



Native Plant News

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant News
Julie Higgie, editor

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MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to promote the enjoyment and conservation of North Carolina's native plants and their habitats through education, cultivation and advocacy.

ncwildflower.org

Home Sweet Grasslands

Bringing Back an Ancient Piedmont Prairie

By **Stan Gilliam**

Editor's Note: We are grateful to O'Henry Magazine of Greensboro for the use of this article, which it published in March 2015.

I didn't know what to expect when I drove up to Reidsville to see what a Piedmont Prairie was all about. Energetic at 78, Mike Vaughn leads me on a brisk walk around his 40-acre property, talking excitedly about his plans to recreate a kind of natural garden that no longer exists. "I belong to a loose-knit bunch of believers in the hypothesis that, before 1500, large parts of the land between the Appalachians and the seacoast were in grasslands," he says, his eyes sparkling.

As a boy, Vaughan dreamed of the vast treeless plains of the American West where bison and elk roamed free, hunted by Indian braves. At that time, almost no one realized that such a scene might have existed in ancient North Carolina. Removing his broad-brimmed hat and wiping his brow, Vaughan explains that once upon a time periodic controlled burns by the Indians and nature's lightning strikes helped maintain vast Piedmont prairies.

Then several years ago, Vaughan saw the paintings of Georgia artist Philip Juras, who had recreated scenes of pre-settlement savannas on canvas. "Philip provided a vision from the past for my planning of the future of Wolf Island Prairie, Vaughan reflects.

Anyone who has driven our rural roads knows we have thousands of acres of open, rolling country cleared for farms and pastures. But after centuries of alterations and the introduction of countless varieties of invasive species by European settlers and their modern descendants, the bison, elk and (Continued on page 4)

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President's Letter



Dr. Larry Mellichamp

Look up there at that stately tree with the big leaves! It has the largest leaves (up to 40 inches) and flowers (over 12 inches) in the temperate zone *of the world*. It is Bigleaf Magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*). It occurs sporadically in rich woods from Kentucky to coastal Mississippi, but in the Carolinas is found wild in only five counties west of the Catawba

River, from Statesville to York.

While Bigleaf Magnolia is a giant among its associates, it does not survive alone. In its rich floodplain soils it is fed by mycorrhizal fungi, and is protected from strong winds and bright sunlight by the surrounding forest. Its sweet-smelling flowers are pollinated by small beetles in May, and the soft-orange seeds are dispersed by birds and other animals in September. It is part of a community of cooperative individuals, part of the web-of-life that must function as a whole for *all* to flourish.

I would like each of you, members of the NC Native Plant Society, to feel that you are part of such a community. The Society is large, prosperous, and functional. It does many things for many people. But it must have the support and cooperation of every member to thrive. As your new president I am looking for ways to improve the overall success of the NCNPS, and would appreciate any thoughts anyone would care to express (lmellichamp@carolina.rr.com). What we need from you right now is *involvement* to support our efforts. Of the 16 people on the board of directors, we need a **chair of the education committee** to help direct our efforts to spreading the word about the beauty and important of native plants. We also need a **chair of programs** to help plan our two field trip outings each year. These are not simple tasks, and they require the input from many people, but we must have individuals to focus that attention. Please come forward if you can.

(Continued on page 3)

Fall Outing: Saturday, Oct. 10

The Fall Trip will be a one-day event to visit Riles Creek (an unofficial site), just east of Richfield, NC, in Stanly County. The area is used for hunting and there are housing tracts nearby, but it has a wonderful aura of “rural” if not “wilderness”.



Coral Honeysuckle

This is an unusually diverse site on circumneutral, slate-based soils. The site is an upland, dryish woodland dominated by Chestnut Oak and Scarlet Oak (and planted Loblolly Pine). Also present are Sourwood, Witch-hazel, 3 species of Viburnum, Tall Indigo-bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Coral Honeysuckle, Cross-vine, lots of dwarf blueberries, Fringe-tree, and Silky Dogwood in the bottomlands. Rare or unusual plants are Conjur-er’s-nut (*Nestronia umbellula*), Mountain Laurel on creek bluffs, Chalk Maple (*Acer leuco-derme*), Overcup Oak (*Quercus lyrata*),

American Plum (*Prunus americana*), Rattan Vine (*Berchemia scandens*), Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromati-ca*), and Sensitive-briar (*Mimosa* sp., formerly *Schrankia*).

Larry Mellichamp notes that in 1980, he saw Monkshood (*Aconitum uncinatum*) there, but was never able to find it again—we can look! The site was logged in 1982 and is planted with pines, so there has been some disturbance; however, there are plenty of interesting places to botanize at the site and there is a nice trail along the creek. We’ll use a local park and fast-food places for our lunch and bathroom break, and visit a different spot in the afternoon.

Details and registration information will be available later in September!

President’s Letter (cont. from p2)

My goals include the idea of visiting every chapter - maybe giving a talk if it works in the schedule - to see what folks are doing across the state. I have also been looking at various partnerships that we might strengthen. For example, just this week I talked with representatives from the N.C. Audubon Society on helping with their future annual lists of plants for birds. See their excellent website for brochures on plants for different regions (<http://nc.audubon.org/bird-friendly-plants>).

Many people come to native plants through their interest in birds. Likewise, many people like butterflies and want to help the plight of the Monarch. Planting more native milkweeds and nectar plants is the best thing we can do. Our Native Plant Society is an excellent source of information and it is up to you, the members, to help spread the word and direct young people to these activities. Do not sit idly by - help give a kid a milkweed

plant! See these items, including the butterfly highway project at UNC Charlotte <http://ui.uncc.edu/story/milkweed-monarch-butterfly> and http://www.butterflyhighway.org/?page_id=53 and <https://www.facebook.com/UNCCCharlotteGardens?fref=fb>

So, I am handing you a magnolia leaf as a symbolic token of inspiration and connection for you to get involved and do what you can do for native plants and N.C. citizens in your own region and across the state. We must all cooperate to keep the earth rich for ourselves and our grandchildren - just as the grandchildren of the monarch butterflies in your garden today will be the ones to come back next year and hopefully find a habitat in which to be prosperous.

Have a great fall and “Raise your spirits - plant more natives!”

Larry

Home Sweet Grasslands (cont. from p1)



Biology Professor Mike Vaughan

ester John Isenhour noticed a particular clump of grass. “He pointed to an attractive, thigh-tall seed stalk bearing white, fuzzy seed clusters and said: ‘This is a typical Piedmont prairie grass, Little Bluestem.’ I fixated on it right then, and it has been my prairie icon ever since. It is the grass I have chosen to be the dominant species in Wolf Island Prairie.”

Later, Greensboro biologist Moni Bates inventoried the plants on Vaughan’s land and discovered that he already had 27 species on hand that were consistent with the old prairie habitat. “I was elated and surprised,” he writes. “Before we planted the first prairie plant ourselves, nature had begun to convert the right-of-way to a prairie.”

wolf and many of the plant species that supported the prairies have passed into the twilight of place names and mythology.

As we walk along the pathways that Vaughan has blazed on his land, he points with pride to several species he has reintroduced: yellow Schweinitz’s Sunflower, lavender Georgia Aster and plume grasses towering 12 feet above the ground.

A biology professor, Vaughan wants Wolf Island Prairie to be a sort of living botanical museum and classroom where people can come and experience for themselves a natural pre-historic habitat, though maybe not quite as dramatic as Jurassic Park.

Although Vaughan didn’t know it 20-some years ago when he and his wife, Tucky, bought the property, it already had a sort of manmade prairie running across it in the form of the land under lofty Duke Energy power lines. In his blog, Vaughan writes about the day a few years ago when visiting state for-

prised,” he writes. “Before we planted the first prairie plant ourselves, nature had begun to convert the right-of-way to a prairie.”

After contacting the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Vaughan learned that his property was eligible for a conservation easement through the Habitat Restoration Program, an initiative designed to protect, enhance and restore wildlife, waterways and historical landscapes from the effects of rampant development.

“So we are going to have a prairie, Wolf Island Prairie,” says Vaughan, “and we are going to live in it.” Working furiously over the past five years, he has daily been planting and setting out thousands of native prairie seeds and seedlings on his land. And with the use of carefully chosen chemical agents, he has made inroads into alien interlopers such as honeysuckle and lespedeza.

However, there is even more to do. As Native Americans burned off vegetation to clear

Home Sweet Grasslands (cont. from p4)

spaces for villages and farms and lightning did its work, some grasses became fire-resistant, others, fire-dependent. As Europeans settled, fire clearly became an enemy, a threat to their farms, livestock and wooden homes. They fought it aggressively. That meant that a new set of plants that were not fire-resistant were encouraged to grow in the settlers' clearings, eventually replacing many of the old native species. Recent generations have added imported grasses to their suburban lawns and popular ornamental plants, which have spread into fields and woods.

So in order to recreate the prehistoric habitat, every couple of years Vaughan has to undertake a "prescribed burn" under the watchful eye of the Forest Service. This helps clear out undesirable plants and allows the fire-

resistant plants to prosper. Vaughan hopes to conduct the first one early in 2015, weather permitting. Several of these burns have already been conducted on other properties in Guilford County.

Studying, managing, planting, clearing, burning – clearly, these add up to a monumental task. But Vaughan is obsessed with bringing back what once was so splendid: "Yeah, I'm in love with old Piedmont prairie!" And he continues to prove it every day, one plant at a time.

For more details, see Mike's blog at www.ncprairie.com

Stan Gilliam and Mike Vaughan are both members of the N.C. Native Plant Society.

NC Native Plant Society members enjoyed the 32nd annual Cullowhee Native Plant Conference held July 15-18 at Western Carolina University.



Farewell to a Faithful Society Member

It was with heavy hearts that we learned of the death of our friend, mentor, and leader **Alice Zawadzki** on June 30, 2015.

Those who knew Alice, or ever saw her, remember her for her unique style: a different color, head to toe, for each month of the year, and royal blue for traveling. She was a free spirit with a giant hug for friends and strangers alike.

More importantly, in addition to her faith and her love of folk dancing, was her commitment to the native flora of North Carolina, and more particularly, her passion for rare plant conservation. She was a self-avowed "idea person," charting a path for others to follow and never hesitating to get involved in discussions that she thought would advance any efforts to preserve the natural beauty of North Carolina.

Alice took the leadership of the then N.C. Wild Flower Preservation Society and moved it into the 21st Century with a name change (N.C. Native Plant Society) and a focus on plant conservation. She "grew" the idea of NCNPS chapters across the state, and her vision took an existing group in the Southern Piedmont and expanded the plan to become chapters in the Triad, Triangle, SE Coast, NE Coast, NW Sandhills, Western NC and the newest in the Blue Ridge. As NCNPS President, she was one of the initiators of what has become an annual event, the Rare Flora meeting. She encouraged and supported the NC Plant Conservation Program, and urged the founding of



Alice Zawadzki (left) and her mother, Helen, enjoying nature.

the Friends of Plant Conservation. NCNPS, under her leadership, donated the funds necessary to create the Friends group. She was a tireless member of the Friends of State Parks, serving on their board of directors for many years.

More recently, Alice joined the board of directors of the Friends group, with a commitment to forging a strong bond between FOPC and NCNPS. As with everything she undertook, it was all or nothing, as she eagerly sought her niche in the organization.

She was a tireless voice for the natural world, to paraphrase Johnny Randall, and a mentor to any who shared her passion. She will be missed by many, and remembered as we see her above, in blue, in the field, and with her mother.

She leaves her mother and two brothers in New Jersey.

Farewell to our friend.

*Photo of Alice and her Mom courtesy of **Johnny Randall**. Photo of Gentiana autumnalis courtesy of **Kathy Schlosser**.*



Alice loved the name of this plant, but insisted that it be called Gentiana autumAlice.

June 4, 2016: HOLD THE DATE!

The NCNPS 2016 Annual Meeting & Picnic will be held on Saturday, June 4, 2016.

We'll be trying a new location:

Seven Springs

(a former Girl Scout camp)

in Farmington NC (Davie County).

Look for more information in the Spring *Native Plant News*.



Houstonia caerulea

CHLOROFIENDS!*

Invasive Plants Education



By Lisa Lofland Gould

On behalf of the NC Native Plant Society, this May I attended the 2015 joint meeting of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council (SEPPC) and the NC Invasive Plant Council (NCIPC). The sessions included talks on ongoing research into the natural history of invasives and the natives they displace, managing and documenting control efforts, educating private landowners about invasives and their control, trying to stop invasive species at our borders and ports, getting media attention to help with public education, dealing with emerging pests (such as Hydrilla [*Hydrilla verticillata*], Cogongrass [*Imperata cylindrica*], and Fig Buttercup [*Ficaria verna*]), and assessing the potential impact and spread of invasive species. There was lots of useful information, and if you'd like to learn more, you can access the presentations at <http://nc-ipc.weebly.com/2015-annual-meeting-presentations.html>

Anthony Koop (USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service [APHIS]) and Bridget Lassiter (NC Department of Agriculture) both talked about USDA APHIS's recently developed weed risk assessments [WRAs]. The WRAs look at the potential impacts of an invasive species in the United States (for example, on human health, agriculture, fisheries, timber production, livestock, and natural ecosystems), how widely is the species likely to spread in the US, and how certain APHIS

is about their data on potential spread and impact of the species (the less ecological information available, the greater the uncertainty). Such science-based assessments are crucial for regulatory agencies (for example, at what point should an invasive species be placed on a state's noxious weed list and be banned from sale?) and for land managers who must prioritize their monitoring and control efforts.

Japanese Chaff-seed (*Achyranthes japonica*), a member of the Amaranth family, is one plant Koop described as having high risk potential in the Southeast. Native to eastern Asia, this herbaceous perennial can grow to 6 feet tall and has fruits with stiff bracts that can attach to feathers or fur and be easily dispersed. While not yet reported in North Carolina, it's already in Georgia, Tennessee, and several other southern and midwestern states. It appears to have high potential as a pest in natural areas, but APHIS is less certain about its impact on agriculture.

Another up-and-comer is Wavyleaf Basketgrass (*Oplismenus undulatifolius* [= *O. hirtel-*



Pampasgrass spreading in a field.

Chlorofiends! (cont.)

lus ssp. undulatifolius]), a Eurasian grass with habits similar to Japanese Stilt-grass (*Microstegium vimineum*). Like Japanese Chaff-seed, its seedheads (which have very long awns) can be dispersed on fur, feathers, and clothing and can spread rapidly in natural areas. First reported in Maryland in 1996, APHIS considers this a high-risk species, but needs more information to assess its impact on human activities such as agriculture or silviculture.

Other “High Risk” species for our area include Pampasgrass (*Cortaderia selloana*), a noxious weed in some countries, but still sold in the nursery trade here; Japanese Climbing Fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), which can spread via harvested pine straw; Tropical Soda-apple (*Solanum viarum*), a very prickly South American plant that can quickly take over pastures and agricultural areas; Yellow Floating Heart (*Nymphoides peltata*), sold in the nursery trade as a water-garden plant; and Beach Vitex (*Vitex rotundifolia*), now a state noxious weed in North Carolina. You can access the full list of WRAs by going to http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/importexport?1dmy&urile=wcm:path:/aphis/content_library/sa_our_focus/sa_plant_health/sa_domestic_pests_and_diseases/sa_pests_and_diseases/sa_weeds/sa_noxious_weeds_program/ct_riskassessments and clicking on “List of Available Weed Risk Assessments”.

In May 2015, Bridget Lassiter completed a WRA on Fig Buttercup (*Ficaria verna* [= *Ranunculus ficaria*]), also known as Lesser Cel-



Fig Buttercup invading a woodland.

andine. This European native has been cultivated in the US for a long time, but now appears to be naturalizing rapidly. An established invasive in the Northeast—I have seen it cover acres in New York, where it simply carpets the ground and allows nothing else to grow—it is now spreading in the South as well. In North Carolina it was

first reported in Wake Co., but more recently has also been found in Buncombe, Chatham, Durham, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Orange, and Swain counties. Several cultivars are sold in the nursery trade, and there are at least five subspecies growing in the US. It is sometimes confused with Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), which reaches its southernmost limits in our region and is found only in a few mountain bogs in North Carolina. Fig Buttercup is a noxious weed in several states, but has not yet been designated noxious in North Carolina.

The more aware we are of the potential and newly emerging invasive plants in our state, the better able we are to be on the lookout for them and catch them before they spread widely. It is far more cost effective to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species than to try to eradicate large infestations. Be aware, be informed, and of course, Plant Natives!

**Thanks to Jim Butcher’s The Dresden Files for the column title.*

What's the Buzz? Pollinators!

Bumble Bees



By **Theresa Morr**

Long ignored by farmers, bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.) are now being recognized for their unique adaptations to their local environment, which reestablishes them as some of the most valuable of native pollinators in North America. They are efficiency engineers that have finely tuned their life cycle to minimize energy loss based on temperature and availability of food. Their unique methods of pollen collection allow them to access the most resistant of blossoms. They are able to forage in less than optimum weather and are available three seasons of the year. Being generalists, their foraging includes native plants that may not be commercially valuable, but that are critically important to native ecosystems that provide food for wildlife.

The bumble bee life cycle begins when queen bumble bees, carrying eggs fertilized by males during the previous fall, emerges from the winter hibernaculum in early spring. She selects a hidden ground nesting site, often an abandoned rodent nest or underneath a grass

tussock. She gathers nectar and pollen and stores it away in waxy cells for each of the first group of larvae to begin eating as soon as it hatches. She lays the first group of eggs. These are all daughters, workers whose task will be to provide food to the hatching larvae and to take over their care while the queen continues to lay eggs and expand the brood. She will continue to produce female workers until later in summer. Finally the males are born and mated with the females which will become next year's queens. Mated queens survive the winter by secreting an internal bio-antifreeze, but the rest of the colony will die when temperatures go below freezing.



Wreath Goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*

Only one species of bumble bee behaves differently than the rest. The queen of the *Bombus* subgenus *Psithyrus*, or cuckoo bumble bees, has evolved to take advantage of the hardworking habits of the other native bumble bee species. She will attempt to usurp the host queen of an established nest. If successful, she will lay her own eggs for the workers to raise as their own, stealing food from the overtaken nest instead of foraging to feed the emerging workers.

(Continued on p 11)

Pollinators! (cont.)

As efficiency engineers, bumble bees have achieved a remarkable energy synchronicity within their environments. This allows the queens to leave winter quarters earlier than honey bees or other pollinators. She will only hatch enough young in the first brood for the amount of food she has been able to collect. She has the ability



**Scarlet Beebalm,
*Monarda didyma***

to thermoregulate internal temperatures based on pollen and nectar availability and can calculate the “return on investment” before making decisions to expend energy on a particular day. Bumble bees can instantly transfer or reserve energy based on the need for flight, walking, idling, warmup, brood incubation, or foraging. Their actions are finely tuned to immediate environmental needs and can change in a fraction of a second. This includes heating the nest, which is expensive in terms of energy expenditure, but also allows for accelerated production of worker bees who in turn add their own ambient heat to the nest. As spring weather warms the earth and produces more and more blossoms, the worker population grows and the energy expenditure goes down.

Sonication, or “buzz-pollination,” is the ability that bumble bees have to disengage their wings from flight muscles during flower visits in order to vibrate the plant for maximum pollen extraction. The vibration of those muscles makes the loud buzzing we hear and is comparable to the musical “C” note. The vibration shakes electrostatically charged clouds of pollen out of the anthers, and the pollen is attracted to the bumble bee’s oppositely charged body hairs and clings to them. The bumble bee later grooms the pollen from

its body, using nectar to “glue” the pollen cache in place into a pollen-carrying concave body structure, called a *corbicula* or pollen basket, on its back legs. The *corbicula* is surrounded by stiff hairs that hold pollen cache against the bee’s body during transportation to the nest. Buzz pollination is necessary to extract pollen from anthers that have only a small hole or slit,

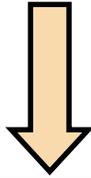
such as tomatoes and blueberries.

But the value of bumble bees to humans as pollinators has been established to the point where there are now factory-produced colonies, such as *Bombus terrestris*, that are shipped all over the world and used in commercial tomato production. They work well in enclosed spaces such as greenhouses. And unlike honey bees, bumble bees go out and forage even on cold, rainy or cloudy days, a valuable asset for farms in the more temperate regions that sometimes don’t get full days of sun.

Managed bumble bee colonies, however, have increased risk of development of pathogens that devastate the colony and may be released outdoors to spread the infection. This is just one aspect of bumble bee decline that is being investigated, along with habitat loss, pollution, pesticide use and climate change.

Data continues to be collected on the importance of bumble bees to the native landscape and native wildlife food systems. To encourage these hardworking insects, include plenty of their favorite natives in your backyard gardens, such as goldenrod, beebalm, and black-eyed Susans. **Plant Native!**

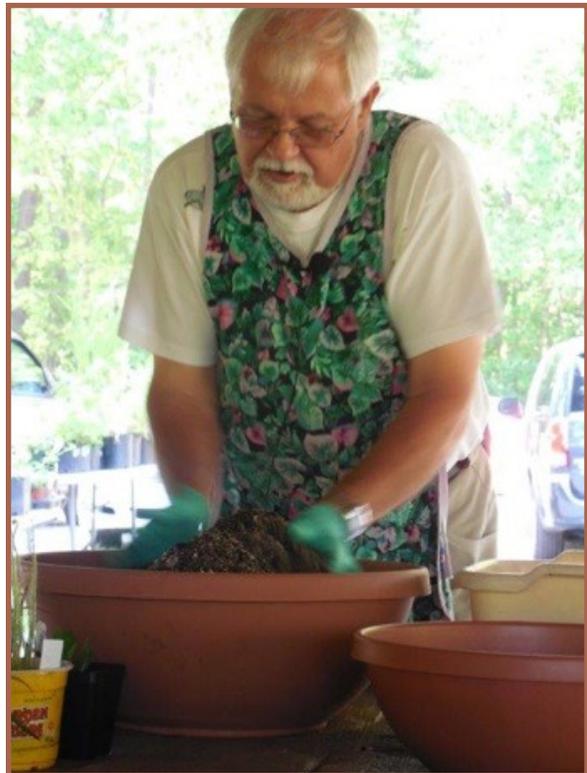
16th Annual Membership Picnic



Food, Fun, Friendship, Books, a Plant Auction AND a Big Bodacious Bog Building were featured at our annual picnic held June 6 in Greensboro.



Members bid a fond farewell to outgoing president **Jean Wilson** (above), and enjoyed bog building by new president **Larry Mellichamp** (right).



Society Members Learn & Share!

Audubon North Carolina fully appreciates that the birds that nest and raise their young across our state depend upon **LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS** and the insect populations these plants support. And Audubon NC has taken action! Over the past year they have compiled a list of region-specific native herbs, shrubs, and trees that provide the most value to the largest number of bird species (compiled with the help of several NCNPS members!) and now they are actively working with local growers and nurseries to make these plants more available to gardeners. Audubon's message is simple. Locally grown native plants sold by local growers and nurseries will benefit local bird populations. Check out this brief YouTube video, produced by Audubon NC, and learn about their efforts to promote "Bird Friendly Native Plants of the Year".

Visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWNlywd_ZnA

Plant More Natives!

The home page for the Broad River Greenway in Cleveland County now has a new feature, "Wildflowers of the Broad River Greenway". The North Carolina Native Plant Society is credited for the information. Photographer **Lanny Waterson**, a NCNPS South Piedmont Chapter member, keeps spreadsheets on all his wildflowers that he has photographed over the years and supplied the county with a spreadsheet and photos of all the plants and flowers taken there, along with permission to use them. The NCNPS also has a mention of this greenway and all its glory on the society's webpage.

Visit:

<http://www.broadrivergreenway.com>



"Earth laughs in flowers."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Art Of Native Plants
May 2016 - July 2016

**A juried show co-sponsored by
the North Carolina Native Plant
Society and the Blowing Rock
Art & History Museum,
Boone, NC**

If you are an artist, or if you know of an artist who might be interested in entering the show, visit the NCNPS website for detailed instructions on how to make submissions:

[www.ncflower.org/index.php/
native_plants/art_contest_form](http://www.ncflower.org/index.php/native_plants/art_contest_form)

We are also compiling quotes that relate to native plants and/or the environment. If you have a favorite quote that you think is appropriate, please send it to trena@tmcnabb.com.

Thank you!



Mellichamp Native Terrace Grand Opening!



On May 31st, our own Dr. Larry Mellichamp proudly cut the ribbon on UNC-Charlotte Botanical Gardens' new Natives Terrace, named in his honor upon his retirement as garden director. The gardens are located at 9090 Craver Road, Charlotte, NC 28262



Photos by Julie Higgie

Grand Opening! (cont.)



The Silverbell Circle

The Silverbell Tree shades a semi-circle of stones perfect for gatherings of young naturalists to observe the comings and goings of wildlife in the border of tall evergreens, grasses, and berry-producing shrubs. White "bells" dangle from the branches of the *Halesia diptera* in spring.

- 'Alta' Southern Magnolia, Atlantic White Cedar, Florida Leucothoe and Carolina Cherry Laurel are growing to replace the exotic barberry (it will be removed) that currently serves to screen our neighbors.
- Pennsylvania sedge is on its way to creating a substitute for lawn under the shade of the Silverbell. (light foot traffic only).
- Winterberry Holly for birds, Rattlesnake Master for butterflies, and Mountain Mint for every pollinator you can imagine are within a few feet of the sitting stones for close encounters.

"A desire to fund the Silverbell Circle was rooted in the belief that connecting children to the natural world not only enriches their lives, but is critical to informing their future choices."
 — Carla and Larry Virec



New Native Plant Habitat Certifications

NCNPS has certified two Native Plant Habitats since the last newsletter. The first is the garden of **Mignon Durham** in Asheville. She has cleared almost 3 acres of non-natives of many kinds and replaced them with a wide range of canopy and understory trees and shrubs, ferns, and blooming plants for each season. Her large habitat includes creekside and rain gardens, as well as woodland paths.

The second certified habitat is that of **Michael Rahman** of Winston-Salem. He has also cleared a lot of non-natives and invasives from a vacant lot next to his home, and planted a wide variety of trees, grasses, and blooming plants. A noteworthy feature of his habitat is a large number of mushrooms in three varieties.

Carolyn Ikenberry



Showy Orchid and Flame Azalea adorn Mignon Durham's property.



(Photos continue on p17)

Habitat Certifications (cont.)



A variety of native plants on Michael Rahman's newly certified property.



Member Spotlight!



Robert Jones



Twinleaf, Jeffersonia diphylla

Know a member who's doing something natively? Send their info to:

jchiggie@yahoo.com

Twenty-five years or so ago, Ruth and I went to Thomas Jefferson's house, Monticello. We enjoyed the tour and on our way out through the garden gift shop we bought a couple of the plants they had for sale. I am sure there was some description or care recommendations that has been long forgotten. All we did was bring them home, plant them in our side yard under large old oak trees, enjoy them in spring but pretty much forgot about them. We added other pretty plants that lived or not and were happy those original two plants seemed to survive where they were no matter how little care they received.

Living in South Guilford County, we knew about the Randleman Water Dam Project. We started seeing that a group was rescuing plants from an area where the lake was to fill up. All this was a mile or less from where we live. It seemed like this group was out somewhere near us every month or so. We talked about calling and joining them on a rescue but work and family always got in the way. Finally after we both had retired the time was right to look into what this group did. We had been N.C. Herb Association members for a few years but herbs don't flower like perennials do and they don't breed new colors of herbs.

We are so glad we found NCNPS. It was then we learned our two special plants that have lived and even thrived where we planted them were *Jeffersonia diphylla*. I have especially enjoyed learning about plant propagation and winter sowing of seeds.

I am from Reidsville, NC, and graduated from Elon College. Ruth is from Monroe, NC, and graduated from Appalachian State University.

Robert Jones

**Robert is a new NCNPS Board member!*

A New Face in the Garden



On August 1, **Jeff Gillman** assumed the role of director of the UNC-Charlotte Botanical Gardens, following in the footsteps of **Larry Mellichamp**, who retired at the end of 2014 after almost four decades with the Botanical Gardens and the university. Gillman sees his mission as engaging the public with the gardens and with nature. “My goal is to bring the gardens to the public,” Gillman said. “The gardens have had a wonderful base over the years, and I hope we can bring it to a wider audience and help more people to experience not only the gardens but also plants in general. That is something I’ve worked on for my whole career – public engagement and getting people to appreciate plants and the environment.”

“I’m looking forward to working in this absolutely gorgeous environment,” Gillman said. “Larry Mellichamp and the staff here, along with many supporters, have built these gardens into one of the most diverse and magnificent gardens that I’ve ever had the opportunity to walk through. The opportunity to direct these gardens feels like one I’ve been waiting for all my life.”

After he and his family moved to Charlotte from Minnesota in 2013 to be closer to extended family, Gillman served as an instructor for the Department of Horticulture Technology at Central Piedmont Community College. Prior to that, he was an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture Science at the University of Minnesota. His work focused on urban and consumer horticulture, particularly sharing research information with the public. While at the University of Minnesota, Gillman directed the activities of the Teaching, Research and Extension Nursery, with its eight acres devoted to research and the education of university students and the general public.

He earned a master’s degree in entomology and a doctorate in horticulture from the University of Georgia.

From the UNCC Website





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