

Native Plant News

NEWSLETTER OF THE NC 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

The Anti-Niche: Native Groundcovers for the Masses!

By Christine Liesiewski

My job is buying and selling plants. Being a passionate advocate for natives, pollinator plants, and basically any plants that lack the ability to invade the tree canopy and/or take over the forest floor, my job often entails quite a bit of educating, encouraging, and enticing customers to try something new or unfamiliar.

When it comes to native groundcovers, attempting to dissuade Mrs. Miller from buying those 10 flats of English Ivy can be quite the challenge. So what's a native-loving girl to do? Well, I have developed a 3-pronged approach: redefinition, practicality, and ecological function. Welcome to the trifecta.

PRONG 1: REDEFINITION

Let's redefine what a groundcover is this very second. It is a plant that covers the ground! That's it! It is *not* a monoculture of invasive 1.72-inch tall broadleaf evergreen



Bunny Blue Sedge

vine-like entities that spread across the ground like an aggressive high-thread-count emerald satin sheet that eats trees. Groundcovers can be a foot tall! Even taller! They can be deciduous! Some bloom in spring, some bloom in fall, some never bloom (e.g. ferns)! You can mix them in beautiful varying drifts like one would see in nature! This might be obvious to you and me, but I can assure you that Mrs. Miller needs to know this ASAP, hence all the exclamation points.

PRONG 2: PRACTICALITY

Ok, here I refer to cost-

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President's Report

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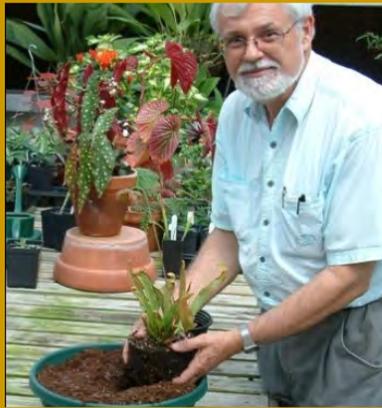
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Dr. Larry Mellichamp

Greetings on a very warm, rainy, mid-January day in Charlotte. There are no native plants — not a single one — in bloom now in my garden during this very warm spell (they know better; winter will likely come again soon). But there are some beautiful non-natives in flower that originate from warmer parts of Europe, China and Japan, such as Japanese Apricot (*Prunus mume*), Winter-Sweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*), Snowdrops (*Galanthus*), Winter Iris (*Iris unguicularis*), and Christmas-rose (*Helleborus niger*). These exotic species need less cold to stimulate flowering, and they are delightful non-invasives in the cooler upper Southeast.

Our earliest *showy* natives to flower will come along in late February or early March, depending on the warmth. Why do they not bloom earlier like the Asian species? One reason is that our natives may be adapted to a consistently colder winter climate, and their innate hormones keep them from flowering before the days are a certain length to protect them from blooming during an abnormally warm spell and then getting zapped by a hard freeze. Their flowers are precious, and it is risky to bloom in the most severe cold. In addition, the innate need for a cold dormancy requires most natives to be subjected to a certain number of hours below 40 ° F to “break dormancy.” Most species in the temperate zone have these cold-dormancy requirements. Some just need longer cold than others. For example, species from farther north need a longer period of cold because winters are longer.

Our Southeastern species need fewer hours, and if this requirement is met earlier, such as before December and early January, they are ready to bloom as the days get longer and the temperatures warm up in February and March. For example, trillium species require a *minimum* of 80 hours below 40 degrees (see the excellent book *Trilliums* by Frederick W. Case, 1997). In my garden, *Trillium decipiens*, from south Georgia, is already up with leaves

(Continued next page)

President's Report (cont.)

and buds. The flowers will not open for several weeks, but there it sits, ready to go. It has a low chilling requirement. On the other hand, I once rescued dozens of *Trillium grandiflorum* from Michigan, planted them in Charlotte, and not a one every came up. Why? It was never cold enough, long enough, to meet the chilling requirements for a species native to severe cold hardiness Zone 5.

I caution people to NOT bring natives from up north (above Zone 7) or from the high mountains, or purchase from northern nurseries as these *may not* adapt to our warmer summers and winters. Hot summers are especially bad for cold-adapted species as they never get the proper rest they require on hot summer nights to store energy for growth and flowering, and they slowly “melt away” as authors Allan Armitage and Michael Dirr so aptly note in their writings about growing such plants in the South. Take heed!



