

# The President's Corner



Dear Friends,

As president of NPSNJ I get to have a lot of interesting conversations about native plants. Every day I talk with folks who want to learn more about native plants – how to incorporate them into their own gardens and forests, but also how to preserve our native plants across the state on public and private lands. Back in April, I spoke with the executive director of NOFA-NJ (North-east Organic Farming Association of New Jersey) about a possible collaboration to encourage farmers across the state to incorporate more native plants in their hedgerows and forests. This spring, I have also spoken to leaders of other state Native Plant Societies about who they are and what they do. These various conversations have had me pondering the full breadth and width of NPSNJ.

The mission of NPSNJ is to promote the appreciation, protection, and study of New Jersey's Native Flora. If you think about it, that is a broad mission statement, but one which we embrace in all we do. Our conference speakers, webinars, chapters, and workshops educate folks far and wide about the unique beauty and diversity of native plants, the roles they play in the environment, and the complex issues involved in conserving them. At our spring conference back in March, we learned about native bee specialists, native plants hiding in plain sight in the Meadowlands, and the critical role of soil and fire (!) in plant ecology. These topics all fall under the 'umbrella' of NPSNJ.

Adding native plants to gardens is certainly a way to bring native plants back to areas where they belong – or, to quote Doug Tallamy, "bringing nature home." But NPSNJ is certainly not just about gardening. Recently a member of our legislative committee (Laura Bush) testified in Trenton, and countless members of NPSNJ reached out to their members of the state assembly to help the NJ Invasive Species bill



unanimously pass the Assembly. I am so very excited about this and have high hopes that it will sail through the Senate and on to the governor's desk. NPSNJ will keep an eye on this and do what we can to make this happen. Banning the sale of invasive plant species in NJ will slow the ongoing assault our native species face across the state.

At the end of the day, I wound up thinking about just who we are. We are gardeners – yes, but also farmers, foresters, restoration ecologists, professors, landscapers, nurserymen and women, biologists, entomologists, botanists, and students of the wild from every walk of life. Native plants can be found in our backyards, but also in our forests, along our roads and rivers, in our public parks, on our farms, and even sprouting up between pavers right underneath our feet.

This summer, look beyond your gardens and your neighborhood – seek out some natural areas to go for a hike and see what you can see. NPSNJ is just starting to work on compiling an updated list of great places to see native plants (and the wildlife that is so dependent upon them). Let us know what great spaces you discover.

All the best,

Randi V. Wilfert Eckel, PhD

# Membership Update, 2023

By Kazys Varnelis  
*NPSNJ Vice President  
of Membership*

I am delighted to write to you as your new Vice President of Membership. We have over 1,100 members this year and easily on track to surpass last year's level. I've taught architecture at Columbia University, Penn, and MIT, I've served on a variety of non-profit boards related to architecture over the years, but I am more excited about what we are doing at NPSNJ than anything I've ever done.

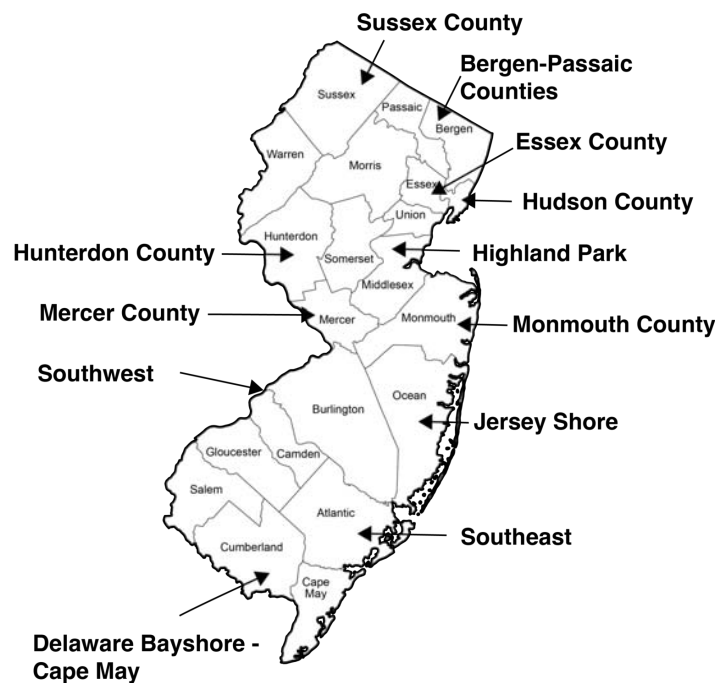
New Jersey may look small in an American context, but it's roughly the same size and population as Israel. We have a remarkably diverse set of ecoregions and a diverse population as well: we are the fourth most culturally diverse state in the Union. As my Jersey-loving daughter points out, the bagels and pizza are better here than anywhere else in the country and in my town alone, we can go to restaurants specializing in cuisines such as Ethiopian, Lebanese, Haitian, Indian, Thai, Italian, Jewish-American, Israeli, Chinese-Indian, Szechuan, Cantonese, African-American, Brazilian, Syrian, Greek, Colombian, Spanish, French, and Puerto Rican (I'm sure I've missed a bunch). Like any community, we have our difficulties, but that only means we need to find ways of working together to make things better.

