

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

"When I observe the fate of Botanists, upon my word I doubt whether to call them sane or mad in their devotion to plants."

Carl Linnaeus
Critica Botanica 1737

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

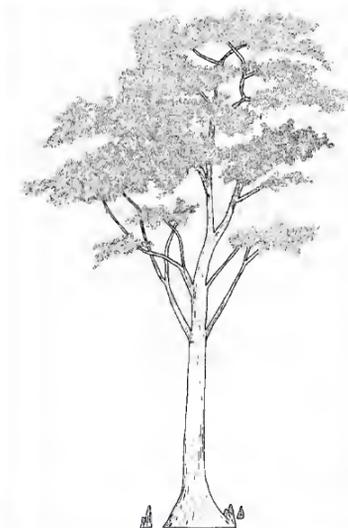


Winter at Newcroft



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

Readings this fall include Andrea Wulf's [*The Brother Gardeners: Botany Empire & The Birth of an Obsession*](#) and [*The Man who Planted Trees*](#) by Jim Robbins.

Wulf's book traces the exchange of plants between John Bartram in North America and several English plantmen. It adds to my quest to learn more about Linnaeus and his development of binomial nomenclature. Wulf weaves his life story into this well-documented novel.

Many native plants that were taken for granted in our area were highly sought after in England. Beginning in 1734, Bartram sent mostly seeds to Peter Collinson in England. Mark Catesby's drawings from a trip to VA and NC whetted the English appetite for many of our native plants. Awkward naming of plants made plant ID between Bartram and Collinson difficult. Coming to the rescue was Linnaeus's 1753 *Species Plantarum* with new naming protocols. Over four decades, Bartram's expertise grew and eventually his reputation exceeded the English plantmen. One of the most prized N. American plants was *Magnolia virginiana* (see Bob's article on pgs 4 & 5).

The Man Who Planted Trees has several references to our U of Delaware professor of wildlife ecology, Doug Tallamy. (See info regarding his lecture this [January 16 at Mt. Cuba.](#)) Jim Robbins relates his 20-year connection with David Milarch* who is cloning Championship Trees in his Michigan nursery and distributing them not only in the US but in Ireland.

Once again plant expertise in the US is influencing European horticulture as it did when John Bartram sent seeds and plants to England 250 years ago. Special tree specimens have been planted in other locations, eg. a Bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*) seedling from the 4,800 yr. old Methuselah the oldest known living non-clonal organism in the world has been planted in the 500-yr. old arboretum at Charles University in Prague by Milarch. It's called Methuselah Jr.

In May, 2012 NPR's Diane Rehm interviewed author of [American Canopy: Trees, Forest and the Making on a Nation](#) Eric Rutkow. The interview "How America's Trees and Forests Shaped the Nation" is [available here](#). Those who are concerned about the disappearance of trees from our planet may be interested in the various efforts to preserve species. Personally, I saw the devastation caused by the pine bark beetle in the Colorado Rockies when my son was planning a wedding. Visiting Snow Mtn. Lodge in 2008 there were still trees beautifying the ceremony site. Returning a year later for the wedding, my future daughter-in-law's tears were prompted by the decimation that had taken place over the year since they had booked the site. May our grandchildren not be shedding tears for trees and other now-living species.

Cindy Albright

*David Milarch seeks to revitalize stressed urban and watershed forests with selected robust strains. He has propagated more than 90 species, including redwoods and bristlecone pines. His plantings grace campuses, botanical gardens and public spaces from coast to coast.

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.

Resources & Reviews

[Beautiful No-Mow Yards: 50 Amazing Lawn Alternatives](#) by Evelyn J. Hadden

Timber Press, March, 2012

Hadden showcases dozens of inspiring, eco-friendly alternatives to that demanding green turf. Trade your lawn for a lively prairie or replace it with a runoff-reducing rain garden.



Photos by Rick Mickowski

The 2012 DNPS Plant Sale experienced average sales due to the cold, blustery weather. We look forward to celebrating the St. Jones Reserve's 20th Anniversary and will coordinate the DNPS Plant Sale with their anniversary activities.

No-Mow Grasses

A low-maintenance lawn lets you enjoy watching the grass grow, slowly

By Marty Ross

Actually the No-Mow lawn needs occasional mowing, eg. once a year or as much as once a month much less than the 20—30 times a season which seems to be in vogue for many communities. Thomas Christopher, ed. of *The New American Landscape* and author of *Water-Wise Gardening* says we have made lawns nice for touch football and a game of croquet but they are eco-villains. He has mixes of slow-growing, environmentally efficient grasses carefully designed to thrive under local conditions. They do not need fertilizer and once established do not need much water. There are several blends for different parts of the country.

Alternatively, a “Freedom lawn” requires even less work. Ginny Stibolt and Christopher are members of the [Lawn Reform Coalition](#). She had a lawn mix of grass, clover and “a pretty good assortment of other kinds of plants.”

[Timber Press Books link](#)

Horticulture, October, 2012 hortmag.com

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Sweetbay magnolia

Magnolia virginiana

Natural History

My first exposure with sweetbay magnolia was several years ago while visiting a friend who resided on the banks of Broad Creek near Laurel Delaware. It seems a sweetbay had sprouted from a seed and was allowed to grow unabated next to our friend's house. Though no special care was taken the small tree prospered and soon rewarded our friend with several beautiful and fragrant flowers – some people have all the luck! Later we purchased our property near Harbeson Delaware and found numerous sweetbay Magnolias growing in the damp woods surrounding our house – yeehaw! But as luck would have it, there were very few flowers gracing the sweetbay trees growing in the thick understory of our property. It turns out that the floral display is never dense nor profuse, but sparse and prolonged over a roughly six-week period of time and exposure to sunlight will greatly improve flowering.

The range of the Sweetbay extends chiefly along the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains from Long Island south through New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania to southern Florida; west to eastern Texas, and north into southern Arkansas and southwest Tennessee. It is widely cultivated for its shiny foliage and beautiful two inch flowers that have a strong lemony fragrance. It was the first magnolia known in Europe, dating from 1688 in England. Sweetbay leaves are evergreen in the southeastern United States and are semi-evergreen to deciduous in the northeast. In the northern part of its growing range, it typically grows as either a 15-20' tall tree with a spreading, rounded crown or as a shorter, suckering, open, multi-stemmed shrub.

In the Deep South, it is more tree-like, sometimes growing to 60' tall. Cone-like fruits with bright red seeds mature in fall and can be very showy. According to the Big Trees of Delaware, the largest sweetbay in the state is a 60' specimen growing near Milford.

Sweetbay magnolia is named for the sweet-smelling bay-like leaves. Other names include swamp or laurel magnolia, Sweetbay, swampbay and swamp laurel, all indicative of the moist peat understory favored for optimum growth.

Sweetbay vegetation and habitats are used by a variety of wildlife species. Squirrels, other small mammals, song birds including eastern kingbirds, mockingbirds, robins, wood thrushes, and red-eyed vireos feed on sweet bay seeds and often use sweetbay leaves as nest material, wild turkeys, and bobwhite quail feed on sweetbay seeds and deer browse sweetbay leaves and twigs throughout the year. Sweetbay is a larval host and/or nectar source for the Sweetbay silkmoth (*Callosamia securifera*). American black bears and beaver feed on sweetbay and utilize sweetbay habitats.

Where to Grow

Throughout its range, sweetbay is most common in wet woods, swamps, swamp margins, savannas, hammocks, bogs, and floodplains where it normally grows as a multistemmed shrub or slender tree in the Northeast and as a single-trunked tree in the Southeast. Sweetbay prefer acidic, moist, rich, organic soils and will grow well in wet and even swampy soils in sun to partial shade. Sweetbay makes an excellent tree for planting next to buildings and narrow corridors, or in other urban areas with limited space for horizontal crown expansion and is an excellent specimen tree for lawns or tall multi-stemmed shrub for shrub borders. However, in dryer well drained areas, soils must be amended with a rich,

Resources & Reviews

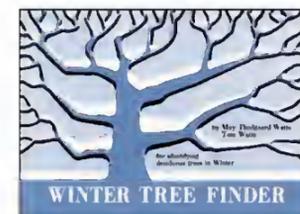
[*Winter Weed Finder: A Guide to Dry Plants in Winter* by Dorcas Miller](#)

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)

moisture holding compost and adequate watering must be applied particularly in early stages of development.

Propagation

Attempts at propagation by seed get mixed reviews. In some instances, sweetbay is cited as easy to start from fresh seed, and germination occurs rapidly. In other cases germination was slow with low percentages of success. To grow from seed, bright red seeds should be gathered when ripe, cleaned and stored in moist sand or sphagnum moss in cold, moist storage for at least 60 days prior to planting.

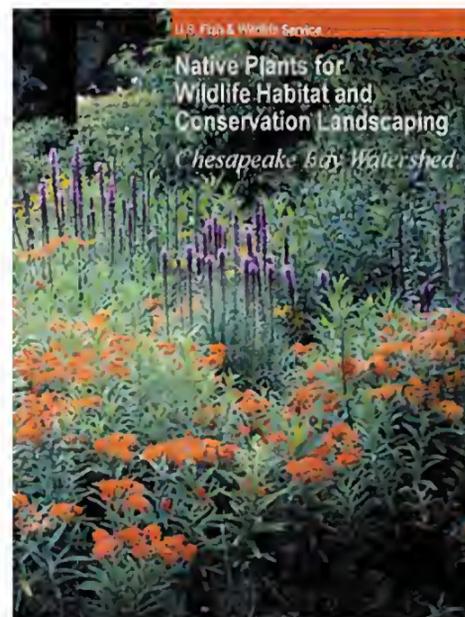
Considerable success is cited using young, fast growing tip cuttings taken in spring and kept under mist. Remember, when transplanting to upland soils, be sure to water frequently during initial stages of growth!

Lore

Native Americans used sweetbay leaves, bark, and roots to treat colds, rheumatism, pleurisy, cough, consumption, typhoid fever, autumnal fever, and to prevent chills. Sweetbay was called Beavertree by colonists who caught beavers in traps baited with the fleshy roots. Sweetbay wood is used for a variety of products including furniture, veneer and interior finishing work.

Bob Edelen

Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Guide Reprinted



This publication includes pictures as well as user-friendly information on native species appropriate for planting in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and adjacent coastal regions. Although one guide cannot furnish the answers to every question, [this guide

has] included as much useful information as possible in a limited space. Although the large number of species of plants included here may overwhelm some readers, this guide displays the great diversity of plants available. We hope that you will bypass the over-used, non-native and sometimes invasive ornamental plants, and select equally and often more attractive native plants. Pore through this guide the same way you look through nursery catalogs. Use it to plan and design your next planting, whether it's a small corner of your front yard, a two-acre meadow seeding, or 100 acres of wetland restoration."

Note: this publication is available on-line and in PDF format from the National Park Service at <http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake/>. A new database from this information is also on-line at <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/>.

Order your copy today! MNPS contributed funding for the printing of this book. The fees charged cover the basic cost of printing and postage. No bulk sales! No on-line orders (yet.) [Download the order form.](#)

Maryland Native Plant Society's 2013 Year of the Heath

The upcoming event will focus on the heath family in celebration of the **2013 Year of the Heath**.

Introduction to Maryland's Heaths

Feb. 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Cris Fleming

Description: To begin our celebration of the Year of the Heath, Cris Fleming will introduce us to the Ericaceae, a ubiquitous plant family that includes rhododendron, laurel, trailing arbutus, blueberry, wintergreen, and many more of our most beautiful and interesting native plants.

Location: Kensington Library

Directions: From the Washington Beltway (I-495)

Take Exit 33, Connecticut Avenue, north to the third signal after the Beltway. Turn left onto Knowles and go 2 1/2 blocks to the library on the right.

The meeting is open to non-members.
Registration is not required.

Other offerings are here on [Maryland Native Plant Society's website](#).

Historic pawpaws making a comeback in Sussex

A year ago in the Winter issue of *Turk's Cap* the Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) was highlighted. This fall a Cape Gazette article reported that Bridgeville DE farmer Charlie Smith recently planted a stand of pawpaws on the family's 800-acre farm. We'll check with him next spring to see if they have survived the winter or if the deer have found them yet.



Mt. Cuba Center Offers First eBook

The [Meadow Plants at Mt. Cuba](#) is Mt. Cuba Center's first e-book. Join Dave Korbonits as he shares his expertise acquired from over 20 years of meadow gardening. Learn the history of Mt. Cuba Center's meadow, why

native plants are such a great fit, and how to make plant selections for your meadow. Find out how to install and maintain a meadow, then review Dave's insights on eight notable native grasses and 35 wildflowers for the meadow. The wildlife value of each plant is included. *Meadow Plants at Mt. Cuba Center* finishes with native plant recommendations for wet or dry sites, a glossary and many links for further information as well as seed sources. Once enrolled, you will have 45 days to download the meadow book as well as to access the *Ask the Horticulturist* feature. Cost of the e-book is **\$25**.

Learn more about classes and offerings at mtcubacenter.org

Order your Restoration chestnut 1.0

After years of breeding and crossbreeding, The American Chestnut Foundation believes it has developed a potentially blight-resistant tree which has been named Restoration Chestnut 1.0. By purchasing an [ANNUAL SPONSOR membership to TACF®](#), you are eligible to receive the latest line of potentially blight-resistant seed stock from our Restoration Chestnuts 1.0. These seeds represent 29 years of our best science.

These chestnuts are for testing and evaluation only. There is no guarantee they will have adequate resistance to the chestnut blight, but by planting these seeds you become part of the science team by helping us evaluate these latest trees. Your feedback on seedling performance will be critical in helping TACF researchers improve resistance.

**For 2013, the cut-off date for ordering chestnuts is
February 1, 2013.**

Orders received after February 1, 2013 will be processed in 2014.

Upcoming Events

Spring 2013—Mt. Cuba Center www.mtcubacenter.org

[View all of the classes offered at Mt. Cuba](#)

Spring 2013—Adkins Arboretum [Native Plant Nursery](#) opens for the season on April 15.

Native Plant Nursery Hours

Monday–Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Weekend hours by arrangement. For more information about special orders, special pick-ups, help with restoration projects plant choices, or pricing for nonprofits or commercial contractors, contact Nursery Manager Joanne Healey at 410.634.2847 x32 or jhealey@adkinsarboretum.org.

Delaware Horticulture Center

Best Species for the Site: Recommended Trees for Urban & Suburban Locations

Tuesday, January 29, 2013 6:00—7:00 p.m.

Learn why certain trees are popular in our area, and many great ones are overlooked. An ISA Certified Arborist will help you decide what is an appropriate selection for your location and the many factors to consider, just in time for our Bare Root Tree sale. \$10

Spring Bare Root Tree Sale

Planting & Caring for Bare Root Trees Workshop

Wednesday, March 20 5:00— 5:30 p.m. Tree pick-up & Pizza

Workshop 5:30— 6:30 p.m.

Free

DNPS meetings for 2013—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**