Bloodroot

Another reason to wait on flowering is that our native insects – bees, flies, butterflies and moths – are not out and available in January. They will be coming along in February and March as the weather warms – they have the same requirements for a dormant spell. You may have seen honeybees on your Winter Honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*), but these non-native insects have no cold dormancy requirement. Most seeds of natives also have cold dormancy and day-length requirements for germination, but some do not. This is a subject for a future article.

So, realize that local climate plays a major role in the thriving of natives and note where your plants come from. On the other hand, your membership in the **N.C. Native Plant Society** has no dormancy requirement, and you can become involved in local and state activities any time of the year. I join you now in looking forward to showy late winter-flowering native wildflowers such as Skunk Cabbage, Hepatica, Bloodroot, Trout Lily and Spring-beauty.



Great White Trillium



Trout Lily

The Anti-Niche: Groundcovers (cont.)

effectiveness and availability. When I gently pull/drag Mrs. Miller away from the flats of \$1.99 ivy and show her a \$16.99 quart container of native seed-grown *Trillium* that consists of stalk and one leaf, a plant that I can assure her with dubious confidence will bloom within the next 5-6 years and will spread slowly over the next decade (so she really should buy everything we have) what do suppose her reaction will be? In the retail world we call it the "run screaming." Our focus should be on plants that regular folks can afford, that spread reasonably quickly and that can be found in the average local garden center. The goal here is not the niche gardener—we need to get mainstream, baby!

PRONG 3: ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION

Yes, you and I can quote Doug Tallamy even after several shots of good tequila. However, when I ask Mrs. Miller if she knows of Dr. Doug Tallamy, she inquires if that's the new young plastic surgeon in Davidson. We must share far and wide the concept of our outdoor living spaces being just that—*living* spaces—for us as well as the birds, butterflies, and bees! (Hold off on the mention of wasps, worms, and beneficial fungi in the initial conversations. Think baby steps). Has anyone ever asked you: "Do you have anything that will bloom all season but won't attract any bees? I do NOT like bees. Oh, and nothing where snakes can hide." We must stop this madness.

OK NO MORE PRONGS

At this point, you might think Mrs. Miller is now at Ikea perusing the faux topiaries and AstroTurf welcome mats, but alas, she is still here and wants to know what to buy that won't

destroy the planet or her credit score, and might help a bug or two. My suggestions for shade/part shade: Lately, I'm really liking some of the native sedges such as Bunny Blue Sedge, Blue Wood Sedge and Seersucker Sedge (*Carex laxiculmis*, *Carex flaccosperma*, *Carex plantaginea*). These grass-like perennials are becoming more readily available and are mostly evergreen. They remain small in stature, some have lovely blue-green or puckered foliage, and all can be mixed in drifts with Christmas Fern, American Alumroot "Dale's Strain", Creeping Phlox "Sherwood Purple", Foamflower "Brandywine", and Dwarf Crested Iris.



Green-and-Gold

For sun/part sun I want my flowers: the Heath Aster (*Symphotrichum ericoides*) 'Snow Flurry' is my latest obsession with its itty-bitty semi-evergreen ground-hugging foliage and delightful profusions of equally itty-bitty white flowers just in time for mi-

grating butterflies. Mix it with old favorites like Moss Pinks (*Phlox subulata*) with their evergreen needle-like foliage and lovely spring flowers in shades of pink, lavender, blush and white. Oh, and the plant snobs can just hush up and quit their eye-rolling.

Remember the mandate – Natives for the Masses! For a pop of yellow, consider Green-and-Gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) or a Dwarf Lobed Tickseed (*Coreopsis auriculata* 'Nana') for their bright golden spring blooms and semi-to-evergreen foliage. Now go find your own Mrs. Miller and change some minds, some habits, and your little corner of the world!

Christine works for Dearness Gardens in Huntersville.

NCNPS Spring Trip — May 5-7 in Boone

"In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love".
--Alfred Lord Tennyson

The turn of a leaf, the sunshine sparkling on dew, the shy flower of Mayapple peeking out from underneath its umbrella. In this case, it is love all right, North Carolina mountain love!



Come with us on our annual Spring Trip
to fall in love all over again with the Blue Ridge Parkway!

The adventure starts **Friday May 5th:**

2 PM Pre-outing hike with **Mark Rose** on the Blue Ridge Parkway

6: 30 PM Snacks and socializing

8 PM Speaker Dr. **Matt Estep**, Appalachian State University professor, discusses "The Botany and Geology of Tater Hill Preserve".



During this evening, we will be able to start examining the specialty silent plant auction items. The silent bidding will begin Friday evening with sign-up sheets on the tables.

Saturday, May 6

9 AM – We will carpool for the first round of hikes.

Lunchtime – return to Boone for lunch on our own and reconvening to carpool for afternoon hikes.

Dinner will be on our own, with approximately 30 restaurants within a 3-mile range of our evening meeting location.

Saturday evening we will have a speaker from Grandfather Mountain and the completion of our silent auction.

Sunday, May 7

9AM – There will be a half-day hike Sunday morning, to be completed by 1 pm.

[Click here to Register online](#)

—**Bobbie Fox**

Orange is the New Green

By **Bettina Darveaux**

Unlike the TV series with a similar name, this is a tale about two native plant species that definitely should not be incarcerated. They are wonderful, well-behaved shrubs that celebrate orange-colored foliage gorgeously. The two shrubs are *Zenobia pulverulenta*, having common names of Dusty Zenobia or Honeycups, and *Croton alabamensis*, not surprisingly called Alabama Croton.

Since you are reading this newsletter, it is safe to assume that you also are a native plant geek so you know how some of us can be. We really are plant collectors at heart. We are so intrigued by a native plant that we have never grown and are not intimately familiar with. We must give it a try!!

I obtained my Zenobia several years back from Jen and Bill Cure of Cure Nursery at a NCNPS Annual Meeting & Picnic. I planted it in my garden located on the west side of my house in an area that gets full mid-day through afternoon sun and doesn't have the best drainage, so it tends to stay wet for a couple of days after heavy rains. It is a deciduous shrub and since the foliage is glaucous, it gives the plant a soft, milky, blue-green coloration in the spring and summer. The white campanulate flowers that appear in the spring are described as having an anise or licorice scent.

I just love licorice but unfortunately my particular plant does not have much fragrance, a trait that seems to be particularly variable in the plant world. What my plant lacks in smell surely makes up for in fall foliage color. The leaves color up later in the fall compared to most other vegetation and have a spectacular display like *Vaccinium*, the blueberries, which share the same Ericaceae botanical family, but tending more on the orange side with an added softness due to the waxy coating on the leaves. This beautiful color, which literally



Honeycups displaying its spectacular fall color.

glows in the low afternoon sun, also lasts for several weeks until the leaves finally drop. Zenobia is just an awesome shrub and I am so glad I gave it a try.

Alabama Croton came into my life from a vendor at the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference a couple of years ago. I was attracted to the plants "warm" foliage color while in the "cold" Ramsey Center!! Croton is a member of the Euphorbia family (*Euphorbiaceae*). The plant is semi-evergreen, having olive green- and orange-colored foliage throughout the year, although my experience is that its color is best in early spring. The emerging new leaves are so vivid, despite the scurfy leaf texture. As an

(continued next page)

Orange is the New Green (cont.)

added bonus, the leaf undersides are a bright silvery white. The yellow flowers appear in the early spring but the inflorescences are really aesthetically insignificant compared to its leaves.

My specimen receives full sun in the afternoons and seems to be a very slow grower, so it can be easily tucked into small garden spaces. There is no excuse not to give this species a try! It is such a nice feature to have a plant with beautiful orange fall-like color during the spring and summer in the garden when the surrounding landscape is predominantly green. Orange is the new green!



The vivid orange leaves of Alabama Croton.

Focus On: Education

Nelson Mandela is credited with saying that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” In light of this saying, the North Carolina Native Plant Society is changing the world!



Education is accomplished in many ways through our various chapters across the state. For the year 2016, members from all seven chapters plus the whole Society spent over 1,128 hours giving talks, leading hikes, organizing and assisting with plant rescues, and having a presence at a variety of festivals and events. Specifically, Society members reported participating in 80 talks/discussions; 25 hikes/tours; 20 displays/exhibits/events; 3 rescues; 2 open-garden tours; 3 work events in a garden; and 5 consultations.

Thanks to your hard work and dedication we reached a total of 8,256 people! Congratulations to a very active Native Plant Society across the whole state of North Carolina.

If you are interested in the breakdown of events, follow this link:

[List of Talks and Events in 2016](#)

–Laura Domingo and Jean Woods

CHLOROFIENDS!*

Invasive Plants of the NC Piedmont, Pt. 1: Woody Vines



By Lisa Lofland Gould

Woody vines incur particular wrath from homeowners and land-managers—because they can grow far up into trees and are often aggressive spreaders, they can be very difficult to control and eradicate. And many vines, native and non-native alike, thrive in disturbed soils and along open edges, which we keep creating as land is developed.

Most of the vines that have become invasive in North Carolina were introduced as ornamentals and/or to control erosion. As they climb they often girdle trees, and may overwhelm shrubs and small trees with the weight of their vines and leaves. Vine leaves can prevent sunlight from reaching other plants' leaves, suppressing photosynthesis and weakening or even killing the "host" plant. Typically, invasive vines are fast growing and usually have fruit that is dispersed by birds and in runoff water. Many remain available in the nursery trade.

It's hard to find a Southern novel where someone doesn't wax poetic about the scent of honeysuckle wafting through the air. That sweet odor is, of course, from Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), first introduced into North America on Long Island, NY in 1806. Planted for ornament, erosion control, and wildlife, it is now ubiquitous

throughout North Carolina and especially problematic in the piedmont and coastal plain, where it spreads into natural areas.

"The weed that ate the South", Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*), was introduced at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition and was widely promoted to control erosion. Seldom setting seed in the Southeast, this smothering, east-Asian vine can grow up to 100' in a season. While Kudzu is a conspicuous reminder of the stupidity of widely planting non-natives without prior research, it is not one of our worst invaders, as it doesn't tend to penetrate deeply into undisturbed forested areas.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix* var. *helix*) is another too-familiar vine in North Carolina. A fast-growing, evergreen plant introduced from Europe in the 1700s, it persists around home sites and spreads from there. In addition to shading out plants, its roots penetrate beneath bark, introducing fungi and other dis-



Porcelain-berry in fruit, with Periwinkle leaves mixed in.

Chlorofiends! (cont.)



English Ivy vines damaging a tree trunk.

ease organisms. Like Japanese Honeysuckle, English Ivy fruits are dispersed by birds and in runoff water.

Also introduced from Europe in the 1700s, Common Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) is an evergreen groundcover that persists around house sites and spreads into natural areas. While seldom producing

seeds, it can quickly form a dense groundcover and eliminate food sources for local wildlife. Less familiar but becoming more widespread is Wintercreeper/Chinese Spindle-tree (*Euonymus fortunei*). This evergreen vine can also grow as a shrub and thrives in heavy shade as well as full sun. Sold as a drought-tolerant, fast-growing groundcover, Wintercreeper has aerial roots that enable its growth into shrubs and trees. The bright red-orange fruits are dispersed by birds and other animals.

In the same family as Wintercreeper, the deciduous Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is sometimes dubbed “the Kudzu of the North”. Introduced from China around 1860, this naturalized vine has spread widely and is common in North Carolina’s mountains and piedmont. It hybridizes with the rarer American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), possibly causing a loss of genetic identity in the native plant; it can also thrive in deeper shade than can the native bittersweet.

Hybrid Asian Wisteria (*Wisteria X formosa*), a cross between Japanese and Chinese Wisteria, is a common naturalized vine across North Carolina, discussed in the Spring 2016 “Chlorofiends” column of *Native News*.

Chocolate-vine/Five-leaf Akebia (*Akebia quinata*) was brought to North America from eastern Asia in the mid-1800s. Its palmate leaves are evergreen here in the South; although it doesn’t appear to set seed often, the plant is fast growing and tolerates both shade and drought. Still considered rare in North Carolina, Alan Weakley warns it is “likely to become a serious invasive alien in the Southeast over the next decade”.

Also uncommon but spreading here is Sweet Autumn Clematis (*Clematis terniflora*, formerly *Clematis paniculata*). A lover of edges and a prolific producer of wind-borne seeds, this east-Asian species resembles our native Virgin’s-bower (*Clematis virginiana*), but has leaf margins that are entire, not toothed like the native species.

And finally there is the up-and-coming Amur Peppervine/Porcelain-berry (*Ampelopsis glandulosa*, formerly *Amelopsis brevipedunculata*), which Larry Mellichamp calls “a most invasive, most undermining, aggressive, insidious” vine. Porcelain-berry thrives in moist soils and a wide range of light conditions, and can form huge mats. Introduced from northeast Asia in 1870 and still rare here, its colorful bird- and water-dispersed fruits guarantee we will be seeing more of it.

Thanks to Larry Mellichamp, Kathy Schlosser, and Ann Walter-Fromson for sharing observations on common invasives in the North Carolina piedmont. As always, if you are adding plants to your home landscape, it’s best to Go Native!

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

Chapter News



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The **Triad** and **Triangle** chapters combined forces once again to participate in Greensboro's **Green & Growin' 17**, held Jan. 19-20. Members provided information on native plants to at least 200 people, as well as sold books at the booth. G&G is an annual event sponsored by the North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association based in Raleigh. **Lynda Waldrep** entered NCNPS into the show. Shown in the photo are, from left (back) **Robert Jones** and **Jeff Prather**, and (front) **Sharon Dyrkacz**, **Cheryl Prather** and **John Neal**. Others who worked the two-day event were **Ruth Jones**, **Tom Harville**, **Terry Ball**, **Joanne Lapple**, **Judy West** and **Pat Holder**.



More Chapter News

Southern Piedmont Chapter

The Southern Piedmont chapter has a new blog, which can be found on Wordpress, ncnpssouthernpiedmont.wordpress.com. The goal of this blog is to engage chapter members with event updates, community happenings, member thoughts, ideas and suggestions. The blog includes recommendations about native plants, recap of recent chapter meetings and upcoming community events.

The blog also hosts an archive of the monthly (and recently renamed) [Eco-Friendly Native Plant of the Month](#). This one-page flyer has been updated to broaden the scope to include all wildlife benefits that our native plants can provide in our home gardens.

We encourage local and state members to contribute blog posts. If you would like to be a guest contributor on the blog please contact **Darcia McKnight** at mcknight.darcia@gmail.com.

Our chapter has also been continuing our exploration of native plants and ecology. Along with pollinator discussions, our chapter is focusing on other benefits of native plants including exploration of urban ecology with **Carrie DeJaco** in November. We learned that in addition to providing shelter and food for the wildlife, native plant gardens enhance human habitation by improving both mental and physical health. December was the annual seed exchange and social meeting of the year (yes that means food!). In addition, **Laura Domingo**, educator and naturalist for Reedy Creek Nature Center, shared her many encounters with wildlife critters around Reedy Creek Nature Preserve. As a preserve,



South Piedmont's annual Seed and Social Meeting.

Reedy Creek limits all plant additions to those native to the 14 surrounding counties. But clearly this diversity of plant material provides food and shelter to a wide variety of wildlife. In January the SP Chapter traveled the Butterfly Highway with **Angel Hjarding** to discover how one small idea for pollinator-friendly gardens in underserved neighborhoods in Charlotte blossomed into 1,600 registered gardens across the state of North Carolina.

— Beth Davis

Eco-Friendly Native Plant of the Month

JANUARY 2017 NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY REEDY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

Photos by Larry Melickang







Northern Mockingbird with *Ilex verticillata* fruit by Will Stuart

***Ilex verticillata* Winterberry Holly**

A Super Winter Show
The superlatives for Winterberry Holly are numerous and deservedly so. As a deciduous native shrub

Male? Female?
Look closely at holly flowers in

whenever the protective mockingbird is off duty. The small clusters of tiny flowers in late spring (May) are not showy.

NCNPS 18th Annual Meeting & Picnic

June 3 10 am to 3 pm

Hagan-Stone Park, Meeting and Events Center

Greensboro, NC



Google Map Directions:
5920 Hagan Stone Park Rd.
Pleasant Gardens, NC
27313

Here's What to Expect:

- ◆ **A Program!** (This portion to be determined.)
- ◆ **The Annual Meeting!**

A short annual review of all that the North Carolina Plant Society has accomplished this year and an introduction of our Officers and Board members.

- ◆ **Books, Books, Books!**

John Neal has consented again this year to offer that special shopping opportunity to our members. He brings an amazing assortment of all things green, including the much sought after *Native Plants of the Southeast* by none other than our very own Dr. **Larry Mellichamp**. As always, John donates the proceeds from these book sales to the NCNPS. So the more books you buy, the more you are actually donating to the Plant Society! Cash or checks are preferred for the books, but credit cards are accepted, thus allowing you to really buy a HUGE amount!

- ◆ **Wear Your Buffet Pants!**

Yes, the food is amazing. Not only do we have fried chicken and barbeque from Smithfields, but all of us bring the most interesting array of side dishes, salads, fruits, vegetables, breads, desserts – enough to share and share and share. The NCNPS will provide tea and water, ice and paper products.

- ◆ **Just one More Plant, I Promise.....**

Really, who hasn't said that at least once during these plant sales? What a lovely way to make our gardens grow. And our NCNPS scholarships stay healthy and funded. If you have plants you would like donate to the sale, please bring them to the auction.

It helps immensely if they are:

- Not in fancy pots. (Smaller items or multiples can be placed on sale table due to time constraints.)
- Clearly labeled with the botanical and/ or common name, and have a short description written for the auctioneer.
- Not a rare, threatened or endangered species, unless they were grown on your own land. (If so, you will be asked to fill out documentation at the picnic.)

So bring your favorite dish, your favorite checkbook and a great big truck to take all the things home you are going to buy!

— **Bobbie Fox**

BOOK REVIEW: *Attracting Native Pollinators*

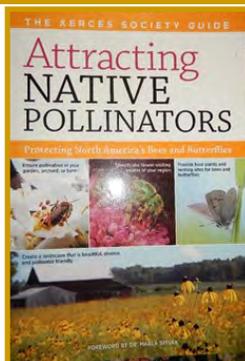
Attracting Native Pollinators: Protecting America's Bees and Butterflies by E. Mader, M. Shepherd, M. Vaughan, S. Black and G. LeBuhn. 2011. Storey Publications (Xerces Society), North Adams, MA.

During these colder days, we dream of the nascent garden beds we will soon revive from a long winter's nap. We visualize the lush plantings, coming alive and trembling lightly with the dance of fauna welcoming the new season of growth. Among the most valued of these various organisms and insects are the native pollinators.

Along with the seed and gardening catalogs we pore over this time of year, *Attracting Native Pollinators* is also a wonderful guide in garden planning. Informed gardeners are well aware of the importance of pollinators to the fruiting of annuals and perennials; this book brings a greater awareness of the diverse native pollinators so important to life cycles of a healthy garden where we live and work.

Part I, "Pollinators and Pollination", explains the value of pollinators. We learn that up to 75 percent of all flowering plants rely at least in part on insects to pollinate them. Although many flowering plants can self-pollinate, insect pollination is more specific, where the insect intentionally visits each flower to obtain the nectar and pollen it depends on for food. This is a dependable method that results in fruiting from a more reliable gene pool than wind-borne pollen which may or may not fall on the next flower of the same species. Also noted is the Xerces Society Red Lists (<http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-redlist/>), which track threatened and endangered native bees, butterflies, and moths.

Part II, "Taking Action", outlines ways to safeguard our native pollinators. Most important is



to recognize and protect existing habitats that provide sustenance and shelter for established pollinator communities, and provide new habitats to increase local pollinator colonization. From simple backyard-protected nesting sites to regional preserves, several strategies are outlined to reduce pesticides and increase plantings of favored natives. Rural, urban and schoolyard plots serve to sustain native pollinators as well as educate the public.

Part III, "Bees of North America", is a more comprehensive guide to bee families, the most critically important pollinators for most of the plant foods eaten by both humans and animals. Bee anatomy is described, as well as tips on how to identify bees from imitator wasps or flies. Additional details include foraging and nesting behaviors of bees, and which native bee species are declining or of special concern. The information is comprehensive yet uses clear language, a helpful guide for both experienced and amateur naturalists.

Part IV, "Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Landscape", outlines colorful, descriptive sample garden plans for community, meadow, residential, riparian buffer, roadside habitat, business, school and public gardens. The next section includes a comprehensive list of the best plantings to add to attract native insects. Not all the flowering plants listed are native to North America, but all provide abundant food pollen and nectar by region.

The information, descriptions of plants and pollinators, and many guides and resources provided in *Attracting Native Pollinators* makes this a worthwhile book to add to one's own library, to be read from cover to cover and kept handy for frequent reference.

—Theresa Morr

New Native Plant Habitats

NCNPS has certified a record number of Native Plant Habitats in the last three months, four on large private properties and two on public sites. As a group, the applications listed a record number of species as well. The public sites involved collaborative work by several groups and many volunteers. The number and quality of applications seem to indicate a growing interest in natives. Congratulations to these successful applicants and welcome to the growing community of certified habitats!

Public Sites

The public sites that were certified are **Heritage Trail** in Monroe and **Woodland Slope Gardens** in Salisbury.

The idea for creating the **Heritage Trail** began with the three Master Gardeners in Monroe who conceived of planting natives from Southern Piedmont woodlands along an existing hiking trail. This initial group expanded to include a Scout troop that wanted a service project, local donors who provided funds for plants and other needs, NCNPS Board members who gave advice on plantings, and many others who contributed in all the ways needed to improve and beautify this ½-mile trail. Tree identification markers and a GPS map of the gardens and trail were added before the trail was officially opened in 2016, with Scouts giving tours to the public. Wingate College plans to use the trail as a field lab in their botany classes and the Scouts intend to continue their work by building a bridge over a gulch and developing a second entrance to the trail. **Carol Larrimore**, Heritage Trail coordinator, submitted the application for certification which was approved in early December 2016. I hope those going through Wingate will stop and visit the Heritage Trail.



Heritage Trail

The **Elizabeth Holmes Hurley Park** is a public park that is a popular site for weddings, gatherings and informal meetings with its woodlands, streams and variety of gardens and pathways for strolling. The **Woodland Slope Gardens**, begun in 1987, was developed by garden staff over a period of years using rescued, purchased and transplanted native plants. Native plant

(continued next page)

NCNPS has certified a **RECORD** number of Native Plant Habitats!

New Native Plant Habitats (cont.)



Loblolly Pine and Carolina Jessamine at Woodland Slope Gardens.

certification was obtained in December 2016 under the direction of **Emily Michael**. When you are in Salisbury, please try to visit this beautiful park and enjoy the native plantings.

Private Gardens

Private gardens which have been certified recently are those of **Pat and Gene Holder** of Asheboro, **Diane Laslie** of Pleasant Garden, **Leigh and Ronnie Yokeley** of Apex, and **Lynda and George Waldrep** of Summerfield.



Asters in the Waldrep garden.

The **Waldreps** began an 18-year journey with native plants after Lynda retired in 1999. She began by learning about plants, with a focus on natives, which led to planting native throughout her 7-acre property from her house to the lake. Many of the plants on their property are from rescues, especially from the Randleman Dam project. The property contains woodlands as well as dry, sunny and wet areas, so Lynda and George have nurtured a rich variety of plants such as Pink Lady's-slippers, Walking Fern, and a wide range of natives for the other settings.

Diane Laslie grew up on a farm in Rockingham County where her grandmother introduced her to an appreciation of wildflowers. Fast forward to 1997, when she moved to a wooded 13-acre tract in Guilford County where she and her husband cleared land for a house, septic field and vegetable garden. Today the property is covered with 27 species of canopy trees, 38 species of understory trees and shrubs, and a wide variety of ferns, perennials, grasses and sedges, vines and bog plants. A creek running through the grounds and garden paths to walk through the garden are special features.



The Laslie pollinator garden.

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New Native Plant Habitats (cont.)

After studying the plight of native pollinators from habitat loss, pondering how to respond to this treat, and visiting local gardens and plant stores, the **Holders** undertook an amazing two-year transformation of their 5-acre home grounds north of Asheboro. Initial inspiration came from a garden tour that featured primarily native plants, leading to a conversation with a gardener and a decision to turn their property into a completely native habitat. Since that pivotal day, the Holders have cleared their property of all non-natives, including trees and shrubs, and removed a large area of fescue which was then covered with landscape cloth for several months. Extensive plantings of natives followed the clearing. All of this involved hours of hard work, but the payoff came the past spring when, in Pat's words, "Other springs had been beautiful in our garden, but last spring was amazing!" She says that the best part of the day is the time spent in the garden, a sentiment that can be echoed by many Society members.

The **Yokeleys** found a 5-acre vacant wooded lot in Apex in a developed older neighborhood 18 years ago. More mountain-like than Piedmont, it has steep hills and giant trees. Trillium, Hepatica, Rattlesnake Plantain and Crested Iris already grew in the woods. They have taken what many would consider a gardening handicap – a power-line easement that runs through their property – and turned it into a focus for their gardening. The middle of the easement is now native grass and the very important "edges" are planted in native flowering perennials, shrubs and grasses for the pollinators, birds and wildlife who thrive there. In Leigh's words, "This property has so many different ecologically diverse areas, including woodlands, wetlands, bottomlands and meadowlands, that I can foresee myself spending the rest of my life improving and building onto it to make it even more beneficial for the pollinators and wildlife."

—Carolyn Ikenberry



The Holders' milkweed.



The Yokeleys' wetland area.

(more photos next page)

I SPY..... Something Smelly!

By Mark Rose

With the departure of winter comes one of nature's grandest surprises. I often call this the true harbinger of spring although there is another plant with that common name (*Erigeron bulbosa*). Often this occurs even while there is still snow on the ground. **Skunk Cabbage** (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) is normally the first of our native wildflowers to show itself and is always a welcome sight after our having endured winter. The first indication is the green leaf point that appears. It barely shows itself only to stop growing for a while to allow the flowers to emerge and attract pollinators. Then the foliage takes off growing again and during the spring and summer, it flushes into a large bright green rosette. This looks somewhat like a cabbage plant but unlike true cabbage plants, this plant does not form heads.



This species is a denizen of swamps and wetland areas. It is deep rooted to keep the crown of the plant down where it can survive the warmth and dryness of summer. I have collected plants and have seen this crown over 18" below the soil surface. It is blessed with contractual roots that continually pull it deeper over the years. Seed, which are deposited on the soil surface, germinate the first spring and by summer's end the roots have pulled the seedling 3-5" deep.

***Note:** No one correctly identified the leaf puzzler in the last issue and I would hope that everyone would go back, check it out, and please try again. I will be bringing both plants to our Spring Outing on May 5-7th for everyone to see and if there is a winner, they will get to take them home. (You can see our newsletters on the Society website.) Happy Wildflowering!



The Waldreps' Atamasco Lilies.



Mountain Laurel at Woodland Slope Gardens.

Member Spotlight!



Trena McNabb

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

jchiggie@yahoo.com



Trena in her studio with her painting, "Landscape with Path".

Q: Where are you from originally and what is your professional background?

A: I grew up in Thomasville, NC, and spent a lot of time in the woods and fields playing with native plants. I was a graphic designer my entire professional life, always painting on the side. I was an art director at AT&T when I left the commercial design field to pursue painting commissions for corporations and public art full time.

Q: What chapter do you belong to and how have you been active in that chapter?

A: I have been a member of the Triad Chapter for about 13 years. As the years have passed, I have become more active. Beginning with plant rescue, attending meetings and on to serve on the board of directors. The results are that my work has become more and more focused on native plants and environments.

I must mention my meadow here. When members learned of my meadow project, many contributed with plants, seeds and knowledge. In my experience no one is more generous than NCNPS gardeners. The meadow and my woodlands have led to more and more examples to include in paintings (as well as a rigorous exercise routine).

Q: What have you done to promote the cause of native plants?

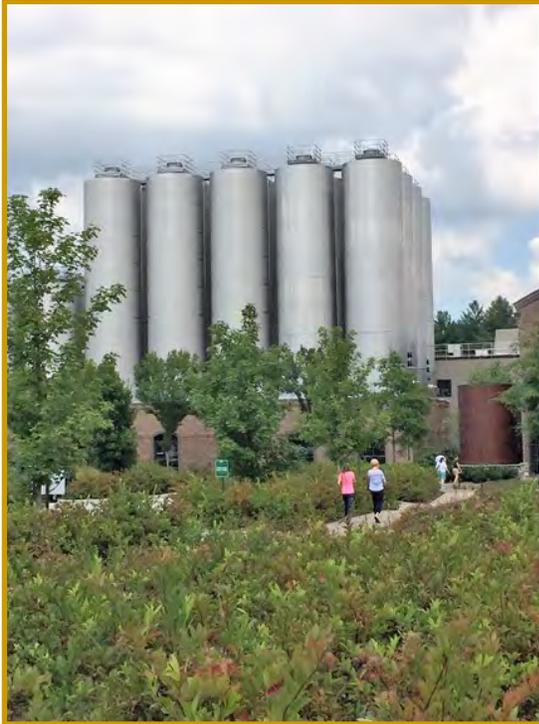
A: Native plants have given to me much more than I could ever repay: Friends, knowledge, models (rare and common), focus, exercise and fellowship. I have made talks to garden and naturalists clubs about the process of creating my meadow. Sometimes I include how native plants have influenced my art. I still "play" with plants by pressing them and have talked about that to groups, detailing the advantage of native plants in the landscape. One day I realized how many artists we have in our society who focus on the plants and thought it would be a good idea to get together for an exhibit to promote native plants. That idea kept growing and growing (into the *Art of Native Plants* exhibit last year).

I spoke to a group of child artists this summer. I mentioned grass was not a good landscape choice because nothing could benefit from it, birds, insects, etc. A beautiful little 6-year-old girl piped up with, "We have a rabbit that eats our grass". Completely shut me down! Haha!

Q: What is your favorite native plant and why?

A: I would say Trilliums are my favorite, but I tend to favor the one I am looking at!

Crafting Beer Native-Style!



Sustainability” is the key word for the Sierra Nevada Brewing Company’s newest facility in Mills River, a community outside of Asheville. The company’s estate features solar panels and micro-turbines to power production, and a “reduce, reuse, recycle and compost” philosophy to lessen its environmental impact. But most impressive to “Go Native!” fans is the fact that the company uses mostly native plants on its property. Not only can you tour the facility – where you will enjoy wood décor and furniture made from trees carefully removed during construction – but you can hike through nature trails and gardens featuring native plants of all sizes and colors. In fact, the company has committed to restoring forest area damaged by construction, using native trees. In the back, you can tour vegetable and herb gardens used by chefs at the brewery’s unique restaurant. Oh, and did I forget to mention there’s beer?

— Julie Higgin



Visit www.SierraNevada.com for tour times and reservations.



North Carolina Native Plant Society

C/O Julie Higgin

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**We're
Wild
About
Natives!**