The pandemic was a nightmare, but the widespread adoption of videoconferencing technology means that the NPSNJ can now serve the membership more effectively than we ever dreamed. There's no question to me that the in-person activities that our chapters offer are our lifeblood, but our monthly Wednesday webinars have hundreds of viewers from across the state and our hybrid conference drew us together both on-line and in person. The NPSNJ's new Web site, <https://npsnj.org>, is now one year old and is the cen-

ter of our statewide membership services, listing the dozens of events at chapters, containing lists of native plants by county, recently updated lists of nurseries that carry natives, our manual on how to build a rain garden, and will be hosting and updating more information all year long.

Over the next two years, I look forward to finding ways to give members more for their contributions at a statewide level. One long-requested change is that, starting with 2023 memberships, memberships will be twelve months long, not for the calendar year. So if you pay for a membership in July, it will expire in July, not at the end of the year. One weak point, currently, is membership management. Having grown to over 1,000 members, it's time for us to find better ways to manage our members, but this isn't easy, and we don't want to make mistakes (even if we do, from time to time, sorry about that). If any of you have experience with non-profit membership management that integrates with Constant Contact and Wordpress, send me a note. NPSNJ also needs to engage with broader activities across the state, from advocacy to

conservation and I am excited to work with other board members and NPSNJ membership to make expand our activities. Finally, we are hoping to build bridges to other native plant societies across the country and kindred organizations in our state. Together, we can make a difference.



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1,000 members, it's time  
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# State of the Chapters



*There are many ways that the chapters fulfill the NPSNJ Mission: Some offer hikes and trips to natural areas, meetings can take place in a member's garden, members volunteer to clean-up and manage garden areas*

## By Elaine Silverstein *NPSNJ Chapter Vice President*

Chapters are essential to the growth and strength of the Native Plant Society of NJ. Through the local chapters, we reach out to communities across the state, make an impact in those communities, and, of course, find potential new members. As of now, spring 2023, we have 12 active chapters, including two that were formed or revitalized within the last few months; in addition, folks from two more counties have recently contacted us about forming new chapters, and I am working with them to help them get started. If you or someone you know is interested in helping to start a new chapter, please contact me either at [chapters@npsnj.org](mailto:chapters@npsnj.org) or through the Bergen-Passaic chapter at [bergenpassaic@npsnj.org](mailto:bergenpassaic@npsnj.org). If you are a NPSNJ member who is not affiliated with a local chapter, please get involved!

Those 12 chapters carry out many different activities, including webinars, hikes, garden tours, work sessions, plant and seed swaps, and plant sales. Tabling events, where we hand out literature and talk to people at local green fairs or other community activities, are a vital

way of reaching out, spreading our message, and attracting new members. So far in 2023, our chapters have already held or participated in over 50 events.

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My predecessor as Chapter VP, Deb Ellis, developed chapter guidelines and standardized the list of materials that each chapter is entitled to. In addition, she worked with the board to increase the annual budget for each chapter to \$1,500. Chapter leaders are free to use this money for any items related to NPSNJ's mission, such as speaker fees, purchase of plants or seeds, or admission fees for venues.

I've been involved in NPSNJ for over 10 years, primarily as founder and then co-leader of the Bergen-Passaic chapter, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. I've helped find speakers, given talks, helped find sites for garden tours, led events, tabled at green fairs, publicized our activities, vis-

ited schools, and reached out to other groups, among many other tasks. I know that each chapter can make a big difference in its local area.

My goals for my term as Chapter VP are to do the same work on a larger scale: to help form new chapters, to serve as a resource to current and prospective chapter leaders, and, above all, to form connections between the chapters. There's a great deal that chapter leaders can learn from each other! Chapter leaders and prospective leaders will have three opportunities to meet this year, in two Zoom meetings and a summer in-person get-together. One Zoom meeting took place in March, and the summer get-together is tentatively planned for Sunday, August 13, in Hunterdon County. We are planning a pot-luck lunch, a short meeting, and an optional hike at a nearby park. But the main goal will be to meet in person and share ideas.

*As leaders, we all play a vital role in furthering NPSNJ's mission: promoting the appreciation, protection, and study of New Jersey's native flora.*

# Monmouth Chapter Celebrates Successful First Year

By Ann Sherwood  
*Monmouth Chapter*

The first year of the Monmouth County Chapter has been wildly successful by any measure! By the end of our kick-off zoom meeting on May 9, 2022, we had an email list of 40 and a volunteer steering committee with diverse experience. Among the first things the Steering Committee did was to define our mission as appreciating, protecting, and studying native flora in NJ. In just one year, our email list has expanded to 425, and from the start, our biggest problem has been restraining ourselves from taking on too many projects.

Starting the Monmouth County chapter was the idea of Kim Rowe, a Brielle resident and member of the Native Plant Society Board. "I was so enthusiastic about native plants that I wanted others to share the experience. So, when I retired, it was the first thing I decided to devote time to," Kim disclosed.

