

Sassafras

Karen Smith, Nature lover and amateur botanist

*"Autumn is a second spring
when every leaf is a flower."*

Albert Camus may have been thinking of Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) when he composed that sentence. Sassafras is probably best known for its three (or four) different leaf shapes — an oval football, a two lobed right-handed mitten, a two lobed left-handed mitten, and a three lobed ghost. This lovely native tree offers four season interest. Male and female trees produce clusters of small bright yellow-green flowers in spring. In summer, the uniquely shaped leaves stand out in bright green. In late summer and early fall, the female trees produce fleshy dark blue drupes in red cups that hang from bright red stalks. Fall foliage is a showy assortment of yellow,

orange, red, and purple leaves. The attractive textured bark and branch architecture are easily seen in winter. A bonus is that almost all parts of the tree are aromatic!

Sassafras is a fast growing, small to medium sized, deciduous tree with an average height of 30 to 60 feet and a spread of 25 to 40 feet. It can be grown as a single stem specimen tree or as a large shrub or privacy screen by allowing the root suckers to grow. Sassafras grows best in moist, well drained, neutral to acidic soils. It also tolerates dry, sandy, clay, and rocky soils. This tree thrives in full sun but can also grow in partial shade or a patchy sunlit understory. Sassafras is drought resistant and low maintenance. Transplanting established trees is difficult due to a long taproot. Recommended propagation is by seed or root cuttings. Since the drupes are loved by birds, the seeds are spread easily. The seeds germinate readily, so be watchful for unwanted seedlings.

Sassafras has high wildlife value. It is an important nectar plant for pollinators and is one of the host plants for the Spicebush Swallowtail and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies, along with moths such as Imperial, Promethea, and Tulip-Tree Beauty. The drupes are eaten by a wide variety of birds such as quail, turkeys, kingbirds, crested flycatchers, mockingbirds, sapsuckers, pileated woodpeckers, yellowthroat warblers, and phoebes. The drupes and/or bark, twigs, and leaves are eaten by black bears, whitetail deer, beavers, raccoons, and foxes.

Sassafras is well suited as a specimen tree in a more formal garden setting, and it also shines in a naturalized garden or woodland edge. You just cannot go wrong with sassafras. As I write this, I am wondering why I have not planted one...or two. I am going to have to rectify that soon!



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello everyone.
I hope this note finds you well!



This is my last letter as President, and it has been a really rewarding experience. I've met so many people who share my passion for native plants and the environment. We have a great community. Our current Vice President, Sarah Chamberlain will be stepping up as President of PNPS in January of 2021 and I look forward working with her.

I am finishing my term as President in the strangest of years. COVID shut down outreach events across the state and of course, PNPS was not excluded from that. While most activities were canceled, we are excited to have some notable accomplishments:

- We awarded grants to 4 different organizations throughout the state for native plant education gardens. Read more about these projects on page 5.
- We joined the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership. This is a collaborative effort of national, regional, state and local agencies, conservation organizations, outdoors enthusiasts, businesses, and citizens committed to improving Pennsylvania's communities, economy, and ecology by planting 10 million trees throughout the Commonwealth.
- We became an Affiliate of the Native Plant Conservation Campaign, a national network of native plant societies, botanic gardens and other plant conservation organizations.
- We published a Black Lives Matter statement as it relates to increasing diversity in the gardening and plant community. Please see our website for the full statement.
- We updated our PNPS logo. Look for this new logo on future correspondence. Learn more on page 3 of this newsletter.

As we take life one day at a time now, we also look to the future! Our organization membership is increasing which gives us the funds needed to continue these great programs. There is still a lot of growing interest in the benefits of native plants. Our goal is to continue to find ways to connect people to the information they need for a successful native plant garden!

Danielle Lanagan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS • 2020

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Board Members	Falene Hamilton Prabhani Kuruppumullage Don Douglas Mason

Announcing Our Fresh New PNPS Logo: *Conveying Symbiosis with Style!*

We've hit the refresh button and updated our logo! In order to better communicate

our purpose and recharge our outreach efforts, our new logo more effectively conveys the connection between native plants and wildlife in a Pennsylvania context, in one elegant graphic.

A picture tells a thousand words, but how do you best impart those words simply, cleanly, and attractively? PNPS turned to the Pennsylvania State University's Department of Graphic Design to help us develop a fresh logo that could communicate the essence of the organization: advocating the conservation and use of native plants and, crucially, the understanding that native plants support wildlife, while identifying as a Pennsylvania organization.

Huiwon Lim, Assistant Professor in Graphic Design at Penn State, with an MFA in Graphic Design and MA in Environmental Graphic Design, generously offered his services and those of his student team to work with us to create a brand-new and improved design, pro bono. Lim and his team — Sarah Bodnar, Samantha Chung, Grace Southern, and Lucas Sterrett — took time and care to learn about PNPS, our purpose, our nature, and our needs, and to create and tweak and tweak again until we had the right design.

Lim told us, "Working with a student team of the Penn State Department of Graphic Design for the local community was a very exciting and pleasing experience. This was my first outreach project since joining the department as an assistant professor in Fall 2019. I'm so glad to share the professional experience which I've gained in the practical field over 10 years with our local community as well as with the Department of Graphic Design. This project was an ideal opportunity for students in the design team to learn how designers work in the field and to get professional experience as a designer out of class. We are ready to work further with local community projects and seek more opportunities to do so."

The conservation of native species and their habitats and the promotion of the use of native plants in the landscape has never been more critical. We hope our fresh logo appeals to greater numbers and attracts more attention to the cause.

Watch for new PNPS logo merch, with all profits, as always, benefiting education outreach and grants, coming soon!



Visit our website:

www.panativeplantsociety.org

PNPS Welcomes Two New Members to the Board of Directors

PNPS welcomed two new Board Members this winter. Andrea Ferich and Doug Mason were appointed to the Board with unanimous approval of our Executive Committee. According to our bylaws their appointments stand until a vote of the membership so you will see their names on the ballot this fall. We are thrilled to have these new volunteers engage and take an active role in the leadership of PNPS.



Andrea Ferich

Andrea Ferich is a forestry consultant in central PA. Prior to her work with private landowners designing and implementing agroforestry systems Ferich worked as Executive Director of the Penns Valley Conservation Association in Centre County conducting collaborative land-

scape-scale ecological restoration toward water quality and wildlife goals. Currently, Ferich is demonstrating and assessing multifunctional riparian forest buffer (MFRFB) opportunities in Central PA, with special focus on the production of and value-added opportunities for native nuts, berries, medicinal products,

and perennial cut-flowers. She is on the steering committee for the Keystone Tree Crops Cooperative. Ferich's graduate research in the PSU School of Forest Resources and the Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment focused on landowner values and behaviors toward riparian buffers. She has a tree nursery in Woodward PA.



Douglas Mason

Doug Mason was born and raised in Philadelphia and now lives on two acres with his wife Sonja near Gray's Centre County. He is a retired soil scientist who has worked for state and local governmental agencies as well as in the private sector and nonprofit arena. Doug has been growing natives and organic vegetables for three

years. He majored in Agronomy at Delaware Valley University and the Pennsylvania State University before pursuing a PhD in Energy Management & Policy at the University of Pennsylvania. Doug is Chair of the Sierra Club Moshannon Group, which encompasses 11 counties in central Pennsylvania, and has been an environmental activist with various organizations since at least Earth Day 1970. He is also a freelance writer, nature photographer, and fly fisherman. Doug has traveled to about 35 countries on every continent except Australia, and has lived in Thailand and Belize. He hopes to help the PNPS by drawing from his media and PR experience, which date from his U.S. Air Force service, and is organizing a native garden tour of Centre County for the late summer.

Promoting Native Plants in Our Communities

By Andrea Ferich
Owner/Forestry Consultant, Ironwood Forestry

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, I'd like to tell you what inspires me about our organization. We are at a turning point for native plants in Pennsylvania and we have the resources needed to continue to make a difference toward the PNPS mission, advocating the conservation of native plants and their habitats and promoting the increased use of native plants in the landscape.

Many invasive noxious weeds are still sold at nurseries, and many of them actually harm our birds, butterflies, and bees, and compete with native plant communities, spreading into the wild, uncontrollably. The economic cost of invasive species management, the time spent in eradication, the damage to native plants and animals, and the impact on land and water are all immeasurable. In addition to plants being treated with neonicotinoids, an insecticide linked to honey-bee colony collapse disorder common non-native landscape perennials can be toxic to wildlife. Nandina (Heavenly Bamboo), for instance, kills Cedar Waxwings

after only a few hours of consuming their berries. It is commonly planted in landscapes. Some of our neighbors treat their yards with toxic chemicals and plant noxious weeds such as Japanese Barberry or Purple Loosestrife. Many noxious plants are still sold at some nurseries, planted in some instances by landscapers because that is what the people always wanted before. Now, more than ever, the pervasive continued use of invasive noxious non-native plants with detrimental impacts on the resiliency of our native ecosystems must cease. Together, we have the tools to make a difference across the Commonwealth. Noxious weeds no longer have a place in our landscape.

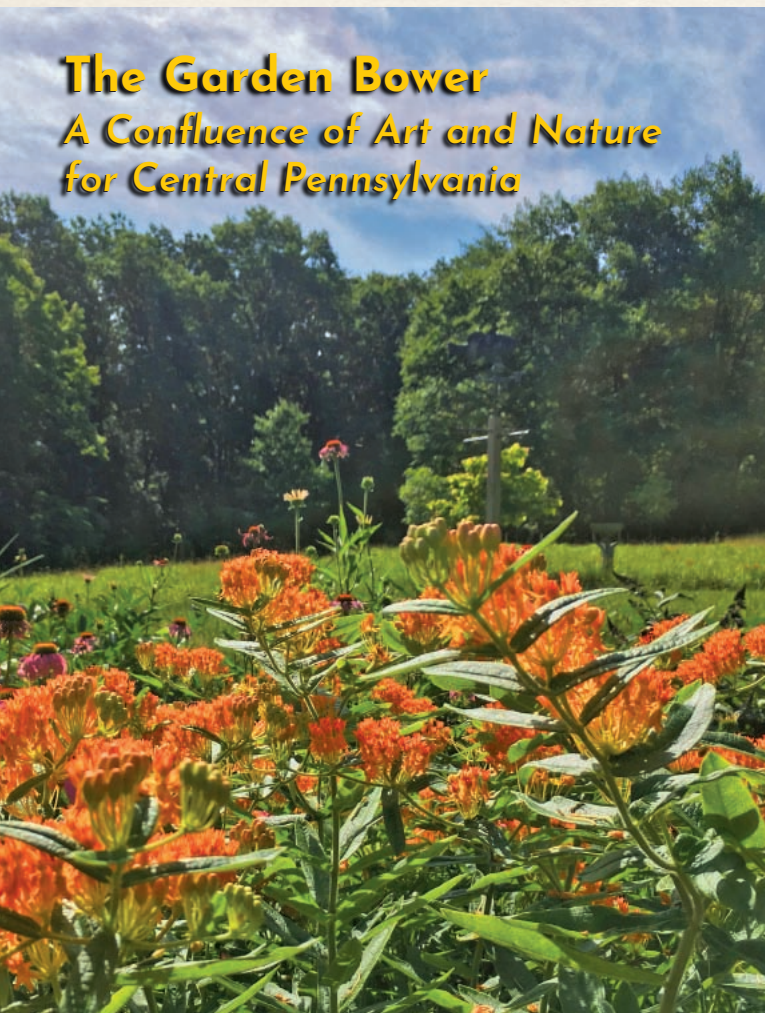
Here are two outcomes that I think are both critical and feasible as we come together:

- 1) Organize toward statewide legislation banning the sale of noxious invasive weeds
- 2) Organize statewide model ordinances for native plants in Pennsylvania through networking with diverse stakeholders

