

MARJORIE L. AND ARTHUR P. MILLER FUND
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FUND FOR OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Across Chester County, local citizen groups are emerging as stewards of their local land resources while other organizations with an environmental focus are forming as issue groups, non-profit agencies, and municipal land trusts. Other non-profits serve as stewards for important parcels of land being used in creative ways for education and demonstration purposes. Each community has valuable resources that are worthy of being preserved—streams, wetlands, green space, areas important to wildlife, scenic vistas, and areas of historic or community significance.

The Chester County Community Foundation is now accepting applications for the Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund. ***One challenge grant of up to \$2,500*** is available each year to support a non-profit organization which provides creative solutions to open space preservation and the wise use of environmental resources. The challenge portion of this grant can be met through such diverse means as new forms of in-kind donations and volunteer support and/or new grant dollars. The Miller grant can be used for the following:

- **The creation of a park, trail, or recreation area**
- **A public or school-based environmental education effort**
- **Research and publication about an important environmental issue**
- **Environmental enhancement and preservation of a significant site**
- **Volunteer and leadership development**
- **A demonstration project with wide-use application**

Successful projects will be those that:

- **Involve collaboration with environmental agencies & organizations**
- **Demonstrate high impact relative to the dollars expended**
- **Are of a lasting nature.**

Programs with a significant educational component are encouraged.

Proposals will be accepted until **Monday, September 29**. Upon review of the initial proposals, a site visit may be conducted of the finalists. The grant will be awarded in November.

Please use the attached Grant Proposal Format to apply for the grant. Please explain how you will meet the challenge component in your grant proposal narrative. Grant applications should be submitted no later than 11:59 P.M., **Monday, September 29** to: grants@chescofcf.org.

Subject: Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund Grant Application

For more information, please contact Stephenie Stevens, Grant Program Officer & Philanthropy Planning Officer at the Chester County Community Foundation at 610-696-0501 or steph@chescofcf.org Thank you!



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Date: 9/29/2025

Contact Information:

Organization Name: **Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens**
Address: **631 Berwyn Baptist Road**
Devon, PA 19333

Phone: **(610) 647-8870 ext. 121**

Web Address: **www.jenkinsarboretum.org**

Contact Name: **Stephanie Kuniholm**

Contact Title: **Dir. of External Relations**

Contact E-mail:

stephanie@jenkinsarboretum.org

Fax: **N/A**

Year Incorporated: **1976**

Have you previously received the Miller Grant Award: Yes **X** No

If "Yes", please indicate date and amount of each grant, if any, received from the Foundation:

(1) Year: 2024	Amt Rec'd: \$1,000.00	(2) Year: 2022	Amt. Rec'd \$2,000.00
(3) Year: 2021	Amt Rec'd: \$3,000.00	(4) Year: 2007	Amt. Rec'd \$2,000.00

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served (*If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County municipalities served*): **Greater Philadelphia Region**

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: **Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens welcomes more than 90,000 visitors and 5,000 program participants each year.**

Mission Statement: **Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens celebrates the wonder of plants and place as a destination for education, conservation, and community connection.**

Organization Description: **Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens is a living classroom for people of all ages. Our free-admission policy invites more than 90,000 annual visitors to explore and connect with nature without barriers. Our gardens serve as a center for the community to learn about and explore topics related to ecological horticulture, outdoor recreation, climate resiliency, and environmental art. Through our work in horticulture, conservation, and education, Jenkins fosters a community of environmental stewards while preserving open space for generations to come.**

Annual Budget **\$1,841,869**

66 % of budget for program expenses

18 % of budget for administrative expenses

16 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

11 Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

21 Board Volunteers

52 Active Non-Board Volunteers

12,704 Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: **Bill and Sharon Schwarze, Pamela Joy Jensen, Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation**

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested: **\$1,800**

Description of Grant Purpose: **Third Thursday Lecture Series**

1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Since 1976, Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens has stewarded 48 acres of woodlands and gardens for the education and enjoyment of our community. Open daily and free of charge, Jenkins welcomes over 90,000 visitors annually from southeastern Pennsylvania and beyond, providing a serene space where people of all ages can connect with nature and discover how to become better caretakers of their own land and resources. Inspiring community engagement through shared learning is central to our mission. To that end, we have developed a highly successful educational program known as the Third Thursday Lectures Series. This series expands Jenkins' offerings of free experiences, complementing no-cost garden admission with equally accessible opportunities for lifelong learning.

2. Funding request:

Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens respectfully seeks a grant of \$1,800 from the Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund to support our popular Third Thursday Lecture Series. This free, virtual lecture series was introduced as a monthly program in fall 2020 as we responded to the need for accessible online programming during the pandemic. The series immediately attracted a strong audience and has continued to grow ever since, with registration averaging 150 attendees per lecture as participants tune in from across the country (and the globe!).

Each month, the lecture series features expert speakers on topics ranging from improving soil health to managing streamside properties to gardening in a warming climate. Lectures are designed to educate and empower, offering community members the opportunity to deepen their appreciation for the natural world while gaining practical knowledge to apply in their own backyards and communities.

Building on the success of past seasons, our 2026 winter and spring series will feature six lectures that highlight the many ways people and plants shape our shared environment. These lectures include:

- **Evolution, Environment, Drought, Frost: Insights from Extinct and Living Plants** with Jonathan Wilson, Edward Drinker Cope Professor of Environmental Biology at Haverford College
- **Paved Paradise: The Ecological Impacts of Our Planet's Road System** with Ben Goldfarb, environmental journalist and author of *Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet*
- **Return to the Sky: The Reintroduction of the Bald Eagle** with Tina Morris, wildlife biologist and author of *Return to the Sky*
- **Art or Science? The Co-Construction of Botanical Illustration** with Tracy Qiu, ornamental horticulturalist and public garden professional
- **Past, Present, Future: A Journey Through Jenkins** with Tom Smarr, Executive Director of Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens
- **The Science of Attracting Butterflies** with Heather Andrews, Cumberland County Master Gardener and professional speaker

In addition to live virtual presentations, we have developed a curated resource page on our website that hosts recordings of lectures (where speakers allow) and supplementary materials for further learning.

This page, available at www.jenkinsarboretum.org/third-thursday-lectures, is shared with registrants, allowing them to revisit sessions and access additional resources for continued education. Recordings of the lectures are also shared to our YouTube channel for wider access. One such recording, “Let it Be an Oak” by renowned entomologist Doug Tallamy, has garnered over 39,500 views since its upload, demonstrating the extended reach and lasting impact of the series.

A. Specific Chester County needs and issues addressed

Jenkins' Third Thursday Lecture Series responds to the community's need for accessible, high-quality environmental education. Offered virtually and free of charge, the series removes barriers of cost and mobility, ensuring that individuals across Chester County and beyond can participate regardless of income, transportation, or physical ability. The growing interest in these lectures underscores their importance as a source of education, inspiration, and connection.

In an increasingly polarized climate, Jenkins provides trusted space for neighbors to explore pressing environmental issues guided by recognized experts. This emphasis on learning together fosters social trust, encourages respectful dialogue, and strengthens community resilience.

B. Organizational impact (for general operating proposals) or project impact (for project proposals)

Funding from the Marjorie L. and Arthur P. Miller Fund will directly cover honoraria for the expert speakers leading our 2026 lecture series. This support will ensure that we can continue attracting high-caliber presenters, maintain the quality of the program, and sustain free access for participants.

Our Third Thursday Lecture Series provides thousands of learners with the tools and knowledge to conserve open spaces, protect wildlife, and steward the environment in their own communities. Over time, this series strengthens both individual practices and collective values. By connecting thousands of participants with leading voices in conservation and horticulture, these lectures inspire environmental responsibility, foster a stronger sense of community, and advance Jenkins' mission to educate, conserve, and connect.

C. Overall strategies to implement the organization's mission (or project)

Our Third Thursday Lecture Series advances Jenkins' mission to serve as a community destination for education, conservation, and connection. Through a diverse lineup of speakers, the series engages audiences with a wide range of perspectives on environmental issues.

This project exemplifies Jenkins' strategy of pairing science-based education with community accessibility. Lectures not only provide practical, evidence-based guidance for homeowners and land managers, but also inspire participants to view themselves as part of a broader conservation movement. By removing cost barriers and offering virtual access, we amplify our reach regionally and globally, positioning Jenkins as a catalyst for positive environmental change.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

The need for accessible, trusted environmental education has never been greater. At a time when misinformation spreads easily, communities need reliable sources of knowledge to understand the challenges of climate change, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline. Our lectures address these issues,

equipping participants with practical tools to apply at home, while also building a community of environmental advocates.

E. How do you intend to meet the challenge component of this grant?

We will meet the challenge component of this grant through volunteer labor. Each recorded lecture requires an average of 2.5 hours of skilled volunteer time to edit, render, prepare, and upload to YouTube and our website. Additionally, Professor Jonathan Wilson has kindly agreed to provide his lecture, “Evolution, Environment, Drought, Frost: Insights from Extinct and Living Plants,” at no charge. Together, these in-kind contributions represent a meaningful investment of time and expertise, and will serve as our match to fulfill the Miller Fund’s challenge component.

3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit’s mission

Funds would support four of the first six lectures of the 2026 calendar year. Virtual lectures will be held at 7pm EST the third Thursday of every month. We anticipate welcoming an average of 150 attendees for each lecture, with hundreds more expected to access recordings on our website and YouTube channel.

By making high-quality environmental education widely accessible, this series advances Jenkins’ mission to provide a destination for learning, conservation, and community connection. Outcomes include:

- Increased community knowledge about ecological practices and conservation challenges.
- Empowered individuals taking action in their own homes and neighborhoods.
- Broader public engagement with Jenkins as a regional leader in environmental education.

4. How impact and results will be demonstrated

We will measure the impact of the lecture series through engagement, including registration and attendance of live lectures; number of views of recorded lectures; and participant feedback gathered through post-event surveys. More importantly, the impact of the lecture series will be demonstrated in how participants apply what they learn, from planting native species to becoming involved in local environmental groups. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient Chester County.