Our first in-person meeting was a screening of the film "Wild in the Garden State," produced and filmed by Sarah Galloway. Sarah, a retired videographer from the American Museum of Natural History, documented her adventures converting her Monmouth County yard from typical suburban plantings to beautiful native gardens.

It was an inspiring start to our programs. The year has been filled with diverse opportunities to learn and meet other native gardeners. Whether it has been behind-the-scenes work such as arranging for venues, creating games for the booth at the Monmouth County Fair, the fabulous Facebook page to publicize what we are doing, or brainstorming about programs, members have supported one



*"I was so enthusiastic about native plants that I wanted others to share the experience. So, when I retired, it was the first thing I decided to devote time to,"*

Kim Rowe

another to make our programs enjoyable, educational, and service-oriented. Having members of the steering committee affiliated with the Monmouth County Park System has allowed us to build a strong

*Seed planting workshop with Randi Eckel, President, NPSNJ*

relationship with the parks. We've scheduled tours of native gardens at Huber Woods and Scudder's Preserve, helped plant 3000 natives at Clayton Park, supported native seed and plant swaps, and enjoyed an evening moth walk and a presentation about goldenrods. This month we will be doing invasive plant identification and removal



*Walk with Park Naturalist, Jason Goldman, Big Brook Park, Marlboro*

along the Henry Hudson Trail. In June, everyone is invited to a guided tour of the Monmouth County Master Gardeners native garden.

In February Randi Eckel, the current President of the NPSNJ, held a seed-starting workshop that was so over-registered, she agreed to hold a second workshop on the same day. We have had presentations on native cultivars and native garden design. We even managed to squeeze in a holiday party and seed swap!

As we move into our second year, we are fortunate to have a new member of the steering committee to serve as an outreach coordinator. Although we staffed tables at several events this past year, we did not have the capacity to say yes to all the invitations. Our outreach volunteers are already gearing up for the Monmouth County Fair in July. Popcorn and cotton candy, anyone?



# New Mercer Chapter is in Full Bloom!

By Stephanie Hill  
*Mercer Chapter Co-Leader*

It was a packed house at the Tulpehaking Nature Center in Hamilton on May 3rd when the new Mercer Chapter held its kick-off event. Enthusiastic NPSNJ members and non-members alike came from all over Mercer County – and beyond – to attend the Chapter's inaugural meeting. After sharing some examples of the kinds of great activities other NPSNJ chapters have held, Mercer Chapter steering Committee members facilitated breakout discussions among those gathered, focusing on answering three key questions:

- 1. How can the Mercer Chapter contribute to the community?**
  - Creating and maintaining native gardens in public and private spaces
  - Tabling at community events
- 2. What do you want to get from NPSNJ?**
  - Plant/seed swaps
  - Garden tours
- 3. What do you think is the most important native plant issue in our area?**
  - Lack of awareness of the importance of native plants
  - Invasive species



Some other great ideas included programs on landscape design with natives, basic botany and plant identification, and lawn alternatives.

Based on the ideas generated at the kick-off, the Steering Committee is in the process of planning for future events, which may include:

- Seasonal newsletters to highlight what should be happening in your native plant garden at various times of year.
- Workshops on native plant propagation including seed collecting and sowing. These workshops will likely be offered to members only, due to space constraints.

- Creating a process to collect and share short “garden story” videos for the community to share experiences with Native gardens - the good, the bad and the ugly.
- Collecting outreach materials and supplies and preparing to attend events with volunteer advocates to build a broader recognition of the importance of Native Plants in the community.
- Exploring avenues for creating and sharing an information repository on Native Plant topics.

So be on the lookout for more from the Mercer Chapter, and don't forget to sign up for our newsletter!

# Southwest Chapter Happenings

By Tara Sullivan

*Southwest Chapter Leader*

It's been an eventful springtime for the Southwest Chapter. First and foremost, we've been renamed!

Formerly the Rancocas Chapter, we decided on Southwest to better reflect the area we serve: Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties.

**Earth Day weekend was our big debut with the new name and we got a lot of positive feedback at our tabling events.**

On April 21st and 22nd, we tabled the native plant sale at the Pinelands Alliance, which was hugely popular. On April 22nd, we also had a table at the Collingswood Green Day, where we made a lot of new friends. A few people even said they were NPSNJ members but they had never seen us "in real life" before! On April 23rd, we tabled the Chesterfield

Green Fun Fair. Suffice to say, that whole weekend we were out in the community making noise, and letting people know that the Southwest Chapter is active and alive.

**On May 9th at the Collingswood Public Library we hosted a talk on establishing wildlife habitats** presented by Stephen Coan, a landscape designer, artist, outdoorsman, and adventurer. Several dozen people attended and it was super encouraging to be so well received by the community. We can't thank Stephen enough for donating his time and being wildly entertaining. He's a great resource for folks in South Jersey. Check him out at [www.coandesign.com](http://www.coandesign.com).

