

A Round of Applause for American Spikenard

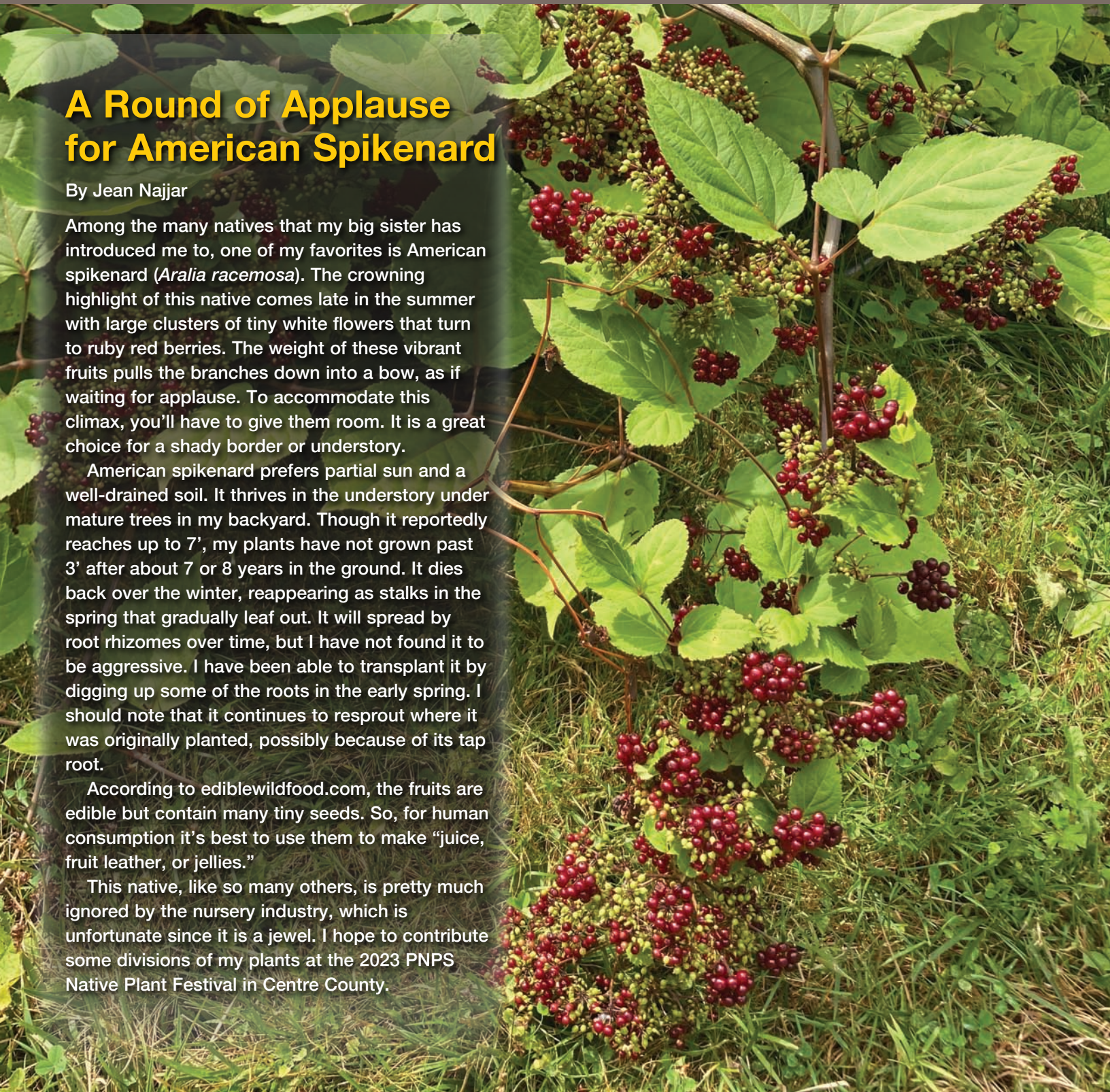
By Jean Najjar

Among the many natives that my big sister has introduced me to, one of my favorites is American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*). The crowning highlight of this native comes late in the summer with large clusters of tiny white flowers that turn to ruby red berries. The weight of these vibrant fruits pulls the branches down into a bow, as if waiting for applause. To accommodate this climax, you'll have to give them room. It is a great choice for a shady border or understory.

American spikenard prefers partial sun and a well-drained soil. It thrives in the understory under mature trees in my backyard. Though it reportedly reaches up to 7', my plants have not grown past 3' after about 7 or 8 years in the ground. It dies back over the winter, reappearing as stalks in the spring that gradually leaf out. It will spread by root rhizomes over time, but I have not found it to be aggressive. I have been able to transplant it by digging up some of the roots in the early spring. I should note that it continues to resprout where it was originally planted, possibly because of its tap root.

According to ediblewildfood.com, the fruits are edible but contain many tiny seeds. So, for human consumption it's best to use them to make "juice, fruit leather, or jellies."

This native, like so many others, is pretty much ignored by the nursery industry, which is unfortunate since it is a jewel. I hope to contribute some divisions of my plants at the 2023 PNPS Native Plant Festival in Centre County.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



As my tenure as president comes to a close, I'd like to reflect and share with you all of the Society's accomplishments in the past two years. In 2021 and 2022, we added two new chapters: the Lancaster Native Plant Alliance and the Great Valley Native Plant Society. They

join the Lehigh Valley Chapter in bringing native plant representation and education throughout the Commonwealth. Despite a two-year hiatus and unrelenting rain, we held our highest grossing plant sale in memory. We also collaborated on projects to promote native plants and reduce the proliferation of non-native invasive plants on the landscape including our Pledge for Plants and Birdy/Dirty Dozen with the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and the Noxious Weed Working Group with Wild Ones chapters in western and southeastern Pennsylvania.

As I pass the baton into the capable hands of Andrea Ferich, our next president, I'm reminded that PNPS is a volunteer-based organization. We couldn't do all of this without the dedication of the volunteers who serve on our Board of Directors as well as the many folks who help with our plant festival and other outreach activities. If you've ever thought you'd like to be a part of PNPS, I encourage you to step up and volunteer — there is plenty to do! We are looking for a vice president, grants manager, and folks to help answer our info@ email. With that, I would like to thank the Board and all of our members for placing your trust in me as president and look forward to my continuing role as past-president.

Sarah Chamberlain

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Enthusiasm of attendees not dampened by the cold and rain.

The 2022 Central PA Native Plant Festival and Sale

The 2022 Central PA Native Plant Festival and Sale arrived with a splash (literally) after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. In spite the weather conditions this year's Plant Festival was a great success. We'd like to thank all the vendors, presenters, and volunteers for braving the weather — and an especially big thanks to all the visitors who came to support us and plant natives!

Despite the rain, we had 10 very busy vendors showcasing their native plants, and thanks to these hardy souls, lots of plants found new homes. Many people took advantage of pre-ordering from our vendors to ensure they didn't miss out on that special plant they've been looking for. Our presentations were also well attended.

Mark your calendar for next year — May 6, 2023, when we will be celebrating at our new location — Millbrook Marsh Nature Center!

Following the success of our members-donated plant table at the Festival, we are adding one to the PNPS Annual Meeting on October 15!

To donate plants for the Fall sale, contact us at Info@PaNativePlantSociety.org, and to attend the PNPS Annual Meeting, please go to: www.panativeplantsociety.org/2022-annual-meeting.html

Seeking VP Candidate for PNPS

The President (P), Vice-President (VP), and Past-President (PP) form a sort of trinity of leadership for our organization. Each is a two-year term, but the VP moves directly into a second 2-year term as P, and from there into a two-year term as PP. It is a 6-year commitment but one that promotes stability, fosters team leadership, and helps to avoid burnout.

As current Vice President, Andrea Ferich steps into the role of President in January 2023, and Sarah Chamberlain will move into the role of Past President.

PNPS is seeking a volunteer to join the leadership team and fill the upcoming vacancy in the Vice President role in 2023. If you are interested, please email Danielle Lanagan and Sarah Chamberlain at info@panativeplantsociety.org

Cast your ballot on page 7

2022 Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, October 15
9:00 am–12:00 pm

Venue: Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, Hamer Classroom Building

Visit our website to register:
www.panativeplantsociety.org

Schedule:

8:00–8:45 am
Bird Walk with Doug Wentzel

9:00–9:15 am
Business meeting — Sarah Chamberlain

9:15–10:00 am
Environmental Yardistry — Kristy Gallo

10:00–10:45 am
Bee diversity and monitoring efforts in Pennsylvania — Margarita Lopez-Urbe

10:45–11:00 am
Break (with coffee and snacks)

11:00 am–12:00 pm
Native Cultivars vs. Straight Species: Results from Recent Trials — Connie Schmotzer

12:30–1:00 pm
Bring your own lunch.

1:00 am–2:00 pm
Plant Walk with Eric Burkhardt



Shaver's Creek Environmental Center

Speakers



Kristy Gallo, Artist

TITLE: **Environmental Yardistry**

Join biologist, artist, and Ohio transplant Kristy Gallo as she highlights her efforts to convert her suburban Columbus yard to native prairie. Gallo will touch on her experiences using soil as her canvas to create a

space that is both pollinator-friendly and pleasing to the eye and spirit. She'll discuss the importance of incorporating keystone plants to support a vast biodiversity within your yard and detail the techniques she used to create her award-winning native plant garden.

Kristy Gallo is an artist, biology major and recent transplant to Pennsylvania. Both art and nature have been a passion and a source of sanctuary for Gallo throughout life. Exchanging a paint brush for a spade, soil has become her new canvas. Artistically inspired and environmentally driven, Kristy is committed to protecting and restoring native ecosystems.



Margarita M. López-Urbe
Lorenzo L. Langstroth Early Career Professor
Associate Professor
Department of Entomology
Pennsylvania State University

TITLE: **Bee Diversity and Monitoring Efforts in Pennsylvania**

Margarita is the Lorenzo L. Langstroth Early Career Professor and Associate Professor of Entomology at Penn State University. She is also an extension specialist in pollinator health for Penn State Extension. Margarita was awarded the ESA Early Career Research Award in 2018 and most recently received an NSF CAREER award. As an evolutionary ecologist, she is broadly interested in understanding how artificial selection and management shape bee health and the long-term persistence of their populations in agricultural areas.



Connie Schmotzer
Coordinator for Pollinator Certification and Pollinator Preferences

TITLE: **Native Cultivars vs. Straight Species: Results from Recent Trials**

As native plants become more popular, many cultivars are being offered in the

marketplace. But do these cultivars still benefit pollinators and wildlife or are they just decorative items in the landscape? Learn about the results of several trials that have been conducted in the Mid-Atlantic and New England and get some tips on how to choose plants that will most benefit your ecosystem.

Connie has been gardening with native plants for 30 years and finds that there is always something new and exciting to learn. She worked as Consumer Horticulture Educator for Penn State Extension, where she concentrated on gardening with native plants to attract pollinators. Connie also worked as a naturalist with the National Park Service in Wyoming.

PNPS's Invasive Plant Initiative

By Sarah Chamberlain

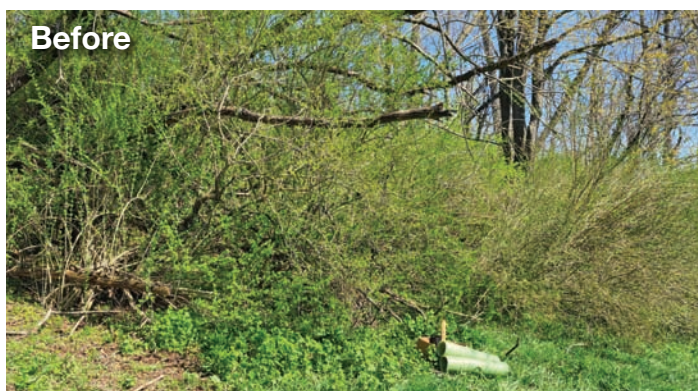
Anyone who has volunteered to remove non-native invasive plants can attest to how hard it is to get rid of them once they become established. Much time, effort, and sweat have gone into these projects for years, sometimes decades. And while it can be highly rewarding to clear areas of invasives, it's only part of the solution. One aspect of invasive control that hasn't received as much attention is stopping the spread at the source. Many of our worst invaders are still sold in the nursery trade in Pennsylvania. Like others before them, these plants often escape the homes and office parks where they're planted and end up in our natural areas.

In Pennsylvania, the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee lists plants as noxious weeds and implements federal and state eradication and control programs. Plants listed as Category B Noxious Weeds may not be distributed, cultivated, or propagated within the state. Unfortunately, the CPNWC has been slow to list plants; only Callary pear and barberry have been listed as Class B Noxious Weeds. While a good first step, the CPNWC has instituted a grace period of two years to allow nurseries to sell their stock (the grace period may be extended to five years for Callary pear).

In 2022, PNPS along with the Wild Ones Southeastern and Northeastern chapters formed the Noxious Weed Working Group with the primary goal of

pressuring the CPNWC to expand and expedite listings. If you've joined in one of our letter writing campaigns, you've helped get our message across. Since we began our efforts, the committee is moving forward to list privet and burning bush at their October meeting and is poised to do the same for shrub honeysuckles in January 2023.

In tandem with these efforts, we are looking into piloting a buyback program to lessen the impact of the grace period. Buying invasive plant nursery stock and destroying it will result in less invasives on the landscape and less invasives can provide room for more natives. Look for our next call for letters in early October and join us in the fight against non-native invasive plants!



Students from Grier School removed privet at Fort Roberdeau, in Blair County as part of the Weed Warriors project funded by the Department of Environmental Protection.



Williamsburg High School students removed Japanese stiltgrass and other invasives from tree islands along the Lower Trail, in Blair County



Roadside Attractions

By Victoria Holderer

Dogwood leaves glow red against calm October skies, ornate with berries and songbirds whose call is crisp upon the morning air. Patches of goldenrod shimmer in the fall breeze.

The sun is giving way to delicate warmth upon the skin. October reminds us that the season of harvest is upon us - *Asimina triloba*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, and even *Juglans nigra* ripe for gathering to enjoy. Fall is a season of immense beauty. Even along roadsides, we see bright violet splashes of *Symphy-*

otrichum novae-angliae ricochet among multicolored blades of *Andropogon virginicus* and *Schizachyrium scoparium*. These familiar roadside companions are often found throughout meadows, naturalizing some of the most challenging habitats and providing habitat for wildlife to prepare for the winter months.

When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may see it with love and respect. — Perhaps such a shift of values can be achieved by reappraising things unnatural, tame, and confined in terms of things natural, wild, and free. — Aldo Leopold

October bears crisp mornings, darker days, sweeter fruits, and a sense of gathering. Consider looking into what harvests are available around you: a pumpkin patch, apple orchard, or into the woods looking for wild edibles. Explore, be curious, and ask questions, always!

Reprinted from Kind Earth Growers E-Newsletter Oct. 2021: Oct. 2021.

Kind Earth Growers is a wholesale nursery in Ottsville PA, founded to meet the demand for native wetland and dry-site perennials used in ecological restoration, storm-water management, and functional landscape design.



Broomsedge, *Andropogon virginicus*

The ever-adaptable *Andropogon virginicus* is sweeping throughout fallow fields. They show off their fall colors this time of year as they shift from green to a reddish-purple. Glimmering silver in the sun, their seed heads begin to puff out, re-leasing into the breeze. They are aggressive colonizers, which is perfect for their naturalized habitats in old fallow fields and meadows. They're tolerant of high salt, drought, and wet or dry soils, making them excellent for roadside habitats. As a C4 grass, *Andropogon virginicus* prefer full sun and can handle higher temperatures. They have a full spectrum of seasonal interest — providing a green background spring through summer, changing to a red-purple in the fall, and lastly, a delicate pale orange through winter. *Andropogon virginicus* is an essential provider of cover and nesting material for birds, like the Bobwhite quail. Also, its seed provides winter food for songbirds. *Andropogon virginicus* is also a host plant to the small but beautiful Zabulon Skipper butterfly.

Illustration by Victoria Holderer.



New England Aster, *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*

Glowing violet, *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* blooms within meadows and along roadsides, providing pollinators with a late season treat. These beautiful flowers will provide us with a colorful display from August through October, waiting till late fall to set seed. They prefer full sun or partial shade and tolerate clay soils since they like moist conditions. *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* is a larval host to the pearl crescent butterfly caterpillar and the checkerspot butterfly caterpillar. They provide nectar for bees, hoverflies, skippers, and butterflies — specifically monarch butterflies during their late-season migration. Also, this plant contains medicinal qualities which were historically used to treat poison ivy and sumac rashes, fevers, and stomach ailments. This plant was used by Native Americans, like the Cherokee, Mohawk, and Chippewa, for various purposes, such as attracting game, reviving unconscious patients, and relieving excess mucus.

Illustration by Joe LaMent.



Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*

Similar to *Andropogon virginicus*, *Schizachyrium scoparium* is commonly found in open meadows and along roadsides. However, they are much more adaptable to soil type and moisture levels, handling clay, loam, sandy, or rocky soils. Furthermore, *Schizachyrium scoparium* is tolerant of average to arid soils, various soil pH's, black walnut, drought, deer, heat, humidity, and pollution. That being said, *Schizachyrium scoparium* grows best within full sun and drier soils, which helps them stand upright. Every fall, they begin to change color from a green to vibrant purple-red. They are slightly shorter than *Andropogon virginicus* and have a more robust clumping habit, with delicate and smaller leaves and seeds. *Schizachyrium scoparium* is the larval host for the wood nymph butterfly caterpillar, and the seedheads are essential winter food for songbirds and aid in winter habitat for other small mammals.

Illustration by Victoria Holderer.

Growing Greener Garden Tour

A PA Master Naturalist Pilot Project Showcasing Native Plant Gardens in the State College Area



From left: PMN volunteers Dave DeCapria, Rosemarie Stover, Kristen Devlin, and Mary Wujek.

By Kristen Devlin, PA Master Naturalist Volunteer

The inaugural Growing Greener Garden Tour, a one-day event that took place on July 30 in four residential yards in the State College area, provided more than 50 community members the opportunity to see firsthand examples of the use of native plants in home landscapes as well as other habitat-friendly landscaping practices. The goal of the tour was to inspire and empower people to adopt a more habitat-friendly approach to landscaping in their own yards.

The tour was organized as a service project for the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist (PMN) program, a statewide partnership initiative that connects people with their local ecosystems through intensive natural science training and local conservation service work. As a Master Naturalist trainee, I planned the tour in partnership with PNPS, Sustainable Centre Region, and

ClearWater Conservancy. PNPS Board Member Jean Najjar served as an advisor to the project, and also as one of the garden hosts on the tour.

