

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

Let the Buzz (and Flutter) Begin!

By Will Stuart

A number of Carolina native plants "roll the dice" and bloom in late February and March, a season of unpredictable weather -- a season when few pollinators are active. Over the past several years, I have waited, camera in hand, curious to see which bee or butterfly might brave the elements to visit our early bloomers. I have learned a number of pollinator species, some uncommon, are linked to the native plants of early spring.



Brown Elfin visiting Sandhills Pyxie-moss.

Sandhills Pyxie-moss (*Pyxidantha brevifolia*) is among the first Carolina natives to flower. Carpets of bright white blossoms with unusual yellow-tipped anthers (which account for the genus name) seemingly advertise for visitors. On several cool spring days, I have waited in vain. Last spring my patience was rewarded when I happened upon dozens of penny-sized Brown Elfins, one of our earliest butterflies, chasing each other and nectaring on an extensive patch of Sandhills Pyxie-moss.

Pink buds of Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) begin to swell in February and appear to wait for a burst of warm weather before opening. Once in bloom, they attract a variety of native bees and flower flies. Andrenids (mining bees) and Colletids (plasterer bees) are two groups of small, ground-nesting bees very active in early spring. Smaller than honeybees, they seek out

(continued on page 3)

Native Plant News

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HELP WANTED

The NCNPS Needs You!

Ready to make a difference on behalf of native plants, our Society, and our State? Volunteer for a role on our Leadership Team. We are looking for officers, at-large board members, and committee and chapter chairs. Interested? Please email me, Steven Kroeger, Vice President at skroeger@mindspring.com

Meet the NC Wildflower of the Year!

Narrow-leaf Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)



Mountain mints are true pollinator magnets and instantly add wildlife value to your yard. Smaller and less aggressive than other mints, this delicate species is perfect even for a small garden or container, and much loved by bees!

<http://ncbg.unc.edu/north-carolina-wildflower-of-the-year/>

Inaugural Joint Annual Meeting of the SE-EPPC Carolina Chapters

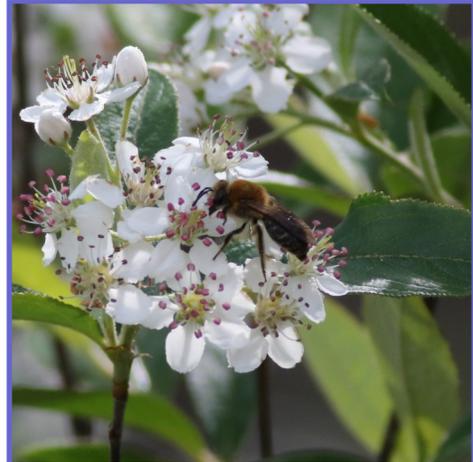
The NC Invasive Plant Council and the SC Exotic Pest Plant Council will hold its **2019 Invasive Weed Management Symposium** March 27-29 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 444 Cox Road, Gastonia, NC 28054. This event consists of three days of presentations, workshops, field trips, socials, and continuing education credits. A silent auction is one of the events.

For information, contact **Rob Emens** at rob.emens@ncdenr.gov The Hilton can be reached at 704-810-1111.

Let the Buzz Begin! (cont.)



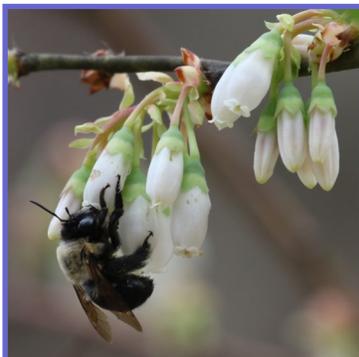
Yellow-rumped Warbler on a Chickasaw Plum.



Plasterer Bee on Red Chokeberry.

chokeberry blossoms and collect nectar and pollen to provision their nests. Watch for small, fresh mounds of sand with holes in the center along walking trails and two-lanes in the Sandhills in late February as females prepare nests in anticipation of the first flowers of the season.

