

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

"There was Cardinal flower of vivid,
deep, soul-satisfying red."

"How to Grow Wildflowers in Your
Own Garden"
by Hal Bruce

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?

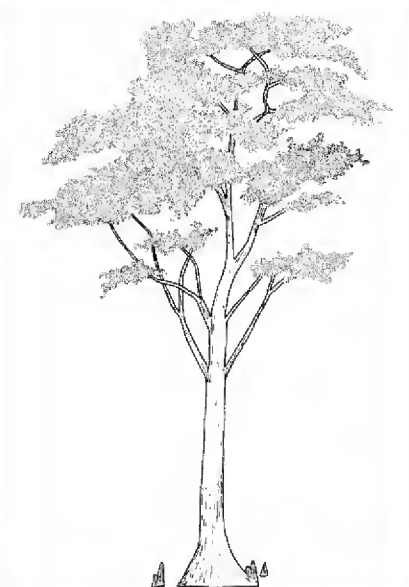
The Delaware Native Plant Society is open to everyone ranging from the novice gardener to the professional botanist. One of the primary goals of the society is to involve as many individuals as possible.

The DNPS is working on some significant projects at this time. We have completed four reforestation projects in the Prime Hook area, at Blackbird Creek in New Castle County and Cedar Creek in Sussex County where we have installed tree tubes around newly sprouted seedlings, and are performing annual management of the sites. Help is also needed at our native plant nursery at the St. Jones Reserve with the monitoring and watering of plants along with many other nursery activities.

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.



Summer at Newcroft



Notes from Newcroft

...and abroad

One would never expect to see a whole garden of North American native plants growing in London but that's what I discovered on a recent trip to



the UK. The British Museum has chosen a prominent location in front of the museum for the exhibit which has been curated in conjunction with Kew Gardens. Lo and behold, the Cardinal flower (DNPS's Plant of the Year) is among the highlighted plants.

"Plants of the N. American subcontinent have global ecological and economic importance. Used by native peoples for thousands of years, many were introduced to Europe in the 1500s and 1600s following the colonization of North America. Grown for their medicinal uses, as food crops and for other economic purposes, some species have also become familiar ornamental garden plants."

Another discovery was a Douglas fir at Scone Palace (north of Perth Scotland) that plantsman David Douglas grew from seeds he collected on a plant exploration trip in 1826 to our Pacific NW. Read his fascinating bio [here](#). Our history intertwines horticulturally with the UK in many ways.

Cindy Albright
Newcroft in Lewes, DE
cindy@cindyalbright.com

DNPS Member Donates Trees

Jim MacKenzie, DNPS member, and Octoraro Native Plant Nursery President and Operations Manager, donated over 50 native plants to Delaware Wild Lands, Inc. (DWL) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). On June 19, DWL staff and DNPS member Rick McCorkle visited the nursery to pick up 13 bald cypress, 4 black gums, 24 white oaks, 2 swamp white oaks, and a small number of native shrubs (e.g., sweet pepperbush, highbush blueberry). All of the trees will be planted by DWL staff in or adjacent to Great Cypress Swamp (GCS). Some may be used in native plant landscaping around the buildings at the Roman Fisher Farm, which is DWL's southern headquarters, on the edge of the GCS. Some of the shrubs will be used in native plant landscaping at the USFWS's Delaware Bay Estuary Project office, located at Bombay Hook NWR. Most of these plants had become "root-bound" and, therefore, needed to be planted rather than maintained in the nursery. The white oaks had been affected by a condition known as "oak tatters" (http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/oaktatters/oaktatters.htm) which was likely caused by cold snaps that occurred after leaf-out this past spring. While these white oaks are good specimens, Jim removed them from his inventory due to their appearance. Many thanks to Jim MacKenzie for this wonderful donation.

Rick McCorkle, DNPS Member

DNPS Receives Award at Adopt-A-Wetland Conference

On behalf of the Delaware Native Plant Society, DNPS Board member Bill McAvoy recently accepted an award of recognition from the Adopt-A-Wetland Program at their annual conference. The award plaque reads: "For exceptional stewardship of their Big Oak Park adopted wetland and for promoting the importance of the use of native plants in wetlands, open space, and community environments for the people of Delaware." Bill was excited to receive this award for the Society and we encourage our members to become active at our adopt-a-wetland site at Big Oak Park in Smyrna.

Resources & Reviews

Sibley Guide to Trees

David Allan Sibley, 464 pgs.

With the same attention to detail given in his bird guides, Sibley's book offers several illustrations of flowers, leaves, bark, fruits and seed pods for each tree species.

Native Delaware: Hummingbirds all abuzz for this vivid native wildflower*

The cardinal plant -- a magnet for hummingbirds -- was named the 2012 Delaware native plant of the year. When John Harrod canoes the Christina River and Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge in late summer, he makes a mental note to look for cardinal flower, which is in bloom then with dramatic red spires. This native wildflower thrives in moist and wet soil, such as found at the refuge.

Harrod, manager of the DuPont Environmental Education Center, not only likes this plant's blooms but what they attract -- ruby-throated hummingbirds and butterflies. (It's pollinated by the former and used as a food source by the latter.)

The cardinal flower was named the Delaware Native Plant of the Year by the Delaware Native Plant Society. Harrod, president of the society, says that this wildflower was chosen for several reasons: it's native to Delaware; can be easily propagated; and is common in both regions of the state -- the Piedmont, the northernmost part, and the Coastal Plain, which starts around Kirkwood Highway and extends southward. Another important reason is it's valuable for wildlife habitat restoration since it provides food to native wildlife.

"Cardinal flower supports four species of caterpillars and it's important for hummingbirds. It also is a good source of nectar for sphinx moth adults," notes Doug Tallamy, chair of UD's department of entomology and applied ecology. "I mention cardinal flower in my book ["Bringing Nature Home"] "

J.W. Wistermayer, a UD Master Gardener grows cardinal flower in his home garden and also helps to maintain it in the Native Teaching Garden at the New Castle County Cooperative Extension office in Newark.

"At Master Gardener workshops, people ask about ways to use cardinal flower in the home landscape. I have it planted with blue lobelia but I think it would work well with just about anything that is comparable in sun/moisture tolerance," he says. "I was thinking of planting some goldenrod as well -- that would be a striking combination -- blazing red, vibrant blue and striking gold."

Cardinal flower is a good choice for rain gardens and ornamental ponds, as long as the plant's crown stays above water, says Harrod.

*Written by MARGO McDONOUGH
News Journal Apr. 28, 2012

Native Delaware is a weekly column by the university's Cooperative Extension on First State plants, animals and weather. McDonough is a communications specialist for the University of Delaware. To suggest a topic or ask a question, please contact her at 831-1358 or margomcd@udel.edu.

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS**CARDINAL FLOWER (*LOBELIA CARDINALIS*)****NATURAL HISTORY**

In mid-summer the brilliant scarlet color of the Cardinal Flower flashes from the marshes, stream banks and low woods across the Eastern United States from Southern Canada to Texas. Often called "America's favorite" and "spectacular", its extremely showy blossoms can be recognized at considerable distance. Few native plants have flowers of such intense color as this common herbaceous perennial. The blossoms are delicate, gradually opening from bottom to top in groups of 2 to 8 brilliant crimson flowers. Though a mature *Lobelia cardinalis* may ultimately support over a hundred flowers, the sequential blossoming habit of this spectacular native plant will prolong blooming time from summer into early fall. A moderately tall plant, (2 to 4 Feet) stout and erect, it is a favorite of our ruby-throated hummingbird, numerous butterflies and some bees who oblige as pollinators. The sexual tube of the cardinal flower is at first male, displaying pollen-bearing stamens at the tube tip. Pollinators collect the pollen by brushing their foreheads against the tube tip as they forage for nectar. As the stamen decline, the Y-shaped pistils extend from the tube, becoming the female and ready to receive pollen from flowers still in the pollen stage.

WHERE TO GROW

Though primarily a wetland plant, *Lobelia cardinalis* is adaptable to a wide range of soil and light conditions. Cardinal flowers can be grown in full sun or shade but probably grow best in filtered light. They can be grown in the water garden under partially submerged conditions in heavy soils along stream and pond banks that are occasionally flooded, or can be grown in a well drained perennial garden if sufficient moisture can be provided and mulch is used to keep the roots moist.

PROPAGATION AND CARE

Lobelia cardinalis will re-seed itself readily. The near microscopic seeds can be collected in the late fall once the seed capsules have thoroughly dried. Seeds may be saved over the winter in an envelope stored in a dry location. In the early spring seeds may be direct seeded into the flowerbed. Do not allow the soil to dry until the plants are well established. Seeds may also be sprinkled onto a rich potting media in a pot of flat (do not cover), and watered



from the bottom until seedlings are well established. Once the plants have emerged and formed two sets of true leaves, transplant the seedlings into individual pots. Continue to provide ample moisture until a strong root system is established then plant the individual seedlings into the flowerbed,

water garden or any natural habitat where sufficient moisture is assured. Seeds planted in the summer form rosettes of foliage in the fall. Be careful to keep leaves and debris from smothering these rosettes.

LORE

Historically, *Lobelia cardinalis* has been used as a medicine and emetic (to induce vomiting). Native Americans used root and leaf teas of the Cardinal Flower for stomachache, fever, headache and colds, to expel worms, soothe the nerves, and cure syphilis and typhoid fever! It contains fourteen alkaloids similar to those in nicotine. Extracts of the leaves and fruit produce vomiting, sweating and pain and some people may have an allergic reaction to the plants sap on the skin. There is no current medicinal use for this plant today. Definitely a plant to enjoy for its great beauty.

Bob Edelen, DNPS Member

Resources and Reviews

Flowering Earth

By Donald Culross Peattie

"By night the moths take over, fertilizing the night-blooming flowers. This tribe of the feathery antennae have some of them tongues incredibly long, coiled like a watchspring that can probe the deepest corolla."

Resources and Reviews

"American Eden: From Monticello to Central Park to Our Backyards"

By Wade Graham, published by Harper Collins, 2011

Graham covers one of the first examples of ecological thinking in 1789 when Gilbert White published *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* to the High Line Park in NYC, where wild nature is in the heart of the postindustrial city...new pastoral urbanism.

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Wet Garden Area

The cardinal flower is one of the perennials mentioned in the excerpt below from a Delaware publication by Susan Barton, Gary Schwetz and Rick Lewandowski.*

"Wet areas in the landscape provide a great gardening opportunity. Swales between property lines or other low areas often stay wet for a while after a rain. Some good perennials for moist sites include marsh mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*), blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and New York aster (*Symphotrichum novi-belgii*)."

* From "Livable Plants for the Home Landscape" [Plants for a Livable Delaware](#) - a handy booklet

Hal Bruce's thoughts on the Cardinal flower*

"As a boy, roaming the broad fields and tidal marshes of the great Delaware tributaries... one day in late August I pushed completely through the thicket and stood in the ooze of the marsh. I was enthralled by four plants in particular... turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), monkeyflower (*Mimulus ringens*), sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*). Twenty years have passed and I can still see the medley of bright colors, smell the marsh gases and feel again the pure delight I felt on finding a kind of wildflower garden in such an unlikely spot."

"How to Grow Wildflowers & Shrubs & Trees in Your Own Garden" by Hal Bruce 1976.



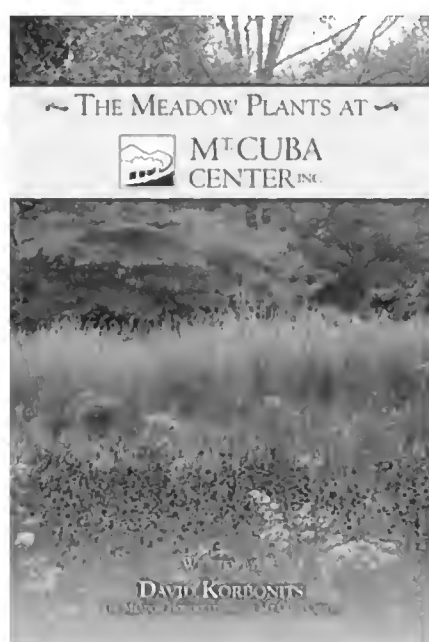
Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design

By Nancy Ondra

No longer relegated to back-of-the-border backdrops for showy perennials or space-filling solutions for inconsequential garden areas, ornamental grasses are moving front and center as befits their versatile, adaptable, and irresistible nature. From their burnished glow when backlit by a setting sun to the textural richness they bring to a mixed border, grasses offer much in the way of gardening excitement and distinction yet require little maintenance in return. After succinctly covering the cultural basics of grass gardening, Ondra concentrates her efforts on extolling their multifaceted design distinctions. For every garden element, from borders, pathways, and containers to location challenges such as shade, slopes and screening, Ondra's capsule "designer's choices" offer brief but essential descriptions to aid in plant selection and planning considerations, and quick-reference lists highlight grasses that work well in such diverse conditions as hot-and-dry sites and low-and-wet bogs. Supported by Saxon Holt's captivating color photographs, Ondra elevates grasses from garden understudies to starring roles.

Amazon review by *Carol Haggas*

Mt. Cuba Publishes First eBook



In *Meadow Plants at Mt. Cuba Center*, join Dave Korbonits as he shares his expertise gleaned from over 20 years of meadow gardening. Learn about the history of the meadow at Mt. Cuba Center*, why native plants are recommended for meadows, 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 for the meadow and 35 wildflowers. 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 access the *Ask the Horticulturist* feature. Cost of the e-book is **\$25**.

[Click here to download ebook](#)

Mt. Cuba's meadow contains:

*Native grasses such as little bluestem, broom-sedge, and Indian grass dominate the Meadow, providing continuous change throughout the year. From mid-summer through autumn, these grasses are enhanced with colorful plants such as butterfly weed, black-eyed Susan, and purple coneflower.

Visit Historic Lewes Delaware's Colonial Herb Garden at the Fisher-Martin House

Renovations of the herb garden have been completed by Lewes in Bloom member and Master Gardener Brenda Brady who conducted research on what plants were used



in a colonial herb garden. The plants are segregated by type such as medicinal, culinary, fragrant and flowering herbs and herbs for other household uses such as dyeing fabrics. Herbs used by Native Americans who populated the Cape Henlopen area during the 1700s are also in the garden. The photo above shows Lewes in Bloom volunteers preparing the garden for Lewes Garden Day.

View a brochure of the [garden's design at Lewesinbloom.org](#).

The Herb Garden is located next to the [Lewes Chamber of Commerce](#) at 120 Kings Highway, Lewes, DE 19958

Notes from Annual Meeting May 12, 2012

The fall symposium in September will focus on bog gardens. The speaker is from New Jersey and he will talk about creating a bog garden. Bill McAvoy will talk about Delaware native plants for use in bog gardens. Bill discussed a potential field trip site to the Spring Creek Preserve located in Kent County near Frederica.

John Harrod discussed the Society becoming a member of the American Chestnut Foundation that has cross bred the American Chestnut with an Asian Chestnut. The Red Clay Reservation could become a test plot. Other potential sites could be on state forest lands, private landowner's property, at the St. Jones nursery, and at the national wildlife refuges. We could help to promote chestnut plantations and use in restoration site work. John will contact the Foundation to see what the next steps would be for the Society and possibly have a presentation at our spring 2013 meeting.

Upcoming Events

Mt. Cuba Center *Your pathway to native plants*

Distance Learning—new program on [Meadows](#) (see previous page for details)

July 18 10:00 am to noon Program “Native Alternatives to Invasives”

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

Delaware Nature Society ([for program registration info](#))

Flint Woods Walk with Brian Winslow

Program #: U12-015-FW, Thursday, July 19, 6 - 8 pm

Member/Non-Member: \$10/\$15

Leader: Brian Winslow

Meeting Location: Flint Woods Preserve

Evening is a wonderful time to see wildlife, hear singing birds, and to enjoy the soft evening light among towering old trees and bubbling creeks. This is a great opportunity to experience one of the best natural areas in New Castle County and get to meet Brian, the Delaware Nature Society's new Executive Director.

Pine Barrens Wildflower Ramble

Program #: U12-204-DC, Wednesday, July 11, 8 am - 5 pm

Member/Non-Member: \$25/35

Leaders: John Harrod and Russell Juelg

Meeting Location: DuPont Environmental Education Center, van transportation provided.

July is prime wildflower time in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. Join Russell Juelg, 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.

Save the Date

Delaware Coast Day

Sunday, October 7, 2012 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

College of Earth, Ocean and Environment

Lewes, DE

Includes many exhibits related to Native Plants and their environment www.decoastday.org

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**

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 DOVER, DELAWARE 19903**