The gardens on the tour were selected to provide examples of habitat-friendly landscaping in a variety of contexts, from relatively new installations to a 20+ year work-in-progress. Each of the gardens reflected the unique style of the gardeners who tend them and demonstrated how beautiful this approach to landscaping can be. To learn more about the gardens on the tour, visit the Growing Greener website: <https://sites.google.com/view/-growing-greener/>.

In addition to Najjar, several other PNPS members contributed to the event's success: Jean Yeatman was one of the garden hosts; Diane Albright was a tour guide at the Yeatman property; and Doug Mason staffed a PNPS table at the Najjar property, sharing information, seeds, and literature with visitors. Other garden hosts include Jennifer Rand and Greg Ziegler. PMN volunteers Dave DeCapria, Rosemarie Stover, Jodi Vender, and Mary Wujek helped interact with visitors and guide tours. I'm so grateful to everyone who pitched in for generously sharing their yards, time, experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm with tour participants.

Based on feedback gathered in-person and via a follow-up survey sent to participants, the tour was well received and there is significant interest in continuing this type of interactive educational event in the future. Plans are underway to organize a second Growing Greener Tour in State College in 2023. If you would like to volunteer your garden or time for the next iteration of this event, please contact Kristendevlin@gmail.com.



Attendees in the Najjar Garden.



Attendees in the Yeatman Garden.



redbud
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PNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT • 2023-2024 TERM

NEW CANDIDATES



Kristen Devlin is a PA native and longtime gardening enthusiast who first became interested in native plants after reading Doug Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope*. Her desire to see and share examples of landscapes that incorporate native plants and habitat-friendly gardening practices led her to connect with PNPS to co-organize the State College Growing Greener tour, as a Pennsylvania Master Naturalist volunteer. Kristen manages communications for the Penn State-based Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, funded by the USDA to help address issues of rural development.



Victoria Holderer is a horticulturist, ecologist, and avid hiker, who graduated from Temple University with a B.S. in Horticulture, focused on native plants in the cultivated and natural landscape. She works at Kind Earth Growers, a native plant nursery in Ottsville, PA, as a community outreach leader, writing their bi-weekly newsletter and organizing community educational events on environmental topics. She has worked on various environmental restoration projects in woodlands, riparian corridors, and coastal dunes. She also leads educational hikes through the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the PNPS and is the administrator of the PNPS social media accounts.

BALLOT

Cast your vote for six directors.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doug Mason | <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria Holderer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merrill David | <input type="checkbox"/> Danielle Lanagan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kristen Devlin | <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Najjar |

Write in

**Please cast your vote
and return your ballot to be counted:**

- **By Mail:** PNPS, PO Box 807, Boalsburg, PA 16827
- **By Email:** info@panativeplantsociety.org
- **In Person:** Cast your ballot in person at the 2022 Annual Meeting on October 15th.

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Winner of the PNPS 2022 Facebook Photo Contest & Facebook Update



Photo contest winner:

Monongahela Barbara's buttons, *Marshallia pulchra*,
photo by Mark Bowers, Fayette Co., PA, July 2022

Facebook Update by Victoria Holderer

You may have noticed in the past few months a new page for the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society on Facebook. To respond to our growing number of participants and environmental stewards involved via social media, we realized some online organization was in order!

In addition to our Pennsylvania Native Plant Society Discussion Group, we have added an official Pennsylvania Native Plant Society Page. This distinction is meant to help condense streams of communications and create a one-stop location for finding PNPS important announcements, events, and so on.

We encourage everyone to keep sharing their beautiful native plant gardens, species, and interesting finds on the PNPS Discussion Group, and refer to the Official PNPS Page for important notifications for announcements, events, and so on.

Our official PNPS Facebook Page can be found under the name 'PA Native Plant Society' or @panativeplantsociety. You can also find us on Instagram under @panativeplantsociety! Tag us in your native plant photographs, we look forward to hearing from you!

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/PAnativeplantsociety

Facebook Group:

www.facebook.com/groups/panativeplantsociety