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## Big Bugs opens at Green Animals

### Artist David Rogers on hand to open unique installation at Green Animals

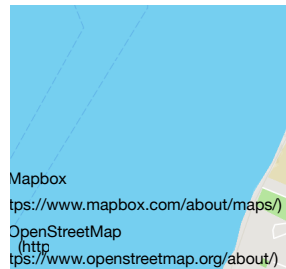


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Lilia Elliot, 9, (left) and Maya Brown, 8, play under the daddy long legs spider.

RICHARD W. DIONNE JR.

Posted Friday, July 2, 2021 4:24 pm



**Green Animals**  
380 Corys Lane

**By Christy Nadalin**

David Rogers' Big Bugs installation was unveiled last Thursday, a picture-perfect summer evening at Green Animals.

David Rogers' Big Bugs exhibition includes a 10-foot-tall Daddy Long Legs weighing 600 pounds, an 18-foot-long Praying Mantis weighing 1,200 pounds, and a 10-foot-long Damselfly among other massive creatures.

Created with various combinations of found or fallen trees, cut green saplings selectively harvested from the willow family, dry branches, and other sustainable forest materials. These sculptures are one part



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landscape art, one part recycled art and two parts environmental art. The exhibition will be open through Oct. 3.

"This has been a phenomenal week," said Trudy Coxe, CEO and Executive Director of The Preservation Society of Newport County, citing the success of last weekend's Newport Flower Show. "We're back, which is really exciting."

"Last year people really did spend a lot of time outside and for the first time ever, Green Animals was visited heavily, Green Animals is very unique, very magical and very special. We are thrilled to be in partnership with you, David Rogers, and Big Bugs."

**A devotion to rustic design**

A lifelong artist, by age 15, Mr. Rogers was experimenting with found forest materials, using dry branches and rope-lashing techniques to assemble various abstract structures. At this early stage, he had already steel-welded his first insect dragonfly and housefly.

With a devotion to rustic design and all-natural materials, he began constructing various styles of rustic furnishings and garden structures employing different kinds of trees and techniques. He developed a very ornate bent-sapling construction style named "Victorian Rustic."

"When I go out into the forest, I am looking for shapes, colors, and textures," he says of his process. "The inherent uniqueness of these materials, their different shapes, colors and textures, provide these sculptures with character, definition and a sense of motion."

**The birth of Big Bugs**

In the fall of 1990, while staying on a cousin's farm in Vermont's Green Mountains, he encountered a maple sapling bent over from previous winter's ice storm. As he explains on his website: "There was something about the curvature and posture of this particularly ravaged tree – a backbone to a large beast, perhaps that suggested a new life for the tree. Using dried branches and different varieties of tree saplings a "dinosaur" sculpture emerged in twelve inspired days."

He first conceptualized the Big Bugs exhibition in 1991. He built 10 sculptures and had his first show at the Dallas Arboretum in the summer of 1994. He has now exhibited in 40 states and there are currently 40 sculptures in the collection. He has staged about 80 exhibitions at locations including Longwood Gardens and New York Botanical Gardens.

Introduced by Ms. Coxe, Mr. Rogers said, "I'm feeling great. It's so great to be here." He noted that people had been thanking him all week, but it's a true collaboration. "Thank you for the opportunity," he said. "I bring the artwork but I get to pursue my passion and collaborate with these gardens on their mission of conservation and preservation, and be better stewards of this planet."

"Good planets are hard to find, and this is a good one." For more information about the artist and the exhibition, visit [www.davidrogersbigbugs.com](http://www.davidrogersbigbugs.com) (<http://www.davidrogersbigbugs.com>).

Admission to David Rogers' Big Bugs is included with the Preservation Society's Stroll the Gardens & Grounds ticket, which includes two other properties and allows visitors to picnic on the grounds. Stroll the Gardens & Grounds tickets are \$20 per adult and \$8 per youth (ages 6-17). In addition, Green Animals will be offering lots of children's programming about the importance of bugs in the ecosystem.

Go to [www.NewportMansions.org](http://www.NewportMansions.org) (<http://www.NewportMansions.org>) for more information and to purchase tickets.

**Keywords**

Green Animals (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter=Green Animals), David Rogers (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter= David Rogers), Big Bugs (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter= Big Bugs), Newport Preservation (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter= Newport Preservation)

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