**On June 3rd we co-sponsored the Marlton Garden Tour** with the Evesham Green Team, Pinelands Direct, and the Garden Club of

Marlton. One of the gardens on the tour belongs to our very own Mike Jacobs! The tour drew a lot of interest, and it was a relaxed and lovely day of garden walks and talks.

As for the rest of the summer, we have some plans in mind: maybe a Zoom presentation, certainly another garden tour, and maybe a field trip. There's a lot cooking with the Southwest Chapter as we grow and we encourage anyone in South Jersey who wants to contribute, especially in the greater Philadelphia area, to reach out to us at [southwest@npsnj.org](mailto:southwest@npsnj.org). Our goal is to have enough regular members for monthly meetings and to always have a range of events planned that focus on the wonders and benefits of New Jersey's native plants!



*Formerly the Rancocas Chapter, we decided on 'Southwest' to better reflect the area we serve: Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties*





# Jersey Shore Chapter 2023 Events Past and Upcoming

By Becky LaBoy,  
Jersey Shore Chapter  
Co-Leader

In February we offered a webinar introducing the Jersey-Friendly Yards Resident Certification Program. This home gardening program encourages healthy landscaping for a healthy environment. The webinar reviewed how home gardeners could take steps to get their yard certified as "Jersey-Friendly" using the tools and resources on the Jersey-Friendly Yards website. Steps include ensuring a healthy foundation of soil, im-



plementation of water conservation practices, and incorporation of native plants in the landscape, which benefit both people and wildlife.

**In March several Jersey Shore Chapter members were joined by Southeast Chapter members for a Pruning Workshop**, hosted by Duncan Welch, horticulturist and owner of Goshen Gardens, in Cape May Courthouse. Duncan shared the 5 D's of pruning: Dead, Damaged, Diseased, Duplicating, and Deformed, and showed representations of each. He offered tips on good safety habits when pruning, recommended blades, then modeled pruning practices and allowed

participants to put their newly acquired skills to work on some of the farm's shrubs including *Prunus maritima*, *Hydrangea arborescens*, and *Magnolia grandiflora*. Duncan also provided tips on propagating shrubs and trees by digging up suckers and by planting cuttings, such as with *Sambucus canadensis*. One lucky attendee took home a handful of elderberry cuttings to grow her own shrubs!

Our April Native Plant ID Walk & Talk was thwarted by rain, but we had excellent weather for our May **Native Container Garden Workshop**. Jason and Kelly Austin of The Little Plant Company, shared their expertise by introducing participants to a selection of thrillers, fillers and spillers to choose from. The different growing patterns of the plants offer varied form and function within the container. The thriller is the main attraction, giving the planting a central focus.



**Thrillers:**  
Goldenrod  
Black-eyed Susan  
Aromatic Aster

**Spillers:**  
Rosey Sedge  
Appalachian Sedge

**Fillers:**  
Ornamental Onion  
Mountainmint  
Butterflyweed

Once you select the thriller, build around it with fillers. Fillers provide mass to the pot, compliment the thriller, and offer alternative color and texture. Around the edge of the container, add some spillers. Greenery that spills over the side softens the hard edges of the pot. Our June 25th trip to Webbs Mill Bog was canceled due to flooding from beaver dams. Our guide, Expert Botanist Jason Hafstad (NJDEP Preserve Manager for NJ Natural Lands Trust) agreed to do a botany tour at the nearby Wells Mills County Park in the Pine Barrens (See separate article).

**We have two home garden tours planned for July and August.** Jersey Shore Chapter co-leader, Kelly Balon and her husband Peter, will be showcasing their home gardens and landscapes. We toured their garden last summer and since then they have added some new gardens and hardscape areas they would love to show off! The duo continue to replace lawn with gardens and have added even more species of native trees, shrubs, and perennials to the landscape. In August we will tour the home gardens at Skip and Angela Byrnes' property in Freehold. They have planted a variety of native perennials, trees, shrubs, grasses and vines. Many of these showstoppers have been grown from seed by Skip who has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to propagating natives. Some favorites include Ninebark, Joe-Pye Weed, Coral Honeysuckle, and Eastern Columbine.

# NPSNJ-June 25, 2023 Trip to Wells Mills County Park

By Becky LaBoy,  
*Jersey Shore Chapter  
Co-Leader*

Although the original destination for our June field excursion was Webbs Mill Bog, the local beavers thwarted our plans by flooding the area, causing it to be impassable. Our guide, Jason Hafstad, kindly agreed to offer a guided walk at nearby Wells Mills County Park, which encompasses 900 acres. It is located within the Pine Barrens and contains a mix of habitat types including Atlantic White Cedar swamp lowlands, and Pine and Oak uplands. Miles of color-coded hiking trails traverse the park, offering opportunities to immerse yourself in nature and enjoy its beauty.

