

THE TURK'S CAP

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

www.delawarenativeplants.org

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NATURAL QUOTES

The Paw Paw Patch Song
Traditional Children's Chant

Pickin' up pawpaws
Put 'em in your pocket
Way down yonder
In the pawpaw patch.

Use the online links in this newsletter to access the world wide web of native plant information.

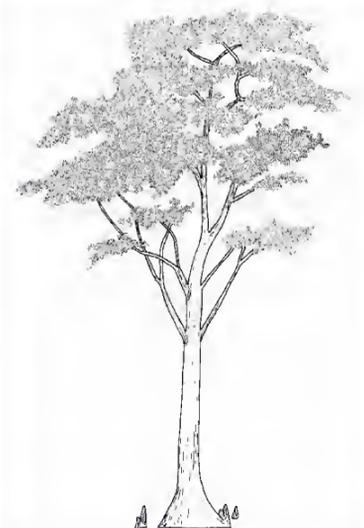


Winter at Newcroft



The DNPS Vision

The purpose of the Delaware Native Plant Society (DNPS) is to participate in and encourage the preservation, conservation, restoration, and propagation of Delaware's native plants and plant communities. The Society provides information to government officials, business people, educators, and the general public on the protection, management, and restoration of native plant ecosystems. The DNPS encourages the use of native plants in the landscape by homeowners, businesses, and local and state governments through an on-going distribution of information and knowledge by various means that includes periodic publications, symposia, conferences, workshops, field trips, and a growing statewide membership organized by the DNPS.



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Delaware Native Plant Society is open to everyone ranging from the novice gardener to the professional botanist. One of the primary goals of the society is to involve as many individuals as possible.

The DNPS is looking for volunteers to help with ongoing projects. One project is an effort to create a large and diverse seed bank that we can use for propagation of plants in our nursery. To accomplish this, we need to collect seeds from all over Delmarva. We have seed collecting guidelines on our website. We are also looking for volunteers to help with community outreach through staffing our display board at public events. We have a great display, but it is idle right now and needs a good leader or two to put it back into service.

For more information, visit our website at www.delawarenativeplants.org. Our very informative, up-to-date website has all the contact information for the Society, along with a section on native plants, volunteering, and links to other environmental and plant related organizations.

Notes from Newcroft

Winter at Newcroft looked like the photo on the front page but only briefly in October. Temperatures stayed relative warm enough for me to visit two friends who are growing *Asimina triloba* Pawpaw trees and get photos before they dropped their leaves .



Bill Fintel, pictured left, was given a pawpaw seedling several years ago by DNPS member Bob Edelen. As you can see it likes its location near Red Mill Pond in Southern Delaware. (see Bob's article on pages 4 & 5)

Another friend, Don Brunk (pictured right) purchased several pawpaws now growing in his wetland area near Naamans Creek in SE Pennsylvania. In Bob's article see why Don's trees are smaller than Bill's.



My interest in Pawpaws began with an NPR program about the [13th Annual Pawpaw Festival](#) in Albany, OH last September. Also check out **NPR's Food blog *The Salt*** [The Pawpaw: Foraging For America's Forgotten Fruit.](#)

Cindy Albright

Delaware Bayshore Initiative Celebrates Coastal Zone Acts 40th Anniversary

Enhancing the state's natural resources for world-class conservation and boosting the economy through low-impact recreational activities

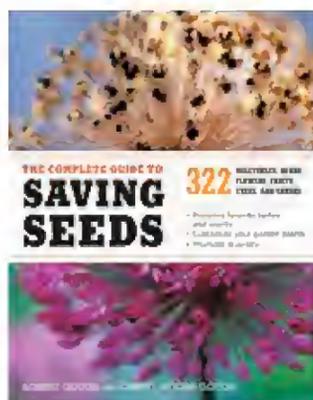
Extending from Pea Patch Island (also see article on page 6) in New Castle County to the City of Lewes in Sussex County, the Delaware Bay shoreline is widely recognized as an area of global ecological significance. Its expansive coastal marshes, shoreline, agricultural lands and forests provide diverse habitat to many species, including migratory shorebirds. Birders and biologists from around the world come to central Delaware to witness the annual spring spectacle of more than a half million shorebirds taking a rest stop to dine on eggs laid by spawning horseshoe crabs.

The **Delaware Bayshore Initiative** will collaboratively build on the region's reputation as a unique and beautiful natural resource, and help improve the shoreline economy by encouraging more Delawareans and visitors to enjoy it through activities such as recreational fishing, hunting, boating and ecotourism. This non-regulatory approach will continue the tradition of DNREC's commitment to preserving the state's coastal zone. Due in large part to the legacy of that landmark legislation, the Delaware Bayshore's acreage remains undeveloped, and is today protected as state or federal wildlife lands.

Significant land protection: 58% of acreage from Pea Patch Island to Lewes is shown in map of shoreline ownership on page 5 of this document:

www.dnrec.delaware.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/The_Delaware_Bayshore.pdf

Resources & Reviews



[The Complete Guide to Saving Seeds: 322 Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers, Fruits, Trees, and Shrubs*](#)

By Robert Gough and Cheryl Moore-Gough, 2011

See page 229 for information about propagating pawpaw seeds.

*This is downloadable on a Nook from the Barnes and Noble link above or on the Kindle from Amazon.

Resources & Reviews

[A Guide to Wildflowers in Winter: Herbaceous Plants of Northeastern North America](#)

Authored by Carol Levine, and Dick Rauh. This guide is intended to help both amateur naturalists and serious field botanists to identify non-woody plants - herbaceous weeds and wildflowers - as they are found in winter in the NE United States and E Canada.



Our 2011 **Native Plant Sale** was again a nice success thanks to everyone involved. We experienced a somewhat chilly, but sunny day. We had our 3rd lowest sale in terms of revenue brought in, and one of our lowest in terms



Photos by Rick Mickowski

of available species, but we were actually expecting that. It's difficult to put on a gigantic, blow-out sale every year, and this year was a transition time during the change of management of the nursery.

We did \$1031.00 in pure plant sales, with some of that revenue going to the Friends of the St. Jones Reserve volunteers to help compensate for time and materials. Our annual plant sale is our

	2009	2010	2011
Species available	78	52	46
Plants available	1113	908	1371
Plants sold	661	440	406
Customers	74	48	58
Booklets sold	5	2	2

only true fund raising event of the year and every little bit of money that comes in goes right back into the nursery. We'd like to thank everyone who came out and helped to label, price, put up signs, haul plants, or brought food. You are all essential and greatly appreciated!

Eric Zuelke

Russell Peterson Legacy

Purchase Brick for the Peterson Plaza

The Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge and Dupont Environmental Education Center (DEEC) located at the Wilmington Riverfront offers an opportunity to become part of the Riverfront History forever with your own personalized tribute brick paver which will be placed around Peterson Plaza at the main entrance to the Urban Wildlife Refuge and will help support the ongoing operation of the DEEC and the refuge.

Take advantage of the many ways to tribute your brick paver: memorialize a family member, pay tribute to a friend or colleague, recognize a Wilmington family or pay tribute to a spouse or children. Each brick paver costs \$250 and will be placed around Peterson Plaza.

The Riverfront Development Corporation is managing the brick campaign.

<http://www.riverfrontwilm.com/uploads/pdfs/BrickTribute.pdf>

DEEC

South Madison St., Wilmington, DE
19801 Phone: (302) 425-4890.

[Visit Website](#)

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Pawpaw *Asimina triloba*

Natural History

My first experience with the Pawpaw came perhaps 10 years ago when a friend gave me several of the fruits grown in his yard on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The custard-like pulp was an immediate hit and I was excited to learn the Pawpaw was native to Delaware. Though the original range of the Pawpaw is debatable (Native Americans are credited with spreading the plant across the Eastern U.S. for its value as a food source), the Pawpaw's current range extends to eastern Kansas and Texas, and from the Great Lakes almost to the Gulf. The pawpaw produces the largest edible fruit native to America. Individual fruits weigh five to 16 ounces and are three to six inches in length. The common names applied to the Pawpaw; Poor Man's Banana, Hoosier Banana, American Custard Apple, the West Virginia Banana, the Indiana Banana, etc. all indicate a preference for the taste of the popular fruit said to resemble a combination of banana, Pineapple and Mango. But people are not the only critters attracted to the Pawpaw! Wildlife such as opossum, raccoon, fox, quail, turkey, Deer and a variety of birds relish the pawpaw fruit, and the Zebra Swallowtail butterfly's larvae feed exclusively on young, pawpaw foliage.

The flowers of the Pawpaw contribute to its popularity in the landscape. Velvety, dark brown flower buds develop in the axils of the previous years' leaves. One to two-inch wine-colored flowers appear briefly in spring just as the leaves are developing, with a blooming period of up to six weeks in early spring depending on latitude and

Each flower contains several ovaries which permits a single flower can produce multiple fruits. Flowers are pollinated by flies and beetles which is consistent with the appearance of the flower: dark, meat-colored petals and a fetid aroma. To improve pollination, road kill is often collected and hung in trees of commercial plantings to attract pollinators – you may wish to try hand pollination instead! The pawpaw tree resembles a deciduous magnolia, with bold, lance-shaped leaves drooping toward the ground, sometimes growing from 6 to 12 inches long and 3 to 5 inches wide.

Where to Grow

The Pawpaw is a small, deciduous tree that may attain upwards of 30 feet in height. Pawpaws flourish in the deep, rich fertile soils of river-bottom lands where they grow as understory trees or thicket-shrubs making this an ideal plant for the shady landscape! They prefer a slightly acid soil. The soil should be well drained and fertile. Avoid heavy, wet, alkaline soil. Several trees should be planted in close proximity to improve pollination. In sunny locations, trees typically assume a pyramidal habit, straight trunk and lush, dark green, long, drooping leaves that turn gold and brown in color during the fall. The Pawpaw is sensitive to high winds and may not be suitable for immediate coastal areas unless appropriate shelter can be provided.

Propagation

I find that nature's way of propagating many plants is perhaps the best way and that, in my experience is certainly true of the Pawpaw. As soon as flesh is soft, fruit should be collected for seed. Seeds are easily extracted following maceration of fruit in water and floating off of pulp. As with many seedlings I have started, planting the seeds in pots in rich compost as soon as harvested and covering with a light layer of leaves in a cold frame, then left to over-winter works exceptionally well.

Resources & Reviews

[*Winter Weed Finder: A Guide to Dry Plants in Winter* by Dorcas Miller](#)

Key to identifying non-woody plants in late fall and winter by the dried structures that remain after frost, such as pods, dried flower heads, seed capsules, and burrs. Includes common native and naturalized herbs and native ferns. Area covered is the upper Midwest and eastern U.S. north of South Carolina and eastern Canada. Illustrated with line drawings. 64 pgs. 1989

A reviewer said "I love these 'finder' books. They are just the right size to grab and stuff in a pocket or hip pack before a nature hike or even a walk in an untamed yard. It identifies between 350-400 plants, giving both their common and Latin names."

Resources & Reviews

[Winter Tree Finder: A Manual for Identifying Deciduous Trees in Winter \(Eastern US\)](#) (Nature Study Guides) 1970



(cont. from page 4)

In the spring remove the layer of leaves keeping the cold-frame covered to reduce predation until plantlet emerge and danger of frost has passed.

Alternately, seeds may be placed in plastic freezer zipper bag containing a handful of moist sphagnum moss and refrigerated at 32° - 40° F to achieve a 90 to 120 day stratification, then planted out in pots in mid spring. Germination can be expected in about seven to 10 weeks depending on climate. Give the plant good drainage and keep it well watered the first year. Seeds field-planted in the fall will emerge the following July or August. But before the shoot emerges, the seed will have sent down a 10-inch long tap root.

Lore

Pawpaws were a staple for Native Americans and the fibrous inner bark was used to string fish and repair fish nets. The fruit of the Pawpaw was eagerly consumed by western moving pioneers during the 18th and 19th centuries. Those interested in expanding their own uses of the Pawpaw can scan the internet for a myriad of recipes for pies, custards, cookies, cakes, ice creams, puddings and preserves – enjoy!!

Bob Edelen

DNPS Offers Winter Plant ID Workshop Saturday, March 24 at 10:00 am

Happy New Year and a big welcome to 2012. This year is promising to be just as successful as 2011; plus DNPS is working on some fresh, new ideas that will certainly help grow the society. The Spring Workshop this year is scheduled for March 24 at the **St. Jones Reserve** located in Dover, Delaware, and will start at 10:00 a.m. The focus in this workshop will be **Winter Plant Identification**. You will discover how to recognize native plants in the landscape during their dormant period by examining bark appearance, dropped leaves and seeds, branching habit, and overall form, among others. So please join us on the 24th of March and learn how to view our native landscape through a different lens. For more information and directions to the Reserve, please visit our website at www.delawarenativeplants.org. To confirm your attendance, please call Jennifer Holmes at [302.739.3436](tel:302.739.3436) or email her at Jenni-fer.Holmes@state.de.us

Eric Wahl

THE DELAWARE STATE PARKS MEMORIAL TREE PROGRAM

The **Memorial Tree Program** was developed to acknowledge the loss of loved ones or to honor living persons in a meaningful way.

A Greek proverb says “a wise man plants a tree whose shade he will never enjoy.” Caecilius Statius, 220-168 B. C.

The funds received in the Memorial Tree Program are used to purchase trees to serve as a living reminder of the special people in our lives and to reforest areas of state parks. Donors may elect to fully fund the purchase of a tree or choose to donate towards a tree planted on behalf of multiple persons. In order to preserve the natural beauty of our facilities, individual trees are not marked or identified as part of this program. Instead, a plaque is hung in the State Park Office acknowledging the names of all those for whom the memorial trees were planted.

For more information about the **Memorial Tree Program**, call (302) 739-9220 or e-mail Delaware State Parks Information.

Current Articles

Changing Forests for the Better

by Josephine Eccel

From *Outdoor Delaware*—Fall 2011

Of the 600 species of North American trees, 115* are native to Delaware. Efforts are underway in Brandywine Creek State Park's Tulip Tree Woods Nature Preserve to remove non-native species. When the editor's sons were running cross country there in the 1980's, it seemed strange that there was so little in that tract besides the tulip poplars and non-native species. After Robert Line, Environmental Stewardship Program manager in DNREC's Division of Parks and Recreation, removed Japanese stiltgrass and garlic mustard, young oaks and hickories along with native wild ginger and bloodroot, along with other wildflowers, now thrive.

With success at Brandywine Creek State Park, forest restoration is taking place at Fort DuPont on Pea Patch Island. More than 120 trees purchased from a Delmarva nursery have been planted in shoreline areas. With 200 bird species having been sighted there in the late 1990s by DOS (Delaware Ornithological Society), hopefully more birds will make it a stop on their migratory flights. (See next column for related details.)

Another area of tree removal has taken place at Cape Henlopen State Park. The Japanese black pine introduced at Fort Miles during World War II had become the dominant tree making it difficult for the beach heather to grow. Removing those trees plus wisteria is an ongoing project.

See bottom of page 5 for information on making a donation to **Delaware State Parks Memorial Tree Program**.

* **Bill McAvoy** is the primary author of *The Flora of Delaware: An Annotated Checklist* and maintains the [Flora of Delaware Online Database](#). He states that Delaware has 77 native trees.

(continued on next column)

Response to editor's inquiry from Rob Line, DNREC's Mgr. Environmental Stewardship Program:

"The rookery at Pea Patch Island annually numbers between 2 and 3 thousand pairs of 9 species of herons, Ibis and egrets, as well as one pair of bald eagles. This year we are going to plant native trees on the island, to provide nesting substrate, and a buffer between the heronry and the fort. But, it is more challenging than just planting trees. We have killed most of the Ailanthus on the historic part of the island (there are few in the heronry which is a much younger creation thanks to the Army Corps of Engineers). Other invasives are a challenge. We have been controlling deer to allow natural regeneration. We have been studying the trees that the birds use to see the most effective species for introduction. We are also planning for sea level rise and species that can handle more water and potentially salty water into the future."

Mt. Cuba Offers Online Classes

This winter why not take advantage of Mt. Cuba Center's distance learning, a virtual guide to native plants. The editor has taken the *Ferns* class and found it to be easy-to-use with excellent videos and photos of ferns that will grow in our area.

Mt. Cuba Center's *Connect* captures a selection of their live education programs, informational handouts, and plant videos on demand. This portal offers native plants. Learn more about these classes at mtcubacenter.org

[The Ferns at Mt. Cuba Center](#) \$40
[Hummingbirds in Your Garden](#)

Classes coming soon:

- Moss Gardening - available in January
- The Meadow Plants at Mt. Cuba Center - available in February

Upcoming Events

Spring 2012—Mt. Cuba Center www.mtcubacenter.org

“Learn about some of the best native plant cultivars”

Wednesday, February 8

1:30 pm — 2:30 pm

Instructor: Jeanne Frett

[Visit the website for more details and to register.](#)

Winter/Spring 2012—Adkins Arboretum Register for classes at adkinsarboretum.org.

“Plants for Difficult Soils”

Saturday, February 11, 10:00 am —1:00 pm

The soils of the Delmarva Peninsula vary considerably, from salty to hydric to sandy to clay to every mix in between. This lively and interactive program will answer questions about soil types, mineral content, amending soil, pH levels, and helping native plants thrive in your landscape. Discover what various plants need and how to keep them happy.

“Among the Ancients

Wednesday, March 14, 2012 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

What is happening to our forests, and what can we do to save them? Biologist and nature writer Dr. Joan Maloof, author of *Among the Ancients: Adventures in the Eastern Old-Growth Forests*, will discuss her love affair with ancient trees and the myriad flora and fauna that live in their midst.

“The Elfin World of Mosses and Liverworts”

Saturday, March 24, 10:00 —11:30 am

Join Bill McAvoy to learn the basics of bryophyte morphology, their life-cycles and ecology and their place in the ecosystem. They are an important component of many habitats of the Delmarva Peninsula.

Delaware Horticulture Center

Spring Bare Root Tree Sale

Order by February 17; Pick up by March 21 & 22 Order forms at www.TheDCH.org

Planting & Caring for Bare Root Trees Workshop

Wednesday, March 21 5:30—6:30 pm (Pizza and pick-up 5—5:30 pm)

DNPS meetings for 2012—As part of our organizational restructuring, and as of 1 January 2011, we will no longer be having bi-monthly meetings. Please contact Eric at ezuelke@juno.com for more information or check www.delawarenativeplants.org.

Membership Application

www.delawarenativeplants.org

DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Member Information

Name:

Business Name or Organization:

Address:

City and Zip Code:

Telephone (home/work):

E-mail address:

- Full-time Student \$10.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family or Household \$18.00
- Contributing \$50.00
- Business \$100.00
- Lifetime \$500.00
- Donations are also welcome \$ _____

Membership benefits include:

- * The DNPS quarterly newsletter, The Turk's Cap
- * Native plant gardening and landscaping information
- * Speakers, field trips, native plant nursery and sales

Total Amount Enclosed: \$

**Make check payable to:
DE Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 369, Dover, DE 19903**

**DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 369
DOVER, DELAWARE 19903**

