

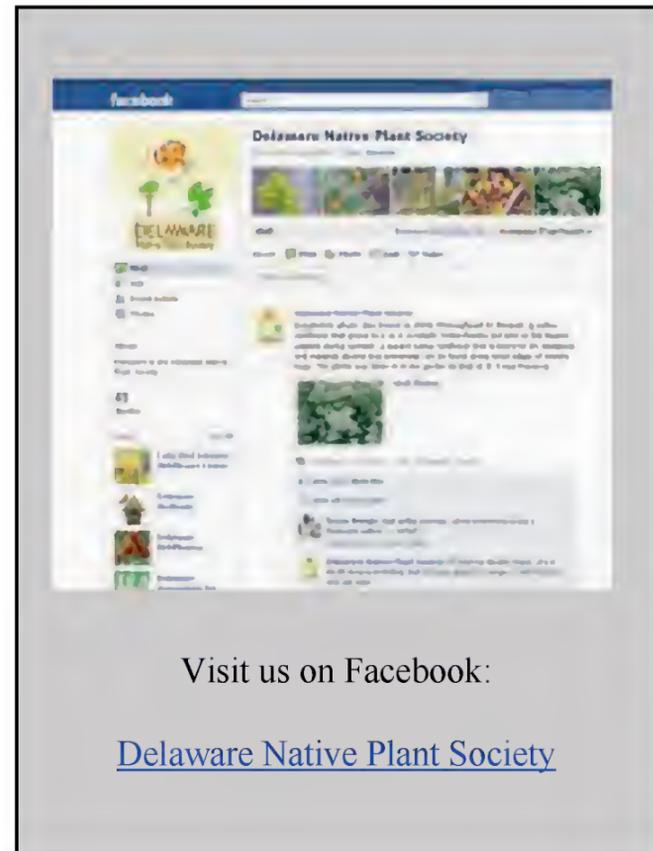
THE TURK'S CAP

Volume 17, Number 1
Spring 2014

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
www.delawarenativeplants.org

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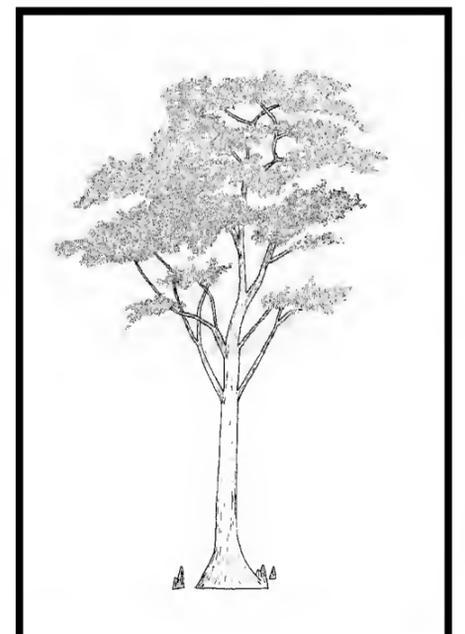
Save The Date: DNPS Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 7th. Details still being finalized. More information to come via email to membership. Board/Officer elections will be held at this meeting. If you are interested in serving DNPS in any capacity, please contact John Harrod, DNPS President. John has announced that he is stepping down as DNPS President as of June 2014.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Delaware Native Plant Society is open to everyone ranging from the novice gardener to the professional botanist. For more information, visit our website at www.delawarenativeplants.org.

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.



Notes from Newcroft

Stretching back to when I took horticulture classes at Longwood Gardens, I've been exposed to Linnaeus's binomial nomenclature. An interest in birding furthered my exposure to that type of classification. Recently my *Natural Selections* book group has been reading [Horseshoe Crabs and Velvet Worms](#) which traces the evolution of living things back through millions of years. That and other nature books are replete with Latin names and references to eons, eras and periods. Liking to organize things, I was trying to determine how many kingdoms current research list. In discussing this with my sons, Eric a biology teacher and Andrew a molecular biologist, they report:

- 2 - ancient Greece (Plant/Animal)
- 3 - someone added fungi
- 5 - ma's list (what I sent them)
- 8 - my HS text (early 1990s)
- 12 - getting too big
- 3 - Andrew's U of Illinois professor [Carl Woese](#) Discovered 3rd kingdom—Archaea

"I make stuff like this up all the time to teach my students that classification is constantly in flux ... just a debate over the rationale you have. Birds are the same. Phases of lumping and then splitting." Andrew says "Yes sequencing is a game changer but in many arenas it will take a while to figure out what it all means. "

My real question is "What is a native plant" ? Each issue when I'm looking for a plant to feature in the newsletter, I ask that question. During their peak, it is thought that there were as many as 16 genera of ginkgos which formed a major component of the world's flora. Maximum diversity was reached during the Cretaceous period in the **Northern Hemisphere**. Could they have been native to our area? On my list of new books to read is "[Ginkgo: The tree that time forgot](#)".



Bob Edelen's review of *Quercus alba* is on pgs 4 & 5. Maybe next month we'll highlight the Ginkgo although it's not in [Bill McAvoy's list](#).

Cindy Albright

Visit to the Claude Phillips Herbarium February 6, 2014



Pictured: Chris Besche, Gwen Elliott, Carole Stillbaughl, Donna Hoyt and Patti Deptula

My Natural Selections book group has been meeting for over 10 years and finally we took our first field trip. We visited the [Claude Phillips Herbarium at Delaware State University](#). Thanks to Dr. Susan Yost and Dr. Art Tucker for their tour of the facility. It was a cold day so we decided to return later to tour the

Save the Date:

Pine Barrens Wildflower Ramble. (Part of the *Copeland Native Plant Series*.) DNSP President, John Harrod along with Russell Juelg. will lead this walk on **July 12, 2014**, 8am-5pm. Meet at Ashland Nature Center. July is prime wildflower time in the NJ Pine Barrens. Join Russell Jueig, a pinelands expert with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, for a day of searching for rare, unique, and beautiful flora. See sundews, pitcher plants, rose pogonia orchids, cranberries, Atlantic white cedars, and fragrant swamp azaleas. Bring a lunch. Transportation provided. Registration: Call 302.239.2334 or visit delawarenaturesociety.org



2014 Winter Workshop at St. Jones Reserve “Navigating the Edge”

On February 22nd, nearly 30 people turned out for this workshop at the St. Jones Reserve. Participants were there to hear about the many types of edges found throughout the landscape, and to learn more about how to improve edges through ecological restoration, including planting native species which provide benefits for migratory birds and other wildlife.

In addition to giving the feature presentation, Eric Wahl also provided coffee and an assortment of home-baked goodies. Eric discussed sustainability and ensuring that the needs of future generations are met when we tinker with the natural world, ecosystem services such as those provided by trees, the importance of pollinators and current threats they face, the importance of water and understanding the water cycle, and different types of edges (e.g., urban, suburban, agricultural, wetland). The urban edge was discussed as a way of bringing nature into urban areas, slowing traffic and improving water quality with street trees, and improving aesthetics and the urban experience.

Eric also talked about suburban edges and yardscapes, and how residents can improve these edges and their value to birds and other wildlife by enhancing them with native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. The importance of trees to energy conservation, carbon sequestration and air quality was also discussed. Eric presented examples of natural edges, including wetland edges and the different plant communities along a moisture regime from wetland to upland, and edges associated with natural succession, from a fallow field to a mature forest and the various stages in between. He then provided examples of native trees that work well as street trees, and other native trees and shrubs to consider in the home landscape.

some of the highlighted shrubs such as southern arrowwood produce fruits that are very important to migratory birds. Lastly, Eric discussed bird seed ornaments, and provided a handout about how to make them. Rick McCorkle then gave a presentation about the challenges of living on the edge, and the negative impacts of forest fragmentation (which creates lots of edge) on many of our rarest, forest-dependent, bird species. Among those challenges are increased predation, increased human disturbance, invasion by non-native plant species, and nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds. Rick ended by referring back to the suggestions Eric had made about planting native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants in backyards and along edges between forests and developed areas, to mitigate the impacts of human disturbance and provide food and cover to birds and other wildlife. Rick provided three handouts, two of which come from Dr. Doug Tallamy's book about "[Bringing Nature Home](#)," and list the most important trees and wildflowers in terms of the numbers of butterflies and moths they host. The third handout lists native shrubs in order of importance of their fruit to migratory birds. The workshop was a great success with lots of good questions and interactions between the participants and speakers. Special thanks to Jennifer Holmes for making the facility at the St. Jones Reserve available, and for providing a computer projector.

John Harrod, President

john@delawarenaturesociety.org

John Wahl, Vice President

john.EWahl@elementdg.com

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

WHITE OAK (*QUERCUS ALBA*)

by Bob Edelen

NATURAL HISTORY

Hardly anyone does not know of the majestic White Oak. In fact the White Oak is so popular for its beauty, stately presence, many uses, and abundance, that it is the state tree of Connecticut, Illinois and Maryland. The value of the White Oak to all of nature becomes apparent. Take a walk in most any mature forest throughout the Eastern United States and in a good year you will feel the crunch of acorns under your feet. Acorns are a valuable source of food for more than 180 birds and mammals. They are a favorite food of turkeys, ducks, pheasants, grackles, jays, nuthatches, thrushes, woodpeckers, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, deer and many others. Handsome and sturdy, the White Oak is named for its whitish bark and gray twigs. They may be found in pure stands but most often occur in mixed hardwood forests usually with other oaks, hickories, sweetgum, yellow poplar, maple and often conifers such as loblolly and Virginia pines as well. The west slopes of the Appalachian Mountains, and the Ohio and central Mississippi River Valleys have optimum conditions for white oak, but some of the largest individuals have been found in Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore. [The Wye Oak on Maryland's Eastern Shore](#) was the honorary state tree of Maryland and was probably the oldest living White Oak until it was felled by a thunderstorm on June 6, 2002. The largest White Oaks in Delaware are found in New Castle County.

WHERE TO GROW

The White Oak is one of the most spectacular of oaks and when grown in an open landscape without competition will spread into a magnificent shade tree, with an exceptionally wide spread and almost never dropping limbs. It bestows a special elegance to parks and large lawns. There is no finer shade tree for eastern North America and the rich brown fall color often persists for several weeks. Normally not a tall tree, typically 60 to 80 ft. at maturity, it nonetheless becomes quite massive and its branches tend to reach far out parallel to the ground when given sufficient room to grow. The White oak is fairly tolerant of a variety of habitats, and may be found on ridges, in valleys, and in between, and in dry and moist habitats, and in moderately acid to alkaline soils. So, regardless of



Maryland's Wye Oak in 1929 in Talbot County

the condition of your landscape the White Oak might just be the perfect tree given sufficient room and time to grow.

PROPAGATION

Most White Oak propagation is from seed. The White Oak will begin to produce acorns usually around its 50th year although a well-grown specimen in an open area may produce acorns by its 20th year. Acorn production will vary from year to year and from tree to tree, but in a good acorn production year (every 4 to 6 years), a healthy specimen may produce up to 10,000 acorns. In a poor production year it may be difficult to find viable seeds, as the competition among wildlife for food can be intense. Seed will begin to fall in early October and will soon germinate and are best harvested before wildlife or insect damage can occur. Select large healthy, light brown, blemish free seeds and remove the cap carefully inspecting for holes in the shell that might indicate the presence of borers – discard if holes are evident. Finally, check for seed viability by flotation in water: acorns that sink are sound; those that float should be discarded. White Oak acorns do not store well, so they should be planted as soon as possible after collection. A light medium is preferred so that the taproot can develop unimpeded. Prepare a mix of equal parts peat moss, sand, fine pine bark mulch and rotted leaf compost and place in a large (6 to 8 inch) pot. Add a layer of acorns spaced approximately 1 inch apart and cover, water well and place in a cold frame. I have found that an insulating layer of fresh leaves inside the cold frame is great for protecting from any freeze/thaw cycle and improves root development. After germination, root growth continues until interrupted by cold weather. Root and shoot growth will resume in the spring and a large taproot will develop. In early summer pot up the seedlings into individual pots and continue to grow for one year before setting out into the landscape. Keep young seedlings well watered until established. Once established, transplanting is hard because of the deep growing taproot!

(cont. on page 5)

Resources and Reviews

[Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants](#), Updated and Expanded Paperback
by Douglas W. Tallamy (Author), Rick Darke (Contributor)

(cont. from page 4)

LORE

In addition to being an outstanding tree for the landscape, the wood, bark and fruit of the White Oak have long been valued by the earliest Native Americans to present day furniture makers and artisans. Native Americans used acorns of the White Oak as a food – they are much less bitter than the acorn of red oaks. Native Americans ground acorns into flour, a technique they shared with early European settlers. The acorns were either boiled in water or soaked in a lye solution to remove the tannins, then pounded and ground to make a flour that was made into mush or used to thicken soups. In Native American medicine the bark was brewed into a tea for treating diarrhea and hemorrhoids. Modern herbals still specify White Oak as an astringent for external use on wounds open sores and insect bites. Of course, where would the furniture market be were it not for the White Oak? The wood is tight grained, hard and tough making the finest furniture and flooring, support timbers, railroad ties and pallets. It was used in ship construction and extremely popular for barrel making for its watertight grain – hence the name stave oak.



Quercus alba is listed in the "[The Flora of Delaware Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program](#)" - Bill McAvoy's database.

Delaware Watersheds: Protecting Delaware Waterways



Below is shared from the [Inland Bays Blog](#)

The Inland Bays Foundation supports the concept of "Rain" Gardens and even more the concept of **"rain" communities**. Plantation lakes in Millsboro is a good example of a "rain" community where every drop of rain and flow from impervious surfaces is trapped in lined ponds for future use in irrigation. This is especially important as this community surrounds Bett's Pond on three sides. Bett's Pond is in the Headwaters watershed for the Indian River. It can be done by responsible developers- Lennar gets a thumbs up!

(see page 6 for more info from blogs)

Last minute notice for PA Conference—Register now!
2014 Native Plants in the Landscape Conference at
Millersville University June 5-7, 2014. There are many
registration options for the conference.
www.millersvillenativeplants.org
or register online at <https://www.regonline.com/npilc2014>.



**Fostering
Environmental
Awareness
and
Action**

▲
Promoting
the restoration
of the
Delaware

Inland Bays watershed

[Inland Bays Foundation
Blog](#)

DE Environmental Summit, March 22, 2014



Photo: Inland Bays blog

Bill McAvoy spoke at the summit plenary session about the important of non-tidal freshwater wetlands. These wetlands serve as the home for an overwhelming number of rare plants and animals and are currently completely unprotected in Delaware.

From [Livable Lawns](#) Blog

by [Delaware DNREC](#)

The goal of the *Delaware Livable Lawns* initiative is simple -- reduce fertilizer and pesticide runoff from lawns.



[Taking A Soil Sample.mov](#)

[Ed Gartley](#)

9:33

[UD How to Interpret a Soil Test Video.mov](#)

[Ed Gartley](#)

7:
4
7

[Purchasing Fertilizer for Your Lawn](#)

[UDCANR](#)

9:
0
1

[How to read a fertilizer bag and choose a fertilizer](#)

[Water-MattersTV](#)

3:
4
0

[How to apply fertilizer](#)

[Water-MattersTV](#)

3:
4
8

Upcoming Events

Mt. Cuba Center *Your pathway to native plants*

Spring Ephemerals Throughout the Season on April 10, 24, and May 8
 Adventures in Moss Gardening on April 17
 Tenth Annual Wildflower Celebration on April 27
 Our Native Azaleas: America's Treasure on April 29
 Terrific Trilliums on May 1
 National Public Gardens Day on May 9
 Fundamentals of Ecological Gardening May 10 & 17
 The Blended Garden – Good Looks With Terrific Taste on June 3
 Milkweeds for Monarchs on June 26



Photo by Rick Mickowski*

Center for Inland Bays—Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 3, 2014 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

James Farm Ecological Preserve

On Cedar Neck Road in Ocean View

Plants, good food, good advice and fun at the Gardening for the Bays Native Plant Sale!

Copeland Native Plant Series

Tour of Ashland Hollow Gardens. Host: Helen Fischel. **Saturday, May 3, 9:30-11:30am.** Meet at Ashland Nature Center. Tour the **17-acre garden with Bill and Nancy Frederick**, who started work on the property in 1965. Great care has been taken by Mr. Frederick, a professional landscape architect, to design with the seasons, climate, and the existing land forms in mind. Get ideas for your property, or join us to just escape onto this mixture of art, nature and spring. This garden is known for its azalea collection,. Van transportation included. Registration: Call 302.239.2334 or visit delawarenaturesociety.org

Delaware Nature Society **Spring 2014** 3511 Barley Mill Rd Hockessin, DE 19707 (302) 239-2334

Magical Mystery Wildflower Tour **Wednesday, April 16, 9:00 - 12:00 pm**

Travel to a magical place for wildflowers known for diversity of native species and natural beauty. Learn identification techniques and the ecology of some of our most outstanding species -- Member/Non-Member: \$15/\$22 -- Leader: Janet Ebert, Joe Sebastiani -- Location: Van provided

Beautifying Your Garden With Native Plants **Wednesday, April 16, 7 - 9pm** -- Members/Non-member: FREE Pre-registration required, RSVP by calling the Receptionist at [\(302\) 656-1490](tel:3026561490)

Peggy Anne Montgomery is the Brand Manager for American Beauties Native Plants will show some of her favorite native landscape plants: Native Medicinal Plants

Native Plant Sale -- Tuesday April 29, 2:30-4:00 -- Member/Non-member: \$5/\$7 Join us for a talk and tour of the grounds of Ashland to discover which native plants are medicinal and how they can be used, like Spicebush, Elderberry, and Goldenrod. Native Plant Sale guide will be provided; prepare your shopping list for the Native Plant Sale. -- Meeting Location: Ashland Nature Center. Van provided:

Wildflower Study Certification

Earn a certification in Wildflower Study from the Delaware Nature Society by attending **4 lectures and 4 field trips** on the topic. Lectures cover basic botanical structure, biology, ecology and identification of wildflowers, ferns, and grasses. Field trips will be habitat-based -- Dates: **April - September see full itinerary online or call.** -- Member/Non-Member: \$125/\$175 -- Leader: DNS Staff --Locations: Various

Membership Application

DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

WWW.DELAWARENATIVEPLANTS.ORG

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**