Plants of special interest observed by our group included Rose pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*), a beautiful pink-colored orchid which we would have seen in mass at Webbs Mill Bog, along with Pitcher-plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) and Round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*). Another curious plant we observed is Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), which Jason noted is native to New Jersey, but not native to the Pine Barrens. The patch of Mayapple we observed had been planted years ago. Mayapple is an herbaceous perennial that grows in colonies, in shady woodlands. All parts of the plant except the ripe fruit contains the chemical podophyllotoxin, which is toxic when consumed in large quantities. Jason explained the difference between sedges, rushes and grasses: "sedges have edges, rushes are



round, grasses have joints when the cops aren't around." He found examples of each, including Collins' sedge (*Carex collinsii*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), and Poverty rush, and showed us the different feel of the stems, with the sedges having pointy edges when rolled between the fingers, versus the round feel of the rush. The grasses have distinct "joints," or solid nodes, along the otherwise hollow stem.

We are grateful to Jason Hafstad for sharing his wealth of botanical knowledge with our group. He is the Preserve Manager for NJDEP's NJ Natural Lands Trust. Before this, he was the botanist for the Endangered & Threatened Species Unit of the NJDEP.



Jason pointed out a number of native plants of special interest that included Rose pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*) and Round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*).



# Sussex Chapter's Lusscroft Farm Garden Project

By Alana Steib,  
*Sussex Chapter*

The Sussex Chapter's project of restoring the Sister Moon Garden at Lusscroft Farms at the southern end of High Point State Park had continued in 2022. Mary Stone of Stone Associates Landscapes was kind enough to join us to look at the work that has been done and suggest other improvements. In October, Sussex Chapter members and members of The Friends of Lusscroft Farm planted 150 native

plants in the previously weeded and cleared public demonstration garden, where 75 asters donated by the Sussex County Community Garden Horticultural Program had already been planted. Additional planting (and weeding!) continued this Spring. Chapter members cleaned out another section of the Sister Moon garden on May 4, 2023 in preparation for the planting of additional donated plants this Spring and Fall.

## *Sussex Chapter members at Lusscroft Farm*





# Essex Chapter



*Cam Kanterman and John Suskewich at Bloomfield Earth Day Celebration*



*Suzie Yamarone in Roseland at Essex County Earth Day celebration*



*Sarah Paulsen at East Side HS, Newark*



*Tree ID Walk led by Ginger Van Ryzin of the Great Swamp Watershed Association*



## NJ NATIVE SHRUB: Virginia Sweetspire *Itea virginica*



*A plant  
for  
all seasons*

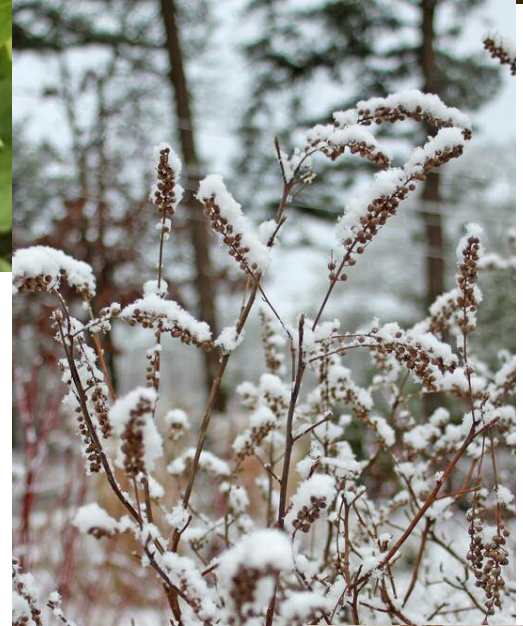


John Suskewich  
*Essex Chapter*

Native plant gardeners prize *Itea virginica*, Virginia sweetspire, not just for its late spring fragrant bottlebrush flowers but for its multi season interest: winter's colorful twigs, summer's green luster, and garnet glory foliage in fall. Autumn is when it becomes every shade of red wine: Merlot, Medoc, Margaux, Marcillac, Moulin-a-Vent.



Its ultimate height and spread is usually in the 3-to-5-foot range. The flowers make pollinators blissful and it thrives anywhere except in very dry shade. Need a plant for a wet area that kills everything else? Try sweetspire, problem probably solved.





# NPSNJ Independent Garden Center (IGC) Committee

By Kim Rowe  
*Monmouth Chapter Leader*

What's the number one complaint of native plant enthusiasts? Over and over, NPSNJ members say, "I can't find the native plants I want at my local garden center." In response,

**IGC Committee Objective:**  
**Gain widespread distribution of native plants in New Jersey IGCs to make native plants locally accessible to gardeners**

The IGC Committee was formed about 6 months ago with the objective of gaining widespread distribution of native plants in New Jersey IGCs. This will make native plants much more easily accessible to gardeners of all types, including those just getting started with natives. IGC owners are businesspeople who are concerned about sales revenue and the bottom line. Traditionally, they may have resisted bringing in native plants because they weren't sure their customers would buy them. But things are changing quickly, native plants are in the news, and IGC management is becoming aware of the growing native market.



**Phase one of the NPSNJ IGC initiative** is to build a business case that will demonstrate the opportunity that IGCs are currently missing. Gardeners all over the state are currently purchasing thousands of natives from native plant sales, mail-order nurseries, and native plant nurseries, including many outside of NJ. There is a large and expanding market for native plants, and the committee plans to show IGCs that if they stock natives, customers will come.

The business case so far includes interviews with retailers and wholesalers, an anecdotal summary of the number of plants sold through non-profit organizations, a summary of key market research from several sources, and an important survey of native plant buying habits conducted by NPSNJ earlier this year. We plan to share our results with NJ garden center owners in August and September.

**With the business case almost complete, the committee is entering Phase 2: Implementation.** In this phase, we will be writing press releases and publications, pulling together Zoom events, researching and contacting industry organizations, and developing educational materials.

If you would like to join this exciting and dynamic project, please contact Kim Rowe at [monmouth@npsnj.org](mailto:monmouth@npsnj.org).

## Members of the IGC Team

Kim Rowe,  
Bobbie Herbs,  
Tom Bender,  
Marilyn Scherfen,  
Laura Deykerhoff,  
Sarah Posluszny,  
Kim Correro,  
Lorraine Freeney,  
Phaedra Singelis

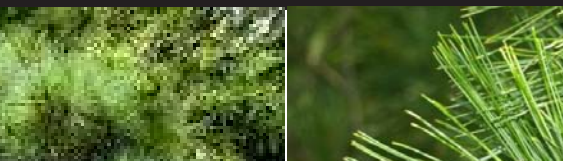
## New Jersey's Potential Native Plant Buyers



Based on the 2023 National Garden Survey



# NJ NATIVE TREE: Eastern White Pine *Pinus strobus*



John Suskewich  
*Essex Chapter*

*Pinus strobus*, the Eastern white pine, is New Jersey's own Tannenbaum, which means, strictly speaking, "fir tree" but more loosely "holiday evergreen." As a specimen, white pine achieves a resinous grandeur, as the accompanying photos of an awesome tree on our residential block in Montclair shows. With incessant pruning, it can be turned into a hedge, which seems cruel when it wants to attain such grandeur.

After 5 or 6 years, the young pine starts to produce cones that provide food for wildlife. And its blue green needles, 5 or so inches long and as soft as my kitten's fur, provide winter shelter for birds and squirrels.

In colonial times and the 19th century, white pine was an important source for "naval stores," which I learned about in 5th



grade history class and never heard the term again. Naval stores are liquid products derived from conifers. They include rosin, tall oil, pine oil, and turpentine. And, white pine has always been an important timber tree.

Several diseases can afflict this handsome native, such as blister rust, which is the reason mail order nurseries may not ship gooseberries or currants, the alternate hosts of this malady.

Thriving in cool moist conditions, white pine may have to shift its range out of our area when climate change stress makes survival in a warming New Jersey difficult. Ah! In our venerable Ramapo Mountains, we see a single white pine soaring over the surrounding hardwoods as if aware of its own coniferous majesty.

## References

davesgarden.com.11/13/12,

# NPSNJ Advocacy Committee Update on Invasives Bill

*June 3, 2023. NJ Bill to Ban Invasives Appears Poised for Passage*



By Laura Bush  
*NPSNJ Advocacy Committee*

Although the New Jersey bill that would ban the sale and distribution of invasive plant species (S2186/A3677) passed the assembly in May, it did not make it through the final steps of passage in June, before the summer break. It will be taken up again in the fall, when it should be passed without difficulty.

After sitting dormant for months last year, the bill began moving last December when it was scheduled for a hearing of the New Jersey Senate Environment and Energy Committee, prompting the Invasive Species subgroup of the New Jersey Forest Stewardship Task Force to get involved. The forest task force had convened in February 2022 by Senator Bob Smith, who is also a primary sponsor of the invasives bill. A key recommendation in the task force's report was that more effort be made to control invasive species.

The Invasive Species subgroup prepared a proposal to strengthen the bill and the Native Plant Society of New Jersey (NPSNJ) signed on in support. Members of the subgroup, including Mike Van Clef, the program director of the FoHVOS New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team, testified at the hearing, as did a member of the NPSNJ Advocacy Committee. There was coverage in multiple news outlets in NJ. At the December hearing, the bill was ad-

vanced out of committee with quick but incomplete amendments, including allowing sterile cultivars (submitted by the NJ Nursery and Landscaping Association, NJNLA) and creating a permanent NJ Invasive Species Council. The revised text was welcomed, but needed multiple important refinements to make sure it would be fair, effective, and efficient.

The subgroup then expanded to include additional stakeholders, including NPSNJ Advocacy Committee members and representatives of NJNLA and the New Jersey Farm Bureau. This combined group of environmentalists and industry stakeholders met extensively to agree on a final proposed set of revisions to the bill, which were submitted to the bill sponsors to be edited into the legislation.

Ahead of the assembly vote, subgroup members activated their networks, and many environmental groups, including NPSNJ, put out action alerts to their members. Various townships passed resolutions in support of the bill. Van Clef, along with Jeanne Fox, published an opinion piece in the *Star Ledger*.

On May 25 the NJ Assembly approved A3677 with a vote of 74-0-0. That version of the bill included almost all the requested amendments, but the working group submitted a few important corrections. Because of the June focus on the state

budget, however, the senate sponsors were not able to make the final fixes to the bill in time for passage in June. The bill will have to be taken up again in the fall. Once the senate sponsors make the final fixes and move the bill through the senate for senate approval, the bill will go back to the assembly for agreement on the final corrections, and on to Governor Murphy's desk for signature.

After enactment, the Governor will establish the Invasive Species Council, which will update the NJ Invasive Species Management Strategy from 2009 and develop recommendations for more effective and efficient invasive species management. The list of 29 regulated species will be prohibited for propagation or importation after one year and for sale after four years, allowing growers to deplete their inventories.

NPSNJ members and friends can find advocacy updates on the new advocacy page of the website, and may contact the committee at [legislation@npsnj.org](mailto:legislation@npsnj.org). New committee members are welcome!



*NPS NJ Advocacy Committee co-chair Laura Bush getting ready to testify before the New Jersey Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee in May 2023.*



# Beech Leaf Disease Spreading in NJ



potentially severe consequences for our ecosystem. We've already lost chestnuts, elms, hemlocks, and ashes, how much more can our ecosystems stand?

BLD is believed to be caused by an infestation

of microscopic nematodes, *Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*, brought in from Japan that lead to a disease, which begins with dark bands appearing between leaf veins (you can see if your leaves have it by looking up through them when backlit with sunlight). As the disease progresses, leaves become brown and leathery, leading to defoliation and eventual death of the tree within two to seven years. First discovered in Ohio 10 years ago, BLD has since spread across several states in the Midwest and Northeast, with the first reported cases in New Jersey emerging in Bergen and Essex counties two years ago. As of now, the disease has been observed in 12 New Jersey counties. Last year I had no BLD. This year, I do.

Unfortunately, as of now, there is no known cure for BLD. However, research is ongoing, and some promising results have been found by treating beech saplings with a phosphite fertilizer product twice a year, Polyphosphite 30 (if it's not available, other phosphites seem to work). This is what my arborist recommended. I don't like to use chemicals on

my property and there's no guarantee this will do more than keep the trees going a while longer, but I'm going to do whatever it takes to save my beech trees. My arborist believes that next year there may be a more effective treatment. If you have beech trees, call an arborist now (not a dude with a chainsaw who says he knows trees, but a certified arborist) and have them come out and take a look at your trees. Stacie Phelps, Municipal Forester for the town of Millburn, notes that it's critical to avoid other environmental stresses, like



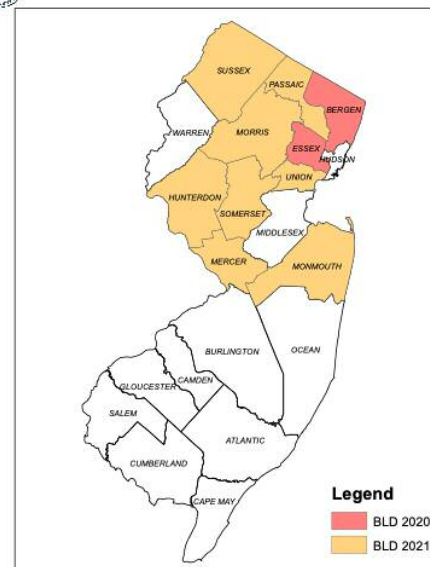
*Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*, microscopic nematode

By Kazys Varnelis  
VP, Membership

I had an unpleasant surprise last week. My arborist came to my Montclair property for a spring visit, and he pointed out that my beech trees all had Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). Beech trees, *Fagus grandifolia*, are the oldest, largest trees on my property and provide shade to my gully full of native spring ephemerals as well as habitat for birds and mammals. According to the DEP, there are some 12 million beech trees in New Jersey, more than the number of people. The National Wildlife Federation identifies beech trees serving up to 134 species of butterflies and moths. BLD puts my Beech trees as well as the state's trees at risk with



## Beech Leaf Disease Detection Map



drought. Beech trees require approximately five gallons of water per square yard under the dripline (the outer circumference of the branches) every week.

# Nature Poetry Workshop Offered by NPSNJ

By Kim Correro

*Co-Leader, Hudson Chapter*

For National Poetry Month, NPSNJ offered members the opportunity to experience a Nature Poetry Workshop. It was led by Ann Wallace, PhD, who is the Poet Laureate of Jersey City and Professor of English at New Jersey City University. She is also the host of "Saturday Morning Poetry" for the Native Plant Society of NJ that airs on the Society's Instagram page.

The workshop, which ran for four Saturdays in April, invited participants to explore a variety of sense-and memory-based methods for observing nature. Each week began with a short warmup exercise and then led into exploration of a poetic form, including georgic poems, haibun, ode, and elegy. Participants composed and shared early drafts of poems during the sessions, and each writer submitted a completed poem for in-depth discussion and workshopping with the group.



Wallace explained that "Every one of us holds memories that are deeply rooted in nature, and with the right tools and practices we are able to tap into those sensory memories and give them voice." She went on to state, "The challenge with writing about nature though is how to let joy and beauty sit alongside conflict and tension, as we live in a time when our natural environment is fraught and needs our active protection. Each week I was impressed by how deftly the participants found ways to allow both realities to live on the page."



## Fledgling

*by Kim Correro*

Your grasp holds tight like a talon on my finger,  
Softly you call in the night, again and again and again.

A glimpse of moonlight through your window,  
We are comforted by the rustle of the trees.

You suffered my sweet boy. I know, you know  
I know.  
Is it a hawk you ask flying overhead?

How did time go by so fast? Cuddling up,  
I keep careful watch until you are gone

**Kim Correro**, Co-Leader of the Hudson Chapter:  
"The class was filled with serious writers and most had experience. I was a bit intimidated at first but Ann's style of teaching made us dig deep within ourselves and our memories that brought beautiful work out in all of us. We all wished the class could have lasted another four weeks!"





## Standing In Our Yard

*by Mary B. Patterson*

Wind waves green with fresh spring grass and  
cow manure  
Pink tulips tossing in a dance.

My head, no higher than her hip  
Steadying myself, I clutch the scratchy  
polyester of my aunt's pant leg.

Already knowing tulips should not be taken  
I point to low purple and yellow petals.

*Look, they have smiling faces.*

They are pansies  
You may take those.

*I may take those?*

Bending down,  
She clips.

They won't be hurt  
Instead, more will come.

Reaching up, I grasp them  
Tickling my nose with their sweet, scented  
smiles.

And more will come.

**Mary B. Paterson**, Jersey Shore Chapter: "For our first assignment, we were asked to recall our oldest memory of nature. Just imagine the joy of remembering what it was like to be just five years old and learning that you could grasp the sweet smell of nature in your hand."

## Beach house haibun

*by Tara Sullivan*

The beach house is a sea glass green and  
the breeze whispers through the salt-laced  
screen-in porch. The air is full of warm  
ocean smell. Inside, it is dim, with paintings  
of tall ships on the walls. One has a black  
sky and hazy moon, the ship rearing back  
on an illuminated wave. A little girl stands  
on a sofa to get a better look as the floor-  
boards of the house creak, expand, con-  
tract. Her tuna sandwich draws seagulls to  
the rocky front yard.

Those ships, house, and girl  
Progress and time washed away  
Bigger things are next.

**Tara Sullivan**, Leader of the Southwest Chapter: "The poetry workshop helped me slow down and appreciate nature and my thoughts on nature in a different way. And I truly appreciated the critiques from my fellow students!"

## How to Eradicate Invasives

by Tara Sullivan

Gather your tools  
A spade  
A digging fork  
Maybe fire, poison  
Laser beam eyes  
And the Internet  
Wear tough clothes  
Put your life to work  
Go to the place  
Where invasive species grow



Go everywhere  
Calculate and examine your  
options  
Can I eat this?  
Would it be better to suffocate it?  
Tear through their roots  
Kill them all  
Like life does  
Replace with life  
That life took  
Ferns and wood lilies  
Red vestments of cardinal flowers  
The hermetic pussy willow

Now wait  
For the pollinator second line  
Mourning cloak butterflies  
Like little whipping flags  
Processions of ruby-throated  
hummingbirds  
The electric thrumming of bumble bees  
Recognize them  
As psychopomps  
With their hidden tools  
To extract you  
Roots and all  
From the earth  
So that they may live

## Kindred

by Ann E. Wallace

Sometimes I think I must have spent  
a lifetime as a girl searching  
alone and in silence for toads  
and salamanders, hoisting stones  
and peering between blades of grass  
in the woods across the street,  
where my brothers, deeper in, dug  
for antique bottles and other treasures,  
where later they stashed their contraband  
magazines in the adjacent cemetery.

Of course it wasn't a lifetime, but when  
you're seven or eight, and seeking solace  
far from the endless noise and clatter,  
loves have the power to consume and the sense  
of a lifetime is skewed. I mean, what  
could I know of decades before  
I had hit my double digits? I mean, how  
else might I imagine time when each  
summer stretched far longer  
than the ten weeks of the calendar?

For honesty, for clarity, I could just tell you  
that I adored toads and the smallest animals  
hiding, or well, you might just call it living,  
out of sight and under my nose  
in the woods across the street.

But then you would have no idea  
the intensity of a small girl who spirited  
each hot and humid day away from her family  
of boys, who found delight in the hunt  
for creatures smaller than she, creatures  
with the innate good sense to stay tucked  
away as rough siblings staked their claim  
on that spit of woodland, a girl who loved  
bumpy toads the color of dry New England  
earth and the slick backs of salamanders  
with their finely wrought toes so dearly  
that she would hold them in her palms  
for just a moment then gently place  
them back in their homes, satisfied  
that they had survived another day.

**This poem by workshop instructor Ann E. Wallace was drafted alongside the workshop participants during the first session and then published in *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*. You can read more of her work online at [AnnWallacePhD.com](http://AnnWallacePhD.com).**