Vacciniums (blueberries, cranberries, etc.) attract one of my favorite early bees, a big-eyed, hard working species that flies only in spring. *Habropoda laboriosa*, commonly known as the Southeastern Blueberry Bee, is well-studied and has been termed an "oligolege" or *Vaccinium* specialist. This plump native looks like a slightly smaller bumblebee and is common in



Southeastern Blueberry

the Sandhills in March when urn-shaped flowers abound. You will be entertained as they hang upside down and sonicate or "buzz" the flowers.

To experience a mob of pollinators in March, I

seek out Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*), a large shrub/small tree common in managed fields of the sandhills region. These 3- to 4-meter trees are covered with thousands of white blossoms in mid-March before their leaves emerge. Flies, flower flies, native bees, wasps and butterflies all converge on newly opened flowers of Chickasaw Plum, so many "bugs" that I often find a Field Sparrow or Yellow-rumped Warbler sitting on the higher branches before darting down to grab a meal. "Butter-butts", as Yellow-rumped Warblers are often called, are especially good at the art of fly-catching from a treetop. Chickasaw Plums have excellent wildlife value and produce ripe fruits as early as mid-May. The downside is that the blossoms tend to be very short-lived, lasting only a few days, so good timing is required.

Over the past several years I have added a few more field guides to my crowded book shelves. Discovering the diversity of pollinators frequenting our earliest blossoming native plants has added another level of enjoyment to my favorite season.

(All photos by the author.)

Native Plant Habitat

By **Carol and Jonathan Fox**

In 2001, we selected a $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lot in a Charlotte suburb to build our home. Interested in natural habitat and gardening for many years, we thought the lot met many of our desires: a level spot with north-south orientation for the house, wooded surroundings for privacy, interesting topography sloping down from the front of the lot to a shallow stream and then rising to another wooded area with a long rock outcropping. The stream bed was dry after four years of drought.

Upon moving in, we began to discover that the lot was much more diverse and interesting than we realized. Classes in the UNCC Native Plant Certificate program helped us identify and appreciate our lot's native plants. We found oak and hickory forest in the back; Sourwood/Black Gum/Dogwood trees on the side; some wildflowers including a few Atamasco lilies along the stream bank; and Fringe-tree, Buttonbush and native azaleas across the stream.

For years, we've tried to preserve the original native plants and add others we've learned about. Along with plant preservation, we needed to address water runoff that was eroding the rear woodland areas. The goal was to have a system to control the rainwater while retaining as much water as possible on the lot. Our drainage contractor wanted to pipe the water from the driveway directly to the stream. The final project, however, involves



some piping with a decorative stream bed and lateral pipes to keep as much water as possible in the woods. The system ends in a rain garden, giving us another gardening opportunity.

What is our native plant garden like today? From the back windows of our house, we have treetop views of our efforts. We've found many varieties of wildflowers on the north-facing slope beyond the stream. The Atamasco lilies have increased from the few we found in the drought to an ever-expanding colony occupying 30-40 feet of a wooded seep and down to the stream bank. We enjoy rain garden perennials like Cardinal Flower, Ironweed and Boneset. Our wooded areas are more diverse with the addition of buckeyes, Bigleaf Magnolia, and ferns and sedges. The ever-changing palette of our native plants continues to bring us joy in every season.

Mark Your Calendar!

What: NCNPS Spring Outing

When: May 10-12

Where: Bluff Mountain in West Jefferson

Questions: Steve Kroeger skroeger@mindspring.com

Diane Laslie diane.laslie@gmail.com



A Pond Love Story (see pond photo page 14)

By **Betty Lou Chaika**

Writing this near the end of January, I haven't heard any frogs yet, but I am starting to anticipate their return to our new pond.

We started our adventures with water gardening in 2017 by sinking a 2'-round tub into the ground to receive the runoff from one of our rain gutters. We filled this rain basin with pots of Gray's Sedge (*Carex grayi*), Lizard's-tail (*Saururus cernuus*), Scouring-rush (*Equisetum* sp.), White Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), Southern Blue Flag (*Iris virginica*), Slender Blue Iris (*Iris prismatica*), and Tall White-top Sedge (*Rhynchospora latifolia*). We enjoyed this little water garden so much we decided to make a small (8'x11') wildlife pond right off our back deck.

Because the land slopes quite a bit, it required boulders to hold back the upper side and a rock wall to contain the water on the lower side. On the slope above the pond we planted Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), dwarf forms of Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), River Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), Blue Wood Sedge (*Carex flaccosperma*), Seersucker Sedge (*Carex plantaginea*), Rosy Sedge (*Carex rosea*), Gray's Sedge, Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), and Pink Turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*).

We filled the new pond mid-May (2018). A few nights later, after rain, we stood out on the deck in the dark listening to the harsh, loud croaks of four close Fowler's toads and the occasional cackles of Cope's gray tree frogs, totally contrasting with the long sweet trill of



two American toads in the background. Along with a few fireflies, it sure felt wild out there! Water creatures began animating the pond by day, and by night the singing of frogs and toads filled the air. Two weeks later there were tadpoles. I know where they

came from, but where did the water boatmen come from?? I had no idea the pond would immediately attract so much wildlife! The water reflects all the colors of the sky and shimmers in any unseen breeze. It makes visible all the various rhythms of the rain.

By mid-July, night was filled with katydids and a crazy cacophony of the gray tree frogs. Sitting on the deck on a blessedly cool afternoon, we watched a Blue-tailed Skink scamper along the top of the pond wall and three frogs alternately sitting on the rocks and swimming in the water. Two doves descended and drank at the little beach (the frogs retreated into their caves in the rocks). Later a blue dragonfly dipped eggs into the pond. An American Snout arrived to sit on a plant stem in the pond.

In the water at the edge of the pond we placed pots of narrow-leaved Cattail Sedge (*Carex squarrosa*), Gray's Sedge, Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Golden Canna (*Canna flaccida*), blue Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and White-top Sedge (*Rhynchospora colorata*), all of which bloomed beautifully. In July, the full moon shone brilliantly white on the pond through the black shadows of the plants, the milky water shimmering with the traffic of water bugs and tadpoles.

My husband's morning ritual before feeding the birds is to go out on the deck with his coffee and count frogs. By the end of July, the population had risen to 18. The squishy sounds of one or two Southern Leopard frogs joined the twang of green frogs and the thrum of a bullfrog. The green frogs are my favorites, because they let you sit on the rocks within inches of them, completely unperturbed.

I look forward to the end of winter when the cycle will start all over again. I'm dreaming of the new native wetland plants we will add, including floating ones. I highly encourage you to make a small water garden or pond if you can, the closer to your deck or patio the better!

Visit Betty Lou at: www.earthsanctuaries.net

CHLOROFIENDS!*

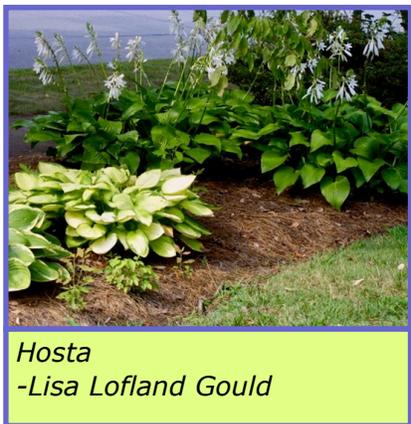
Invasive Plants of the NC Mountains, Pt. 3: Suspicious Characters & a Villain

By Lisa Lofland Gould



are insect-pollinated and do produce seed, which likely spreads in runoff water. Anyone who grows Hosta also knows that they are “deer candy”—both deer and rabbits love to graze on them, but apparently it is toxic to cats and dogs. Time will tell if Hosta is on the way to becoming a serious concern.

Our observers in the mountains have reported some interesting finds. Tracie Jeffries has seen **Hosta** plants naturalized in several areas but notes they are particularly spreading along Curtis Creek in McDowell County (Weakley [2015] shows Blue Plantain-lily [*Hosta ventricosa*] as a rare escape in the North Carolina mountains). The plantain-lilies are in the Agave Family and are native to China, Japan, Korea, and eastern Russian; there are many species (some authorities list up to 70) and lots of hybrids and cultivars. The USDA’s [PLANTS Database](#) shows Blue Plantain-lily present from the Great Lakes states east to New England and south to North Carolina.



Hosta
-Lisa Lofland Gould

Hostas are herbaceous perennials that can grow by stolons and rhizomes, and while they flower best with some sun, they are famous for cold hardiness and shade tolerance, which makes them a concern if they are starting to move into forested habitats. Hostas

A friend of Jean Woods brought her a plant to identify; it turned out to be **Chameleon-plant** (*Houttuynia cordata*), which had formed a large patch not far from Brevard. It took her friend several years to eradicate it. I have seen this herbaceous perennial spreading on the edge of a plant nursery here in Forsyth County, and at a nearby residence, and was interested to read that the *American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* (1996, DK Publishing Inc.) calls it “invasive, especially in moist soils; cultivars are generally only slightly less vigorous.” Weakley (2105) reports it as a waif in the North Carolina piedmont, and notes that it spreads in disturbed areas and moist suburban forests. Also known as Fish-leaf or Fish-mint (apparently because the leaves have a fishy taste), this southeast-Asian member of the Lizard’s-tail Family is cultivated as a green vegetable in Asia, where it also has medicinal uses. As an ornamental it is grown primarily for its foliage. It grows well in



Chameleon-plant
-Lisa Lofland Gould

(continued next page)

Chlorofiends! (cont.)

moist or wet soils and is known for its rapid growth and shade tolerance. As with the plantain-lilies, this is a plant to keep our eyes on.

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is a huge member of the Carrot Family: think Cow-parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) on steroids! A native of the Caucasus Mountains of Eurasia, the plant was introduced into Britain in 1817 as a garden curiosity and by 1828 was already being reported to naturalize. It was brought to North America in the early 20th century and has been recorded in Québec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, ME, NY, CT, MA, PA, MI, IL, NC, WA, OR, and British Columbia. Recently it was found in one North Carolina mountain site (where it has supposedly been eradicated), apparently planted for erosion control, which is



Giant Hogweed (for scale, the pink object is a baseball cap). Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



Giant Hogweed stem. Photo by Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

odd, since this plant has a reputation for causing erosion along streams. It thrives in moist, rich soils and floodplains.

Giant Hogweed can reach 18' in height, and a single leaf can measure up to 9' across. The alternate leaves are deeply lobed and sharply toothed; the hollow stems can be up to 4" in diameter and have reddish-purple blotches as well as bristles (our native Cow-parsnip stems are not as purplish and lack the bristles). It is a biennial or monocarpic perennial: it only produces seeds once before it dies back, but it may take several years before it makes seeds, which can be formed by self-pollination. The inflorescence resembles American Cow-parsnip (or the much smaller Queen Anne's Lace, *Daucus carota*) but may be 2' across—one plant can produce up to 50,000 oval seeds (the fruits of our native Cow-parsnip are heart-shaped). The fruit is spread by wind and water or via animals' fur/feathers and can remain in the seed bank for over 5 years. It is a federally listed noxious weed.

While Giant Hogweed can crowd out native plants, a big concern about its spread is its effect on people: it is phototoxic. The sap contains furocoumarins, chemicals that cause a severe dermatitis when the sap contacts skin and skin is then exposed to sunlight (all members of this genus contain these chemicals and can cause phyto dermatitis). The blistering caused by this reaction can result in permanent purple or black scars, and serious eye injury. Livestock, however, can graze on it without ill effects.

As always, GO NATIVE!

Chlorofiends! is a regular column in *Native Plant News*. If you have information or comments on invasive species in North Carolina, please share them with Lisa Gould (lisaigould@gmail.com).

Research Reports from the Field

In 2017, NCNPS awarded a grant from the Tom and Bruce Shinn Fund to **Ashley Dow**, a graduate student in the MS Biology program at East Carolina University. Her advisor for the research reported here is Dr. Claudia Jolls.

Native Plant Landscaping for Pollinators on NC Solar Farms & Beyond

Solar panel farms (SPFs) offer a solution to pollinator decline. Some SPFs are restoring pollinator habitat by landscaping with diverse native plant seed mixes. Native plants on SPFs have many benefits for the solar industry and surrounding ecosystems. Plants selected should be diverse with ample pollen and nectar resources maximizing benefits for pollinators. Yet, we lack knowledge of native plant performance on SPFs and pollinator attractiveness.

For North Carolina SPFs, I selected 13 possible candidates. Selection criteria: pollinator use, height (minimizing contact with panels),

shade tolerance, and availability. Germination was then assessed under simulated shading in a greenhouse experiment. Butterfly Milkweed, Lanceleaf Tickseed, Purple Coneflower, Blue Mistflower, Indian Blanket, Barbara's Buttons, Orange Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, and Stokes' Aster germinated successfully showing promise for landscaping on SPFs. Select plant species (10 of 13) were also evaluated for pollinator attractiveness in shaded pollinator beds. These natives attracted 37 species of pollinators, including the Monarch. Stokes' Aster, Lanceleaf Tickseed, and Indian Blanket proved most attractive. Indian Blanket appealed widely, attracting pollinators from eight genera.



Here is the 2018 research report from **Bryan Piatkowski**, a graduate student at North Carolina State University, whose advisor is Dr. Jon Shaw.

Systematics, molecular evolution, and functional trait variation in the *Sphagnum magellanicum* (Sphagnaceae) species complex

This research aims to develop *Sphagnum* (*Sphagnaceae*) peat mosses as a model system to study evolutionary and ecological genomics. Peat mosses engineer entire ecosystems, such as pocosins, through the traits that these organisms have, and in so doing provide habitat for more familiar native plants. One globally-distributed and ecologically-important species, *Sphagnum magellanicum* Brid., occurs throughout North Carolina. Recent work has demonstrated that *S. magellanicum* is actually a complex of at least

three reproductively-isolated species that are differentiated genetically, morphologically, and ecologically.

One aspect of my research is a systematic study of *S. magellanicum* sensu lato. In collaboration with an NSF-funded effort, this project seeks to (1) identify which species in this complex occur in North America and resolve their evolutionary relationships, (2) identify patterns of molecular evolution, and (3) quantify functional trait variation within and between species. Preliminary data suggest that areas in southeastern United States harbor an undescribed species, new to science, within this complex.



Chapter News



Photos by Robert Jones

Green & Growin' 2019, presented annually by the North Carolina Nursery & landscape Association, is now in the past. At this year's event, held Jan. 14-18, the **Triad Chapter** had a booth organized by **Jeff and Cheryl Prather**. Other participants including **Larry Mellichamp, Diane Laslie, Pat Holder, John Clarke** and **Judy West** helped man the booth. Free posters were given away the first day, until we ran out. Larry and **John Neal** had books for sale, which really drew in visitors. Our native plant fliers were welcomed by many. A few other members stopped in as part of checking out the whole show. Lots of information was shared, and overall it seemed that native plants were gaining more value in the minds of all the visitors! Also this winter, Triad member **Dennis Burnette** presented the Winston-Salem Wildflower Club's Jan. 21st program, "Native Plants that Attract Butterflies". That club meets at the Emily Allen Wildflower Preserve.

Judy West, Triad Chair

The **Blue Ridge Chapter** has a focus on improving and increasing native habitat in the High Country of NC. When the High Country Audubon Society approached us to collaborate on the Hardin Park School Native Garden, we were all in!

The project combined funding from the B.W. Wells Stewardship Fund and the Coleman and Susan Burke Grant for Native Plants, plus donations from several local nurseries. A

design was developed that included trees such as Serviceberry, Witch-hazel and Winterberry, and shrubs such as Arrowwood Viburnum, Flame Azaleas, Pinkshell Azaleas, Beautyberry and blueberries. Flowering per-



ennials rounded out the design. Garden paths were added to aid student access in taking care of the gardens, and lastly, two large boulders were planned to accent the landscaping. A ground-breaking ceremony kicked off the project, where N.C Rep. Jonathan Jordan expressed his support.

A contractor was hired to remove existing landscaping, and then volunteers and students planted the garden. Teachers from the school are developing a curriculum to utilize the garden in their lesson plans. In coordination with the Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, the Blue Ridge Chapter will be expanding the project to other Watauga County schools in coming years.

Debbie Shetterly

Plant Auction BOGOS

By Bettina Darveaux

The reemergence of our beloved native plants after their winter rest period is what makes the springtime so special, as we miss them dearly over those few months. And with this new growing season upon us comes the various plant sales and auctions that we are not capable of resisting since the desire to find that next special plant to incorporate into our evolving native plant gardens is ingrained in our very being. It is just who we are!

Over the years, I have acquired many plants via our NCNPS auctions and have been pleasantly surprised by some unintentional tagalongs that made their appearance a few seasons later. It's like a botanical BOGO (Buy One, Get One)!

After winning the bid on some Savannah Iris (*Iris tridentata*) and planting it in my bog garden, several years later I noticed a beautiful Atamasco or Cullowhee Lily (*Zephyranthes atamasca*), some Fringed Yellow-eyed Grass (*Xyris fimbriata*), and some Blazing-star (*Liatris spicata*), growing in the vicinity of the Iris. Likewise, from a clump of Seersucker or Plantain-leaved Sedge (*Carex plantaginea*) planted in my shade garden, grew Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) radiating out from underneath the puckered sedge leaves. If I remember correctly, Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), with its striking red-yellow blossoms, was also obtained in this manner.

So how could this be? Well, just think about it. The native plants available at our society's auctions are potted up from various plant rescues or society members gardens, both of which are growing amongst other native plant species. The soil surrounding these natives is just teeming with a myriad of plant propagules from all the native species in the area. These seeds, rhizomes, corms, bulbs, tubers, and crowns can easily be inadvertently scooped up in the soil when the intended native plant is dug up and potted for the auction.

Plant auctions are such a wonderful way to add more native species to your garden. Not only are you contributing funds to an awesome cause, our society's auctions also happen to be very entertaining. And if you are lucky, you may be surprised with even more plants than you thought you were getting. It's a win-win for everyone!



Fringed Yellow-eyed Grass amongst Blazing-star, making a dazzling color combination in the bog garden.



The vigorous blooming of Crossvine matches its enthusiastic sprawling nature!

(Photos by the author.)

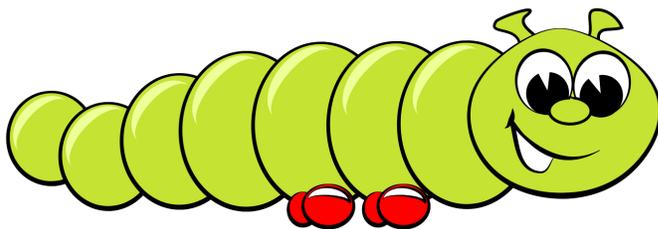
NATIVE PLANT SUPER HEROES

By Virginia Currie

I am so lucky to have a band of birds in the trees outside of my bedroom window that sing me awake most mornings — the music of spring is a particular delight! Spring is the time of the year when birds are finding mates and building nests to create cozy homes for their future children. Do you ever wonder just *how and where* birds decide to have their families?

Unlike us, birds and most wild animals do not have the luxury of shopping in a food store or hiring a real estate company. Instead, they rely upon native trees and plants!

Can you imagine what might be in the kids' section of a bird grocery store? If you said big fat juicy caterpillars then you guessed right!! Unlike adult birds, **baby birds absolutely cannot live off of birdseed**. In order to survive, they must have a diet of live



insects, including caterpillars. These insects are filled with the protein and vitamins that baby birds need to grow into strong, healthy adults. AND these insects are commonly found **ONLY** on native plants and trees.

Growing birds demand *a lot of* caterpillars! One clutch of chickadees needs 9,000 caterpillars to grow into adults. In fact, during daylight hours, the parent birds feed the babies every 3 hours. So if you find a featherless baby bird (fledgling) on the ground, your best bet is to put it back in the tree so that the parent birds can continue to take care of it.

Our native trees not only provide safe homes for bird families, but they also serve as living, breathing grocery stores where bird parents can find the nutritious food that their children need to grow strong and healthy. Some of the trees we pass on our way to school are the exact “host plant” required by your favorite caterpillar. You may even have one in your yard!

The “Big Five” major food source native trees are: oak, maple, cherry, willow and pine. Have you seen any of these trees in your neighborhood? Do you have a tree that is special to you? Have you observed anyone else who might find this tree special? Do you think your special tree could be a **Native Plant Superhero**?

Virginia Currie is the Society's Children's Education Chair.



Society Grant Births Bog Garden

By **Rachel Meriwether**, Manager

Conservation and education is the core message at Green River Preserve, a children's summer camp located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains along the Henderson and Transylvania county border. From edible plants to leave-no-trace guidelines, the GRP curriculum covers as much ground as possible when sharing ecological principles with participants.



Among the many wonderful ecosystems found at Green River, there is a naturally occurring mountain seepage bog! Older campers and staff are occasionally given the chance to visit the bog, but due to the sensitive nature of this unique area not all members of camp get to enter the bog itself. In an effort to bring the wonders of the bog to a wider audience, a plan was hatched to put in a bog garden right on base camp. Thanks to generous help from the NC Native Plant Society (B.W. Wells Grant), this dream was realized.

With the help of the campers themselves, the bog garden was built during the summer of 2017. Throughout the remainder of that year the drainage in the garden was observed to make sure everything would flow properly. Then in the spring of 2018, a variety of native bog plants were planted and I am happy to report, flourished this past summer! Campers and staff alike enjoyed walking by to see the plants and asked many questions. We hope the bog will continue to foster educational opportunities and that close observation of these marvelous plants will inspire young and old alike to appreciate and conserve natural wonders of all kinds.

NCNPS Spring Outing Silent Plant Auction

Contact **Judy West** at westjl@gmail.com or **Lynda Waldrep** at lyndawaldrep@aol.com about your donations, and send a photo if possible. Donations of unusual and hard-to-find plants are requested.

Bids for the plants can be made Friday, May 10, and Saturday, May 11, in the New River State Park Community Building. The auction will close Saturday evening.

Proceeds support Society operations. Thanks for your help!

2019 Plant of the Year

Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia macrophylla*) (also known as *Isotrema macrophylla*) has been named 2019 Plant of the Year by The Garden Club of America (GCA). Annually the GCA identifies a stellar North American native plant to receive its Montine McDaniel Freeman Medal for Plant of the Year.

The Dutchman's Pipe is a valuable and versatile native vine with heart shaped leaves. Named for its exotic pale yellow flowers resembling a "Dutchman's pipe," this unique and underused plant can be used to create a lush living wall, a sheltering green roof, or an attractive privacy fence.



The Freeman Medal was established in 1995 to highlight underutilized, but highly worthy, native trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, and perennials. The goal is to draw attention to select native plants, encourage their use in the landscape, and make them familiar to gardeners and more available in nurseries.

Dutchman's Pipe can be grown in full sun to partial shade in average to moist soil. The unusual shape of the pipe blossom, which blooms in May and June, serves as a type of "fly-trap" attracting small insects that are temporarily held and released to carry pollen to the next flower. The large, heart-shaped, densely overlapping leaves serve as an important host plant for the Pipevine Swallowtail Butterfly and its caterpillars. This workhorse vine thrives in USDA zones 4 to 8 and is deer resistant and pollution tolerant with no serious insect or disease problems. The plant was nominated for the award by a member of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club in Massachusetts.

Honorable mention was awarded to Kentucky Coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) and Rusty/Southern Black Haw (*Viburnum rufidulum*).

The Kentucky Coffeetree is a striking and aesthetically pleasing tree throughout the four seasons. Growing to 75 feet in full sun, this tree can be grown in parks, estates, floodplains, ravines, and highway areas and is an excellent replacement to ash trees currently being lost to the emerald ash borer. It is hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8. Kentucky Coffeetree was nominated by members of the Garden Club of Lexington in Kentucky.

The Rusty/Southern Black Haw is an incredibly versatile and underutilized native shrub that can provide blossoms, berries, and brilliant fall color. Hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9, *Viburnum rufidulum* will grow 10 to 20 feet in full sun or partial/deep shade. It tolerates clay and poor soil, is resistant to disease, insects, deer, and can be planted and naturalized in ravines and along rocky banks of creeks to prevent erosion. *Viburnum rufidulum* was nominated by a member of the Garden Club of Nashville in Tennessee.

The GCA, founded in 1913, is composed of 200 clubs with nearly 18,000 members who devote energy and expertise to projects in horticulture, conservation, and civic improvement across the United States.

Membership Spotlight: Ann Walter-Fromson



Ann has been participating in the Triad Chapter of the NCNPS for about six years.

What is your background?

I was a Professor of Psychology at Greensboro College for 26 years, after working for eight years as a psychologist at the Central NC School for the Deaf. While I was a psychology professor, I developed a course on the Psychology of Environmental Problems and became a NC Certified Environmental Educator. After retiring, I completed the Certificate in Native Plants Studies program at the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill.

How did you get interested in native plants?

It was my love of birds that led to my interest in native plants. About 15 years ago, inspired by a NC Museum of Natural Sciences publication, *Plant It and They Will Come...*, I started to add native plants to my yard to attract birds. As I became more interested in native plants to support wildlife, I decided to join the Society.

How do you support native plants in your chapter?

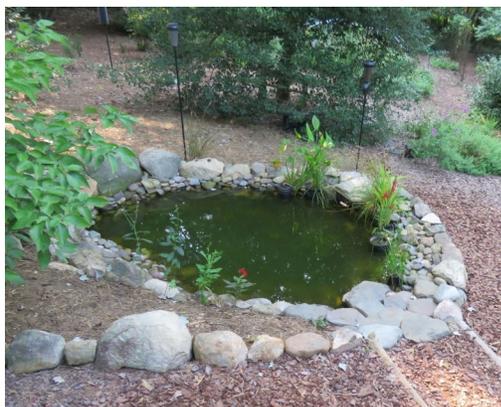
I give talks to local garden clubs and organizations focused on gardening for birds using native plants. I have participated in plant rescues; volunteer in the Audubon Natural area and the Bog Garden, and Greensboro City Parks to help remove invasive plants; developed posters for the Bog Garden Kiosk; and lead spring wildflower walks.

Do you have a favorite native plant?

It depends on the season. I am especially partial to spring ephemerals, and Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) is one of my all-time favorites.

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Betty Lou Chaika's pond



Native Places: Jones Gap State Park



I lived in upstate New York for much of my life, where winter was long and would persist into April. I am now a Charlottean, and I love our earlier spring. I will often celebrate spring's arrival by driving south to the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway where in mid-March, thousands of Oconee Bells bloom in **Devil's Fork State Park**. By late March the popular Oconee Station Falls Trail is lined with masses of Sweet Betsy Trillium and an array of spring ephemerals.

My favorite spring ephemerals are trilliums and my favorite trillium destination is **Jones Gap State Park**, a hidden gem tucked into the 13,000-acre Mountain Bridge Wilderness. This South Carolina State Park has a modern visitor center, primitive camping, and 60 miles of hiking trails. I usually hike the Blue Trail which parallels the scenic Middle Saluda River and is home to a delightful population of bright white erect Catesby's Trillium that bloom around April 1.

The first mile of the Blue Trail is easy and gradual, but then becomes uneven, rocky, and often wet. Be advised the garden-like parking area is small and the park, while quiet on weekdays, can be busy on weekends. Check the park website, <https://southcarolinaparks.com/jones-gap>, for directions, photos, and more.

—Article and photos by **Will Stuart**





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