In Pennsylvania, there are diverse local townships, ordinances, institutions, home-owners associations, and cultural norms that have made it difficult or even illegal in various ways to grow native plants. Some places are far more rigid than others. As a forester, I've testified as an expert witness for my neighbors who were taken to court for establishing and enhancing a young forest of thousands of black cherry trees with meadow succession on their 1.5 acres by the local municipality. The local ordinance required every species that wasn't ornamental or purchased at a nursery to be mowed to the ground. This is not an

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The Garden Bower A Confluence of Art and Nature for Central Pennsylvania



Perry County, Pennsylvania is renowned for its peaceful, natural beauty. One couple from the Shermans Dale area plans to share their piece of Perry County in a unique way with the rest of the world. Bill and Jane Allis are creating The Bower, a 36 acre “garden” of meadows and woodland trails demonstrating the beauty and benefits of native plants enhanced with commissioned sculptures throughout. PNPS provided a \$300 grant to assist with this effort.



The Allises worked with landscape firm OvS from Washington D.C. in 2019 to develop a master plan which emphasizes the history and geography of the region in its design. They are now focused on enhancing their meadows, woods edge, and woodland property with over 100 varieties of native species to create The Bower, with the assistance of the Philadelphia native plant landscape firm, Larry Weaner Landscape Associates.

The Allises were thrilled to receive a grant from The Pennsylvania Native Plant Society which will be utilized to help with educational signage describing the plants on view.

Late summer will bring the installation of ten sculptures, selected and commissioned for The Bower. The sculptures range

in size from a huge corten panel depicting an abstraction of the ecoregions of Pennsylvania and a 185’ sinuous arched stone wall to smaller pieces in bronze and marble, all chosen to be a part of the natural landscape.

The Allis’s hope to open The Bower to the public on a limited basis starting in the spring of 2021. Visitors of all ages will be welcome to engage with the art and enjoy nature at its finest as they stroll the trails or simply sit on a bench and enjoy the views. To learn more about The Bower or plan a visit, browse their website at thegardenbower.com and follow gardenboweron Instagram.

PNPS Partners with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation Keystone 10 Million Tree Initiative

In addition to PNPS grants made available to our members, as partners with the CBF initiative trees and shrubs are also available. Eligibility will be listed on the website as well as further details.

Here’s a little bit more about the partnership from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation website.

www.cbf.org/how-we-save-the-bay/programs-initiatives/keystone-ten-million-trees-partnership.html

The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership is a collaborative effort of national, regional, state, and local agencies, conservation organizations, outdoors enthusiasts, businesses, and citizens committed to improving Pennsylvania’s communities, economy, and ecology.

The Partnership aims to facilitate the planting of 10 million new trees in priority landscapes in

Pennsylvania by the end of 2025 through expansive and collaborative:

- Partnerships that strengthen and diversify
- Assistance that builds capacity and ability
- Inspiration to preserve and protect



Bill and Jane Allis in the Garden Bower.

Homefields Care Farm



Homefields Incorporated, a CSA Care Farm in Millersville received a \$300 grant from the PNPS. We are very grateful for the money that has been put to good use. We used the money to purchase plants to use in our native plant rain garden near the entrance to the farm. This was done in conjunction with our Talks in the Fields program. I am on the board of Homefields and am the chairperson of the Talks in the Fields. This particular talk was given by Elyse Jurgen of Waxwing Ecoworks (www.waxwingecoworks.com).

The rain garden was started last year and this year we extended it up the hill into a drier area. We purchased plants from Kind Earth Growers in Ottsville PA. Here is the list of plants we used: *Heuchera villosa*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, *Symphyotrichum*

oblongifolium, *Conoclinium coelestinum*, *Penstemon calycosus*, *Pycnanthemum incanum*, *Rudbeckia fugida*, *Solidago odora*, *Sporobolus heterolepsis*, *Panicum vigatum* and *Andropogon virginicus*.

Promoting Native Plans in Our Communities

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isolated experience, is it? Fortunately, in our case, the landowners prevailed due to the borough's lack of clarity defining "ornamental."

Finding native alternatives is another strategy. Some landscapers plant invasive species because that is what people have wanted. Cultural cues such as setbacks, well-maintained pathways, regular weeding, fencing, and perhaps the use of recognizable species in a native planting can make enough of a difference to pass local code enforcement or ordinances.

There are a handful of model ordinances that describe the prohibition of noxious weeds and the endorsement of natives. We are gathering examples of these ordinances and legislation related to native plant landscaping. Links to these resources are available on the PNPS website, www.panativeplantsociety.org.

E-mail me, andreaferich@gmail.com if you are working toward the prevention of noxious weeds and encouraging native plant ordinances in Pennsylvania. Send me your stories. Visit our website for more information on model native plant ordinances, and specific related to Home Owners Associations or institutions.

www.panativeplantsociety.org/legislation-and-model-ordinances.html



Volunteers working at Homefields Care Farm.

PNPS Annual Meeting Goes Online

Join us Saturday, September 12 for our Annual Meeting. There will be a short business meeting and several fascinating presentations. The meeting is free and open to the public but you must register in advance and provide an email address so we can provide instructions on joining the meeting.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

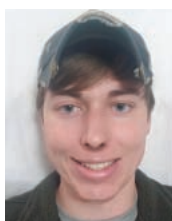


Margaret Brittingham

Professor of Wildlife Resources Penn State University

Landscaping for wildlife: Creating a backyard oasis — Are you ready to reduce the size of your lawn and attract native birds, butterflies and other wildlife to your yard? Native plants are the way to provide quality habitat no matter the size or location of your home space. This talk will cover the basics of wildlife habitat; how to landscape yards to provide food, cover, water and places to raise young; and will provide examples of some of the important and attractive native plants that provide the food and cover our native wildlife need.

Margaret Brittingham is a Professor of Wildlife Resources in the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management at Penn State University where she teaches ornithology and is a Wildlife Extension Specialist for Pennsylvania. She has developed an extension fact sheet series on Landscaping for wildlife available at <http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/wildlife/landscaping-for-wildlife>



Jonathan Hayes

Undergraduate Student
Bucknell University

Genetic diversity & connectivity of Chasmanthium latifolium (Poaceae) in Pennsylvania & the effect on conservation status



Cheyenne Moore

PhD Student
University of Pittsburgh

Baptisia australis var. australis in Pennsylvania: using natural history and population genomics to assess a state-threatened taxon



Angela J. McDonnell

Postdoctoral Fellow
Chicago Botanic Garden

Population genomics and conservation of Erigeron bulbosa (Asteraceae), an edge-of-range species in Pennsylvania

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

9:15–9:30 am — Webinar Login & Testing

9:30–9:45 am — PNPS Business Meeting

9:45–11:15 am — Jonathan Hayes, Cheyanne Moore, and Angela McDonnell
Research Topics — Botanical Studies in Pennsylvania

11:15–11:20 am BREAK

11:20–12:20 pm — Margaret Brittingham:
Landscaping for wildlife: Creating a backyard oasis

To register and
for more information
visit our website:

[www.panativeplantsociety.org/
2020-annual-meeting](http://www.panativeplantsociety.org/2020-annual-meeting)



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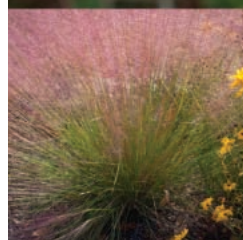


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2020 Facebook Photo Contest Winner

Fire Pink, *Silene virginica*, Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve. By Pete Swauger.



Join PNPS on Facebook: facebook.com/groups/panativeplantsociety

Note to Members:

PNPS Board of Directors Moves to Electronic Ballot

Due to COVID 19 disruptions, the PNPS Board has decided to extend the Board election beyond the Annual Meeting and to use an electronic ballot this fall.

Members will receive an email with a link and instructions.

Members who do not use email or just prefer a paper ballot will have to request a ballot by post or email. Please send your request by post or email by October 16.

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