Pennsylvania Native Plant Society Notes

Spring 2012

Dear Members,

With the March that we've had, it isn't hard to get excited about going outside to hike or work in the garden. We invite all our members to take advantage of this early spring to help us promote the use and preservation of natives in the Landscape.

There are many ways to engage family and friends and share your enthusiasm and knowledge of natives. Become an educator and an advocate by choosing Doug Tallamy's "Bringing Nature Home", as your next book group read or organize a fieldtrip to explore local trails, native plant nurseries, or gardens. Check the PNPS calendar on our website (pawildflower.org) and Facebook group for ideas.

Our native plant sale is coming up on May 5th – please encourage folks to come out to Shaver's Creek and support PNPS and the participating native plant nurseries. Help us restore our native flora one backyard at a time.

Sincerely,
Jean Najjar, Editor

Save the Date

Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival and Sale

May 5, 2012

10 am-3 pm

Shaver's Creek Environmental Center

Brought to you by Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, and the Penn State Master Gardeners

Petersburg, PA

Early Blooms Captured by PNPS Members

Photo 1 Pachysandra procumbens -- photographed 3/22/12 by Debbie Meade – Debbie points out this plant is not listed in Rhoads but is listed in USDA Plants Database.

Photo 1 Sanguinaria canadensis -- photographed 3/24/12 by Denise Wagner

PNPS Notes *is the quarterly publication of the*
Pennsylvania Native Plant Society
PO Box 807, Boalsburg, PA 16827
www.pawildflower.org

Photo 3 Trillium erectum - Photographed by Stan Kotala this March along the Lower Trail in Central Pennsylvnania

Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival

The longstanding tradition of the PNPS annual plant sale continues to grow and evolve through our partnership with Shaver's Creek and the Penn State Master Gardeners. We are looking forward to our second year at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center and we hope that you will join us. Come and celebrate the beauty and complexity of native plants at the Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival and Sale at Shaver's Creek on May 5th. It promises to be an exciting day for native plant enthusiasts. Our partners at Shaver's Creek have arranged speakers and guided walks to spark your imagination and stimulate your interest in gardening with natives. And volunteers from PNPS, Penn State Master Gardeners, and Clearwater Conservancy will be on hand to answer all your gardening questions.

Don't miss this great opportunity to learn how you can make native plants part of your home landscape. The sale will feature six Pennsylvania Nurseries with expertise in natives. Admission is free and there will be locally prepared foods available to purchase – so come for the day and stay for lunch!

THE FESTIVAL PROGRAM

11 am Guest speaker (lower classroom): Gardening for pollinators

Presented by Pam Ford and members of the Penn State Master Gardener Program.

The numbers of both native pollinators and domesticated bee populations are declining. As homeowners and gardeners, we can take a proactive role in conserving and enhancing pollinators by taking steps to help pollinator populations thrive. Penn State Extension Master Gardeners of Centre County will demonstrate what we can do to help support pollinators' need for habitat. By adding plants to the landscape that provide food and shelter for pollinators, and by adopting pollinator friendly landscape practices, we can make a difference to both the pollinators, and the people that rely on them.

12:30 Guided plant walk: A tour of the Shaver's Creek native plant gardens *-- Led by Eric Burkhart, Plant Science Program Director with Shaver's Creek Environmental Center.*

Eric will lead a ~60 minute leisurely stroll throughout the Shaver's Creek front yard gardens to introduce attendees to some of the more showy and non-fussy Pennsylvania native plants that can be used in urban or rural landscapes.

2 pm Guided plant walk: Attracting birds to your landscape using native plants *-- Led by Stan and Alice Kotala, naturalists and board members for Juniata Valley Audubon (www.jvas.org). Stan and Alice will lead a ~45 minute leisurely stroll throughout the Shaver's Creek grounds while discussing native plants and their role in attracting birds to your yard by providing both food and shelter*

PLANT VENDORS

Open from 10:00AM to 3:00PM

Keystone Wildflowers, Robesonia, PA (610)750-4186 (keystonewildflowers.com)

Sammis Greenhouses, Centre Hall, PA (814) 364-2881

Spring Haven Nursery, Newburg, PA (717) 423-6652 (springhavennatives.com)

Perennial Gardens Native Nursery (717) 582-3767 New Bloomfield, PA

Stephen Fast stephen.fast@remcom.com

Go Native Tree Farm, Lancaster, Pa (717)399-0195 (gonativetrees.com)

Falling For Helen's Flower

Helenium autumnale a.k.a. Sneezeweed

By Jean Najjar (references Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center and Elk Creek Nature Preserve)

Photo 4 Helenium autumnale - from Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center

Helen, as in Helen of Troy is the namesake of this plant. As the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center reports, Helenium autumnale was named by Linnaeus for this tragic beauty of mythology -- as legend has it the flowers grew where Helen's tears fell. Who knew Carl was such a romantic?

Don't be misled by its other common name. Sneezeweed is not an allergen source. The pollen of this plant is disseminated by insects, not wind. The common name is more likely derived from the historical use of the dried leaves to make snuff, which was inhaled through the nose to provoke a sneeze – folk wisdom at the time professed that sneezing would expel evil spirits.

Although snuff has gone out of fashion, this Pennsylvania native is a fabulous choice for the home landscape. It grows two to five feet tall with many bold yellow blooms that will brighten your garden in late summer and fall. It requires a damp soil and is a good choice for rain gardens and wet areas in your yard. Since Helen's Flower doesn't require cold-moist stratification to germinate, like so many other Pennsylvania wildflowers, you can plant seeds this May and you see blooms this autumn.

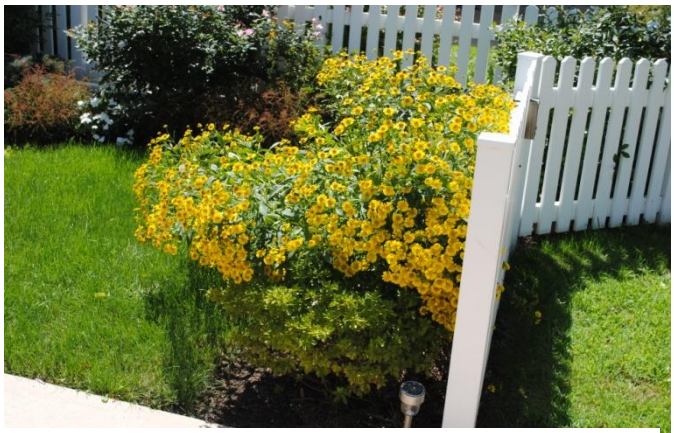


Photo 5 Helenium autumnalis – Photographed Rick Webb – He believes it is a cultivar, probably 'Kanaria' or 'Butterpat'.

PNPS will be giving away seed packets of this hardy native to guests at the Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival and Sale. Be sure to stop by our table at the sale for your seeds and handouts on this plant and backyard rain gardens.

On The Flip Side

Invasive species are getting a head start this spring along with Pennsylvania natives. Be on the look-out for *Alliaria petiolata* or wild garlic mustard. Although some folks may admire this plant for its delicate white flowers in spring, its aggressive nature means that it is displacing wonderful spring natives including *Trillium and wild ginger* (*Asarum canadense.*)

Garlic mustard seeds survive for five or more years in the soil. So controlling it is a long term commitment. Hand weeding that removes the roots can be effective in the early spring. Rosettes of leaves are out right now. Pull it before it flowers. For large areas, mow it close to the ground to prevent seed production. If you are removing mature plants: be sure to bag them as the seeds may survive in your compost.

Photo 2- Alliaria petiolata - Photographed in State College by Jean Najjar- in her own backyard (Oh the shame of it…)

Rain Gardens: Improving our Environment One Drop at a Time

From the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania

The Problem

Studies by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) have shown that a substantial amount of pollution in our streams and rivers is carried there by storm water runoff from our own yards, driveways, and rooftops. When it rains, forests, grasslands, and other natural areas work like a sponge to slow down the movement of water and enable it to be absorbed into the ground.

But human development creates impervious surfaces (such as rooftops, parking lots, driveways, and roads) that cannot absorb water. Compounding this, construction activities on development sites usually compact the soil — further limiting its ability to absorb water. As the amount of impervious surfaces increases, so does the amount of storm water run-off. This runoff, which can carry sediment, trash, and chemicals, gets discharged into our streams and rivers, either directly or through storm sewer systems.

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP)

The headquarters of ASWP is located at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve in Fox Chapel, Allegheny County. Audubon Center for Native Plants, which sells native plants to the public, is also located at Beechwood, 614 Dorseyville Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15238. Contact ASWP at (412) 963-6100 or aswp.org.

A Solution

Simply put, a rain garden is a landscaped depression designed to catch and contain rain water from rooftops or other impervious surfaces before it enters combined sewer systems or local waterways. Rain gardens are different than catchment basins or other larger scale retention ponds. While retention ponds catch water, they also divert it into nearby waterways. Rain gardens, when designed properly, guide water into the underlying earth, thereby reducing runoff, erosion and pollution of our waterways.

Installation of a rain garden is a relatively simple thing. A few calculations and observations will determine the size, depth, and location of the garden you will need to install. First, the size of your impervious surface (roof, driveway, etc) is calculated as well as direction of water travel from the surface (i.e. downspout location or driveway slope). An average rain fall in our area is 1/4" and heavy downpours can measure 3/4" or more. We recommend sizing your garden to accommodate at least this much rain and more if it can be done. Next, the location of your rain garden needs to be determined. Two considerations here are: the garden must be at least 10 feet from your foundation (to avoid water seeping into your basement or foundation), and it must be located down-slope from the source. Steeper slopes require deeper depressions to contain the water, but the typical depth of a rain garden is between 4 and 12 inches --too much math? Don't worry. You can find online versions of these calculators and additional information at www.raingardenalliance.org.

After your garden size and location has been determined, a depression is created. As most of the soil in our area is clayey, some soil augmentation will be required to enable it to drain better. A connection via an underground pipe or an above ground swale is created to convey water to the garden. In many situations a small overflow will be created to allow water from an extraordinary event to leave the garden into an appropriate location/direction.

Now for the fun part… plants. A variety of plants are suitable for rain garden applications, however the key characteristic of these plants is that they are both wet and drought tolerant. Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania recommends native plants for this application. Installing a rain garden not only helps to solve our wet weather overflow problems, it provides new mini-habitats, increasing interest and diversity in your own landscape.

Go Native!
Plants for Rain Gardens need to be able to withstand brief periods of standing water yet be able to tolerate extended periods of dryness. While there are a number of plants that can do well under these conditions, the best are those native to our region. Native plants have evolved to thrive in our local environment and provide great habitat for beneficial insects, including bees and butterflies.

The plants below are recommended for use in either **sunny or shady Rain Gardens in Southwestern Pennsylvania.**

Plants for Sunny Rain Gardens

Andropogon gerardii - Big Bluestem
Asclepias incarnata - Pink or Swamp Milkweed
Aster novae-angliae - New England Aster
Aster puniceus - Purple-stemmed Aster
Aster shortii - Short's Aster
Aster umbellatus - Flat-topped Aster
Caltha palustris - Marsh Marigold
Coreopsis tripteris - Tall Tickseed
Elymus hystrix - Bottlebrush Grass
Elymus virginicus - Wild Rye
Eupatorium fistulosum - Joe-Pye Weed
Eupatorium perfoliatum - Boneset
Gentiana clausa - Bottle Gentian
Helenium autumnale - Common Sneezeweed
Helianthus giganteus - Tall Sunflower
Heliopsis helianthoides - Oxeye
Hibiscus moscheutos - Swamp Rose Mallow
Liatris spicata - Blazing Star
Lobelia cardinalis - Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis x siphilitica "Beechwood Blend"
Lobelia siphilitica - Great Blue Lobelia
Monarda didyma - Bee-balm
Monarda media - Purple Bergamot
Panicum virgatum - Switchgrass
Penstemon digitalis - White Beardtongue
Rudbeckia laciniata - Green-headed Coneflower
Rudbeckia triloba - Three-lobed Coneflower
Solidago rugosa - Rough-stemmed Goldenrod
Verbena hastata - Blue Vervain
Vernonia noveboracensis - New York Ironweed
Veronicastrum virginicum - Culver's Root

Plants for Shady Rain Gardens

Caltha palustris - Marsh Marigold
Chelone glabra - White Turtlehead
Dryopteris marginalis - Marginal Wood Fern
Geranium maculatum - Wild Geranium
Helianthus decapetalus - Thin-leaved Sunflower
Helianthus divaricatus - Woodland Sunflower
Hydrophyllum canadense - Maple-leaved Waterleaf
Iris versicolor - Northern Blue Flag
Luzula acuminata - Hairy Woodrush
Mertensia virginica - Virginia Bluebells
Mimulus ringens - Monkey Flower
Monarda clinopodia - Basil Balm
Onoclea sensibilis - Sensitive Fern
Phlox maculata - Meadow Phlox
Phlox paniculata - Summer Phlox
Polemonium reptans - Spreading Jacob's Ladder
Senecio aureus - Golden Ragwort
Sisyrinchium angustifolium - Blue-eyed Grass
Spiraea alba - Meadowsweet
Thalictrum pubescens - Tall Meadow Rue
Tradescantia virginiana - Spiderwort
Viola striata - Creamy Violet

Rain Garden Shrubs/Trees

Celtis occidentalis – Hackberry
Cornus amomum - Silky Dogwood
Hydrangea arborescens - Wild Hydrangea
Lindera benzoin – Spicebush
Nyssa sylvatica - Tupelo
Physocarpus opulifolius - Ninebark
Rhododendron meximum - Rosebay

For more information or to see pictures of these plants, please visit the Audubon Center for Native Plants website or stop in at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve at 614 Dorseyville Rd., Pittsburgh. PA 15238.

Sambucus canadensis - Common Elderberry
Spiraea alba - Meadowsweet
Viburnum dentatum - Arrowwood

Another great opportunity to buy natives: The Rain Garden Alliance is holding its Native Plant Sale on Saturday, May 5th from 9:00 – 1:00 at our ***Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve*** *located at* ***614 Dorseyville Road , Pittsburgh -- (412) 963-6100***

Conference Highlights:

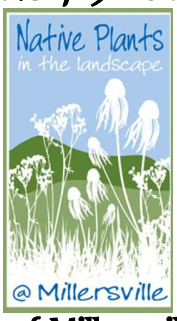
This year's conference will honor Stephanie Cohen and Nancy Beaubaire, both strong advocates for native plants throughout their careers. Fieldtrips include a visit to the Brickyards Restoration Project let by Tim Draude and the Milton Hershey School led by Tim Hoover. There will also be a workshop on creative uses of those invasive woody plants that you've been cutting out of your garden.

Connect with PNPS at the Conference:
We encourage all our members to make an effort to attend this year's conference. It is a great opportunity to meet likeminded folks and gain some inspiration. While there, look for opportunities to connect with PNPS.

Online Registration Opens March 19th for the 22nd annual

Native Plants in the Landscape Conference

June 7-9 2012



On the campus of Millersville University in scenic Lancaster County, this conference provides essential information and networking for gardeners, teachers, and students, as well as landscape, nursery, botanic garden, and environmental professionals.

Register online at
www.regonline.com/npilc2012

A Primer for Landscaping with Native Plants

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/nativeplants/index.htm

A native plant is one which occurred within this region before settlement by Europeans. Native plants include ferns and club mosses; grasses, sedges and rushes; perennial and annual wildflowers; and the woody trees, shrubs, and vines which covered "Penn's Woods" when the first settlers arrived. There are over 2,100 native plant species known in Pennsylvania.

An introduced or non-native plant is one that has been brought into the state and escaped cultivation to become established in the wild. At the turn of the 21st century, about 1,300 species of nonnative plants existed in Pennsylvania outside of gardens, parks and agricultural lands. That is 37 percent of Pennsylvania's total wild plant flora. More introduced plants are identified every year.

Six Basics of Plant Conservation

1. Protect native plant communities and minimize habitat destruction

The most important guideline is to conserve already existing areas of native vegetation as a whole, functioning unit. The easiest, least expensive, and best way to conserve Pennsylvania's plant heritage is to protect existing native plant communities from further disturbance. If disturbance is necessary, strive for minimum habitat destruction. In some cases ecological restoration may be necessary, which can include

planting native species, removing invasive introduced species, controlling erosion and loosening soil compaction.

2. Landscape with native plants

Native plant communities have been destroyed in many areas. Intelligent landscaping in parks, yards and campuses can help redress this loss. Well-chosen native plants can flourish in these landscapes. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)-Bureau of Forestry (BOF) recommends avoiding rare, endangered, and threatened plants and instead choosing native plant species which grow commonly throughout the state. If you do not want all natives, plant adapted introduced plants suited for the site, colorful annuals, or flowering plants that will not escape and become environmental weeds.

3. Learn more about native plants

Learn what plants are native in your area. There are many field guides to wildflowers that can get you started.

4. Buy nursery-propagated native plants

Most retail nurseries and mail-order catalogs now offer native plants. The more consumers request native plants, the more this supply will grow. If you want guaranteed ornamental characteristics, cultivars (named varieties) are available in some cases; for instance, A cultivar of New England Aster named 'Purple Dome', was selected for shorter height and showier flowers. Cultivars should be predictable in attributes like height, color, blooming period, or absence of seed pods/thorns--qualities many gardeners want. If your goal is genetic diversity, however, ask for straight species, not cultivars, grown from local seed sources. Plants grown from seed have much more variety than cloned cultivars.

5. Do not remove native plants from the wild

Taking native plants from the wild depletes native populations. Also, many wild-collected plants do not survive transplanting. Prevent wild-collecting of plants by making sure that plants you buy are propagated at a nursery, or by starting plants yourself from a local seed supply. Before you collect seed always obtain the property owner's permission.

6. Practice responsible landscaping techniques

The first rule of responsible landscaping is to plant the right plants in the right environment: never introduce invasive plants to your landscape that will aggressively spread off your property and invade native plant communities. They can drastically alter ecosystems and give you and your neighbors, maintenance headaches for years to come.

When landscaping with native plants it is important to choose plants that will grow well at the site: wet or dry, shade or sun, acid or neutral soil. A good trick is to notice which native plants are thriving nearby, and to use those clues to guide plant selection. Other information can be found from plant nurseries, catalogs, books, or the Internet.

For soil fertility, compost and mulch of leaves or grass clippings provide slow release nutrients. Chemical fertilizers often provide too many nutrients too quickly for native plants, and this flush of nutrients gives weeds a competitive edge. Proper site preparation begins with a soil test before applying fertilizer. Try organic pest control. Keep the soil covered to prevent weeds. Remove invasive plants nearby. Take out severely diseased plants, or ones with insect infestations. Many native plants attract beneficial insects which help control pests, so try creating habitat for "good bugs."

We invited our plant vendors to provide a little background on their businesses these are responses we have received so far.

Go Native Nursery provides wholesale and retail native trees and shrubs. Our two focus plant groups include the native food plants; and the rare, threatened, and hard-to-find species. They offer all six Pennsylvania hickory species, all three Pennsylvania spruce species, and all eight eastern magnolia species.

The contact information for all of our plant vendors is listed on page two. If you are interested in a particular plant please contact the vendors and ask they have this plant to bring – they cannot bring every plant they stock but would love to know what you are interested in seeing.

Bill Hoffman started **Keystone Native Plant Nursery** in 2001 as a part-time endeavor to market and sell high quality native flowers, grasses, sedges, and ferns. Bill wanted to use his Horticulture degree from Delaware Valley College to promote natives in the landscape. Keystone's mission is to provide expert consultation and high quality native plants at reasonable prices to both the retail and wholesale markets. They offer installation and design services for establishing native gardens and meadows. Keystone has about 3 acres of maintained stock gardens as well as a greenhouse. They propagate their stock by seeds and division from their own stock – also collecting seeds at other permitted sites. Open March through late November, they invite you to call and visit their nursery. (610)750-4186

Spring Haven Nursery is located at the foot of the beautiful Blue Mountains in the south central Pennsylvania countryside. Owned and operated by Diane and Dave Corman, Spring Haven Nursery specializes in Native Woodland Plants and Shade Perennials. The majority of their plants are nursery propagated, grown either in propagation beds or in our gardens. They have three acres of nurseries and gardens, open for your leisurely enjoyment. Plan a visit this season and find some inspiration for a new planting at your home.

The Pennsylvania Native Plant Society (PNPS) is a non-profit, membership organization that promotes the conservation of Pennsylvania's native plants and habitats through education, research, and cultivation.

Join the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society

Name

Mailing Address

Email

Phone

Date

Importance of membership: *We are seeking to grow our membership as we move forward to raise awareness and action to preserve and utilize native plants in the changing landscapes of our time. We welcome your participation and support.*

Membership Level
(Please Check One.)

- ☐ Individual $15
- ☐ Family $20
- ☐ Oganizational $25
- ☐ Businses $25
- ☐ Lifetime $200

Membership dues are paid annually with the exception of the one time payment for Lifetime Membership.

Please make checks payable to *PNPS*. Checks may be mailed to:
PNPS
PO Box 807
Boalsburg, PA 16827

PNPS is a 501 c-3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductable.