Wayrick.
Knippenberg Center for Education (KCE) and greenhouse built in 2015, funded by Passaic County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust, Wayne Township Open Space Fund, and Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum.

Before the building of KCE
Generous local businesses have contributed furniture, rugs, electronic equipment, a security system and other items for the interior.
South Rock Garden

Renovations began in 2014. The Watnong Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society has partnered with staff and volunteers to restore this display garden, which had deteriorated over the years.
Rosemary Boothny, woodcarver, at work creating beautiful signs for Laurelwood
Dorothy’s way trellis
2016 Executive Director Elaine Fogerty in front of Native Plant Garden she designed.
Native Plant Garden

- This unique garden was made possible by the grants from the California-based Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and The Ira A. Roschelle, MD Family Foundation.
2015 Plant Identification and rhododendron identification programs begun

Joe DiGiacomo leads rhododendron identification project
Fundraising to support the Arboretum

Plant sale

Art at the Arboretum
Donate a Bench Program

Isobel Wayrick’s bench

Festival of Friends
A variety of programs for children and adults

All Wayne Orchestra
A variety of programs for children and adults

Fairy Day
A variety of programs for children and adults

Bees and butterflies Day
New Members Day
Wedding at Laurelwood
Laurelwood volunteers at work

Every year over 200 volunteers help maintain Laurelwood beautiful!
Laurelwood volunteers at work

In 2018, volunteers contributed 12,779 hours of service, valued at $361,901!
Columbia Bank volunteers

Columbia Bank donates cart!
McHutchison volunteers
Volunteers from Cedar Crest
Dedication of Founders Garden, Founders of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum, 2018
Laurelwood volunteers with 1,000 hours of service
Laurelwood volunteers with 100 hours of service
Construction begins on new propagation greenhouse, 2019
Thank you for your support of Laurelwood Arboretum and Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum!