

# The Native Plant Society of New Jersey

Winter 2026



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Cover photo, Ambler Arboretum, by Kathleen V. Salisbury, horticulturist, educator and presenter at our 2026 Annual Meeting and Conference.

NPSNJ President Kazys Varnelis, Editorial Advisor;  
Hara Rola, Editor; Marissa Bauman, Design and Layout

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Most people I meet in the Society came to native plants through Doug Tallamy's books and their concern for pollinators. My path was different. As a historian of architecture, I knew quite a bit about landscape architecture, which is often more about reshaping the land than understanding it—but I hadn't given real thought to plants since I was a kid. Then, in 2011, we bought our first house, here on First Mountain in Montclair. Disasters struck almost immediately. I had to think about resilience and change, and that's how I began working with native plants. It's also why I chose it as the theme of this year's annual meeting, *Ecologies in Flux*.

I grew up in Chicago, then spent my teenage years in the Berkshires. My father was a painter and wanted a big place to show off his works, but of course, as an artist, he had no money, so he bought something of a ruin. There was an overgrown landscape designed by Ferruccio Vitale, who was also responsible for Skylands (the New Jersey Botanical Garden) and Longwood Gardens, and my father loved restoring it. I wasn't as thrilled by mowing the lawn or trimming the hedges. Instead, I delighted in wandering through the nearby old-growth hemlock forest and seeing the skunk cabbages, the trilliums, and myriad ferns coming up in the spring, along with the mountain laurels blooming in midsummer.

The Halloween Snowstorm hit months after we moved in, then Sandy hit the next year. Both took down trees; Sandy felled a massive red oak that must have been over a hundred years old. I found a network of insect borings under the bark of the green ashes that fell. Supposedly, there were no emerald ash borers in the area yet, but that's what those borings looked like to me. Things were changing rapidly because of our damage to the ecosystem. It was time to think seriously about the landscape and its capacity for resilience.

I found three books at the library. The title of Ken Druse's *New Shade Garden: Creating a Lush Oasis in the Age of Climate Change* appealed to me. I already lived on a woodland edge, so why not build a shade garden? I was also drawn in by the photography in Rick Darke's *American Woodland Garden*. Finally, Larry Weaner and Thomas Christopher's *Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can Be a Source of Environmental Change* taught me both practical lessons—how to build soil, how to use a green mulch to crowd out invasives—and a philosophy of change: letting plants improvise in the landscape and find their own way.



There have been new challenges since then. The deer population in Essex County is running rampant thanks to our extermination of their natural predators and the end of millennia of deer hunting. Our beech trees are threatened by beech leaf disease. The town dug up the native plant showcase in front of my property twice to install ghastly LED lighting. There I am, with a truckload of wood chips from my arborist to restore the awful soil they put back.

These are exactly the kinds of challenges *Ecologies in Flux* will take on. Larry Weaner will speak on ecological landscape design, Dr. James Shepherd of Yale on how invasive plants and biodiversity loss fuel the spread of tick-borne disease, and Kathleen Salisbury on the Ambler Arboretum's recovery from a catastrophic tornado. Many of us have similar stories about coming to understand resilience through the landscape, whether through invasive plants overrunning our gardens or extreme weather destroying what we built. The old approaches no longer work. It's time for a new aesthetic, with native plants.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kazys Varnelis'.

**Kazys Varnelis, PhD**

President, Native Plant Society of New Jersey  
npsnj.org

2026

The Native Plant Society of New Jersey

# ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

## Ecologies in Flux: RESTORATION, RESILIENCE, AND DISEASE IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE



Scan the QR  
code or click to  
Register today

Join us **Saturday, March 7, at Ocean County College** (or online via Zoom) for our annual symposium exploring restoration, resilience, and disease in a changing landscape. This year's speakers bring perspectives from ecological design, infectious disease ecology, and arboretum management. In-person tickets include lunch, a Zoom link, and early access to conference videos. Zoom tickets will also include early access to conference videos. In-person tickets are for members only.



### Planning for the Unplanned: Integrating Ecological Restoration Techniques and Landscape Design

*Presented by Larry Weaner, FAPLD*

Using native plants is increasingly accepted in landscape architecture and design. Knowing how to incorporate and work with the ecological patterns and processes associated with these plants, however, is less well understood. Explore ways to integrate ecological restoration techniques and traditional design aesthetics to create beautiful, diverse landscapes.

Larry Weaner, FAPLD, founded Larry Weaner Landscape Associates in 1982 and New Directions in the American Landscape in 1990. His nationally recognized work combines horticulture, landscape design, and ecological restoration, and spans more than twenty U.S. states and the U.K. He has been profiled in national publications.



### Why are Tick-Transmitted Infections Spreading? Biodiversity and Infectious Diseases

*Presented by Dr. James Shepherd*

A dense, biodiverse native plant garden might seem like a haven for ticks—and thus disease—but long term ecological patterns in the Northeast suggest a different story. James Shepherd will explore how human land use—suburban expansion, species invasions, and habitat fragmentation—has reshaped disease ecology, fueling the rise of Lyme disease and other zoonoses.

Dr. James Shepherd is an Infectious Disease physician at Yale University School of Medicine and Yale

New Haven Hospital, specializing in Tuberculosis and other Mycobacterial infections. He teaches Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and other global processes changing the world of infectious disease. Dr Shepherd has experience as a molecular and cell biologist, a physician, and a public health specialist.



### Silver Linings & Lemonade: Creative Responses to a Catastrophic Storm

*Presented by Kathleen V. Salisbury*

In September of 2021, an EF2 tornado catastrophically damaged the 187-acre Ambler Arboretum of Temple University. After losing more than 500 trees in their horticultural collection and hundreds more in the natural spaces, Kathy was faced with the question: how do you respond to an event that has destroyed your living laboratory in minutes? After a brief history of the Ambler Arboretum, Kathy will discuss what has been learned during the process of recovery that continues to this day.

Kathleen V. Salisbury is a passionate horticulturist and educator. Since she was young, exploring the pine barrens of her southern NJ home, Kathy has been fascinated and delighted by the natural world around her. Never losing that passion, Kathy earned a BS in Ornamental Horticulture and Environmental Design from Delaware Valley University and an MS in Public Horticulture Management from the University of Delaware, where she was a Longwood Fellow. After more than two decades in various horticultural and educational roles, from adjunct professor to zoo horticulturist, Kathy is an award-winning educator and public horticulture leader.

# 2026 Plant of the Year Nominations

By John Suskewich,  
NPSNJ Essex Chapter



Click or scan the  
QR code to vote!

Voting is open to all active  
members and will take place  
**in advance** of the conference.

## Backyard

### "New York Ironweed" *Vernonia noveboracensis*

In the autumn this plant can be absolutely covered with Monarchs. Its valuable, very late blossoms provides essential high-nutrient food for those dawdling butterflies that got a late start on their southward migration. They are readily attracted to the rayless flowers which are vibrant purple, and held prominently at the end of tall stems that can reach upwards of six feet. Giving Ironweed the "Chelsea Chop" will make it more manageable, and cutting the height makes it bushier, which triggers a fuller floral display. The alternate, serrate leaves are about six inches long. Deadheading of the spent flowers will prevent New York Ironweed's tendency to self-seed over-exuberantly. On the other hand goldfinches have been known to make a picnic out of that luxurious display of seeds. William Kennedy's great 1980s novel *Ironweed* was about a character who was rugged and resilient and who blossomed late, just like this essential native plant.

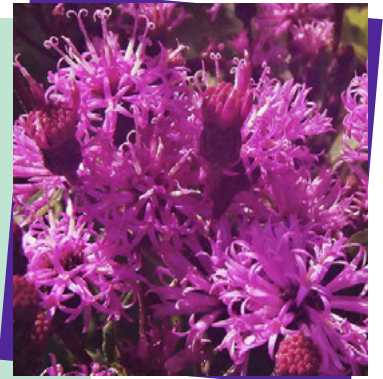


Photo credit:  
Hubert and Millie Ling



Photo credit:  
Andy Rola

### "Common Sassafras" *Sassafras albidum*

This medium sized tree with the sibilant, impudent name, Sassafras, is a New Jersey native with real character. The bark is deeply furrowed. The leaves are distinctive, and varied: some are unlobed, some are two lobed like mittens, some are three lobed, like an emu's toes. They color up spectacularly in the fall. Sassafras is shrubby when young, but then matures to a dense, pyramidal shape and can grow to 60-80 feet. Greenish-yellow flowers, the color of Mountain Dew, on female trees ripen to clusters of dark blue berries. Kids munching on the twigs will notice a distinctive root beer taste, and root beer used to be made, maybe it still is, from the root bark of this cool native tree. Insects munch on it too! Sassafras is pollinator important, and is another host plant for the magnificent Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly, which looks like an airborne stained glass window.

### "Virginia Sweetpire" *Itea virginica*

Plant this medium-sized, suckering, deer-resistant shrub for yearlong interest in the garden. White, fragrant bottlebrush flowers appear in early summer. Lustrous, mid-green, disease resistant foliage turns garnet, burgundy, bordeaux, and claret in the fall and stands out for weeks. And then the twigs retain their vivid red-purple hue through much of the winter. The sweet smelling flowers attract a variety of bees, butterflies, and wasps and is a vital nectar source for adult insects. This is a versatile native woody plant that thrives in New Jersey and will succeed in full sun to part shade and moist, humusy soil.



Photo credit:  
Hubert and Millie Ling

## “Bunchberry” *Cornus canadensis*

At about six to ten inches high, Bunchberry is like a diminutive version of the flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, New Jersey’s “State Memorial Tree.” A shrubby, deciduous ground-cover, *Cornus canadensis* has similar dogwood-like flowers – an umbel surrounded by prominent white bracts – and leaves– elliptic, glossy, and dark green. As the species name implies, this plant is found in the northern regions of North America, even Greenland! So this tells you it will not thrive in areas that have very hot summers, and climate change may be contracting its range even farther north. In New Jersey, it can be seen in moist, acidic, coniferous woodlands and fens, in places like Sussex County’s Pahaquarry Township and thereabouts. Bees and flies are its primary pollinators. The Craisin-red berries were used by many First Nations people for food and medicine. They also appeal to birds and many mammals such as bears, deer, mice.



Photo credit:  
Hubert and  
Millie Ling



Photo credit:  
Mt. Cuba Center:

[mtcubacenter.org/trials/carex-for-the-mid-atlantic-region/carex-woodii-woods-sedge/](http://mtcubacenter.org/trials/carex-for-the-mid-atlantic-region/carex-woodii-woods-sedge/)

## “Wood’s Sedge” *Carex woodii*

Sedges are crucial, versatile native plants. Wood’s sedge is one of the most handsome and useful species. Similar in habit and appearance to the Pennsylvania sedge, it is regarded as superior to that species because of its denser, blue-green foliage and better weed suppression as noted by Mt. Cuba, where it was awarded “Top Performer.” The flowers are fluffy straw-colored spikelets that float over the mounded leaves. People who find sing-songy mnemonic devices useful should add this one to their collection to help them distinguish among the various graminoids: “Sedges have edges, rushes are round, grasses have nodes all the way to the ground...” Wood’s sedge is a superior wildlife plant. It is a larval host for the Broad-winged Skipper; other insects find cover in the mat of foliage, and small animals consume the nutlets. For those who detest the classic American power-mower lawn, it may even prove to be useful as substitute for Scott’s Turf-Builder.

## “Great White Trillium” *Trillium grandiflorum*

This beautiful, beloved native woodland wildflower was once fairly common in New Jersey, especially in the Highlands, but it has become rare and endangered due to habitat loss and deer overpopulation. From a thick rhizome rises an eight-to-twelve-inch stem that unfurls to release 3 ovate leaves (a pedantic botanist would call them “bracts”) and 3 virginally white petals. The whiteness is distinctive, lyrical. Mary Oliver wrote of its impact “the hillsides grew white with the wild trilliums...I believed in the world...” Great white trillium is one of the Northeast’s “spring ephemerals,” plants that emerge, flower and set seed in spring before the tree canopy shades the forest floor. Although pollinated by bees, wasps, and flies, it has the endearing quirk of myrmecochory, seed dispersal by ants. Seed propagation is not for those already “long in the tooth” as for the plant to attain flowering size can take many years. Division of the rhizome is a much faster, more fruitful method.



Photo credit:  
Hubert and  
Millie Ling

**PRESIDENT’S NOTE:** This year all three rare and endangered nominees – Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), Great White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), and Wood’s Sedge (*Carex woodii*) – are commercially available, which is a credit to native plant nurseries but also a point of contention, since some botanists argue that selling state-endangered plants undermines their conservation status, especially when that stock may not represent local ecotypes and could compromise the genetic integrity of our remnant wild populations. All three are globally secure and common further north – they’re endangered in New Jersey because we sit at the southern edge of their ranges, and as the climate warms, these species may disappear from our state entirely.

# The Mighty Oaks

By Hara L. Rola, NPSNJ ENews Editor

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*The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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Photo credit: Saddler's Woods Conservation Association

Strong trees, I believe, are a symbol of resilience. Our native oaks are a good example of strong, sturdy trees that can weather storms, and carry on well despite the overabundance of human development and the undermining effects of climate change. In my yoga practice, I love to do the “Tree Pose” (*Vrksasana*) and imagine myself a tall, strong arboreal entity such as an oak. The pose helps me to cultivate my own strength to be resilient for daily living.

I know of oaks in NJ with a current life span well into the hundreds and they are still standing having been lucky enough to avoid the tree cutter’s saw. One of them is a White Oak (*Quercus alba*) that is over 400 years old located in the 25 acre old growth forest, “Saddler’s Woods,” Haddon Township. Another one is a Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*) that I grew up with in Point Pleasant, and it is still standing at more than 250 years old in the front yard of my childhood home. The advanced ages of these two trees are astounding since oaks live on average between 150 to 250 years.

Oaks are not only resilient as tree entities but they support resilience within their own ecosystem. Each individual oak can support hundreds of beneficial insects as well as several avian and mammalian species. The sheer number of native oak species speaks of a resilience that equates to “strength in numbers.” New Jersey has approximately 19 native oaks with red and white species being the most common. The US has approximately 90 species, and worldwide there are approximately 500 species. That’s a lot of oak variety!

Oaks provide food, habitat and shelter for an array of resident creatures. Individual trees host over 500 species of butterflies and moths such as the rare Oak hairstreak butterfly (*Satyrium favonius*) and the Oak leafroller moth (*Archips semiferanus*). They also support thousands of other insects such as beetles, gall wasps, sap-suckers, bees and flies. There are a number of birds and small mammals that dine on acorns, they include: Bluejay, Tufted Titmouse, Woodpecker, Grackle, Fox, Gray Squirrel, Chipmunk, and Rabbit. Even in death, their hefty hardwood trunks take many years to break down, providing continued opportunities for wildlife habitat and food sources.

Unfortunately, the resilience of oaks can be undermined by excessive trimming, which can lead to Oak Wilt, a deadly disease of the tree’s vascular system. The peak season for Oak Wilt is April through July or August. So, it’s advisable not to trim an oak during that time. Other primary threats to oaks in the US are: invasive pests, drought, fire suppression, and soil compaction from human activity.

Despite all the natural and human induced threats to oaks, I like to focus on their inherent strength and supportive properties. They inspire me to summon my own inner strength to overcome discouragement about environmental issues as well as other life challenges. And, they remind me that we can all emulate the mighty oaks in terms of nurturing our natural world.



# Revegetation and Resilience

By Irene O. Sabin, Hunterdon Chapter

Revegetation is used to restore lands damaged by natural disasters such as floods, storms, wildfires or human mismanagement of agriculture, construction, mining, and clear cutting of forests.

Revegetation with native plants in their hardiness zones and natural habitats has many advantages. Through thousands of years of evolution, native plants have developed resilience for weather conditions, timing for growth and dormancy as well as beneficial interdependence with other plants and wildlife. For example, wildflowers that have to undergo drought conditions in their habitat, like purple coneflowers, grow robust roots deep into the ground searching for groundwater. Those roots also help to stabilize soil and minimize erosion.

Seeding costs for native or non-native plants are about the same, but native plants are more cost effective once they are established because they require less maintenance. They are resilient to extreme weather, need less watering, fertilization and pest management resulting in lower replacement costs.

Native plant revegetation projects are usually successful when the right plants are chosen for their ecological, environmental and practical advantages. Soon, an ecosystem starts to flourish.

Revegetation projects often take place in large areas of public land, like national parks, which are separated from each other by many miles. In his book, *Nature's Best Hope*, Dr. Doug Tallamy (University of Delaware) suggests that homeowners use native plants to make their yards and suburbs into "homegrown national parks and wildlife corridors." The book lays out a plan on how this can be accomplished.



Photography credit: A.F. Sabin

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*PFW Creator Jon Gibbons Describing a Pollinator Bed at Patrick and Mary Lou Underhill's Eco-Yard.*

# Interview with Jon Gibbons, Creator of the Patchwork for Wildlife Project and Founder of the Nonprofit Candide's Garden in Lake Como

By Hara L. Rola, NPSNJ ENews Editor

**HR:** Besides the recent proclamation of support for your project, Patchwork for Wildlife (PFW), by Point Pleasant Mayor Robert Sabosik, what support has been received from the other participating towns?

**JG:** The *Patchwork for Wildlife* project allows for communities to craft their own approach to garnering support for their programs. First, the Environmental Commissions and Council Liaisons in Lake Como (Peter Ventrice), Belmar (Caitlyn Donovan), and Point Pleasant Beach have been championing their programs. Next, Red Bank's Mayor William Portman has shown his support by starting a native plant hedgerow along his property, while Councilors Nancy Blackwood and Laura Jannone have manned their shovels in restoring the Native Plant Demonstration Garden in the pilot *Patchwork* area. And now, Point Pleasant Mayor Robert Sabosik and Council have issued a proclamation supporting the *Patchwork* team's efforts! This is wonderful support from leadership for what is basically a community-focused program.



*Red Bank Volunteers and City Councilors Working in Native Plant Demonstration Garden*

**HR:** Currently, I noticed that the towns involved in PFW are: Lake Como, Belmar, Red Bank, Point Pleasant Beach, and Point Pleasant. Are there any new towns that have been added to the list?

**JG:** These are the communities currently implementing the *Patchwork for Wildlife* program. We are working together to refine the "multi-town" approach, so that more communities can be added as smoothly as possible. If all goes well, we hope to add one or two more communities in the Fall.

**HR:** Can homeowners that don't live in one of the current PFW designated towns participate in the program as individuals?

**JG:** *Patchwork for Wildlife* is community-focused, aiming to build synergy and connections within an area, for instance, by fostering neighbor-to-neighbor interactions. We also follow the progress, by advising

and recognizing homeowners as they transition from a conventional to an eco-landscape. So, there just aren't the resources available to provide this service outside a given community. However, there are some programs, some even national, where a homeowner can achieve certification and purchase a sign recognizing their effort, such as from the *Xerces Society* and *National Wildlife Federation*.

**HR:** At this time, collectively, how many homeowners are participating in the program? And how many of them have received certificates?

**JG:** There are two basic kinds of recognition: Homeowners who have already taken some measures to improve their yards, and those who have taken action as a result of the *Patchwork* program. We recognize those in the former category to show our appreciation and to encourage them to continue making environmental improvements. On the other hand, the areas created as a result of the program count toward the *Patchwork's* goal of "creating an acre of eco-friendly landscape, one yard at a time." This is a tangible measure of the program's success. There are about 240 certificates in all, with over 40 being new efforts. As of last year, Lake Como had reached about 70% of an acre!

**HR:** What are the different certificate levels that are awarded?

**JG:** To keep things simple, there are just three levels of Certificates of Appreciation:

**Entry** – One or Two Measures.

For instance, quite often, a planted bed and a semi-pervious driveway. Hopefully, these folks are now on a journey toward eco-friendliness. Just planting a native plant or tree earns this certificate!

**Distinctive** – Extensive Measures.

These yards tend to be obvious even at first sight – they use native plants to support wildlife and pollinators, create shade to reduce blistering summer temperatures, install pervious surfaces to reduce the volume and toxicity of stormwater reaching bodies of water, avoid unnecessary watering and chemical applications, and re-invest nature's products in the yard. In other words, *Distinctive* yards make up for any environmental shortfall caused by the need for human habitation. They also show the way for others.

**Beneficial** – Multiple Measures.

These are the yards which fall in between those



*PFW Example Certificate for Brian Donahue, Publisher of Red Bank Green*

two easily-identifiable levels above. We are seeing a lot of environmental improvements being made in this group.

**HR:** What does a homeowner need to do initially to participate in the program?

**JG:** Without listing the contacts in all the towns, just get in touch with me, and I'll pass the word: email Jon Gibbons at [candidesgarden1761@gmail.com](mailto:candidesgarden1761@gmail.com).

**HR:** Besides the environmental benefits of landscaping to create wildlife habitat, does the *PFW* project bring people together and create a unique community of ecologically focused neighbors?

**JG:** Lake Como has hosted an Environmental Garden Tour, which featured Distinctive level and some more illustrative *Beneficial* level yards. The residents were "at home" to explain their yards. Beautifully, here were neighbors talking to neighbors about their yards, swapping information on native plants, saving seeds, replacing concrete with pervious surfaces, etc. Quite a number of visitors signed up for the *Patchwork* program. The significance is that like-minded folks became aware of others, and some environmental synergy has been developed in the local community.

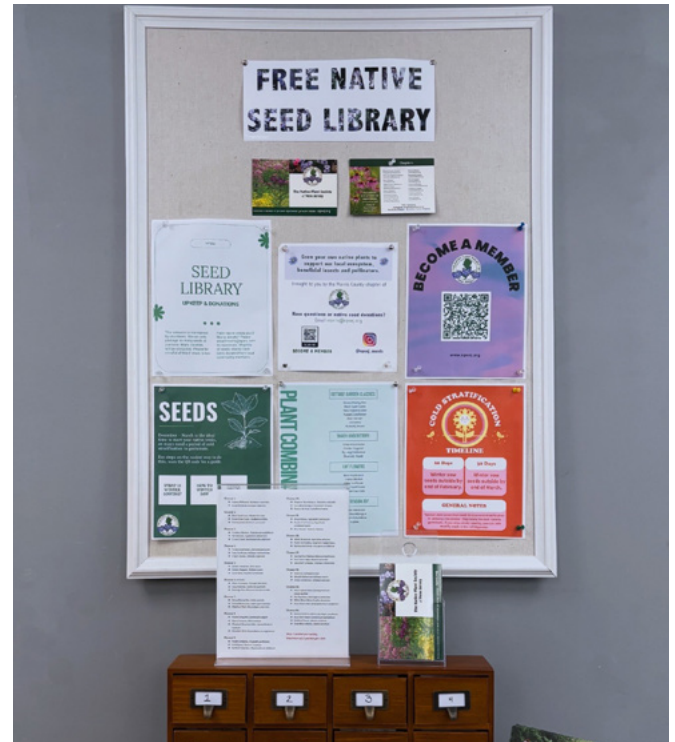
Initiated in 2020, *Patchwork for Wildlife* was developed by Jon Gibbons, the Environmental Commission, and volunteers over four years in Lake Como. The 2025 *PFW* Awards Celebration can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/@candidesgarden1761>.

*Gibbons is a Monmouth County Master Gardener and had chaired the Lake Como Environmental Commission from 2013 to 2019.*

# Morris Chapter Seed Library Update

By Amy DiPalma, Morris Chapter Co-Leader

The Morris chapter is spreading the wealth and expanding access to free native seeds in more Morris County libraries. What better place to find a way to help grow your native garden than in a place that helps you expand your mind? The Boonton Holmes Public Library is in its third year of providing free native seeds to the local community and now houses 50 varieties of native plants. Our Primary Free Native Seed Library at BHPL has been the prototype for expanding to other libraries throughout the county. We now have free seed libraries housed within Mount Olive Public Library in Flanders, the Kemmerer Library in Harding Township and the Long Hill Township Library in Gillette. We are still expanding and are excited to announce our other partners in the near future.



# NPSNJ Wednesday Webinar for May 2026 on Container Gardens with Jeremie Fant, Ph.D

By Bobbie Herbs, Co-Chair of Wednesday Webinar

Through experimentation, and isn't all gardening an experiment, Jeremie Fant has figured out the type of pots that survive overwintering and how to insulate them to protect the plant roots. He decided to have each individual container feature a different community of plants from sun to shade, dry soils to moist. This makes for careful attention to the pot and the soils you use. He will discuss more about this during the May Wednesday Webinar.

Here is a little tease. Fant starts with choosing pots that are not brittle and will remain intact in the bitter Chicago winters, so he eliminated terracotta and some forms of plastic. To insulate the roots from the brutal cold and to survive for multiple years, he found recycled Styrofoam a most effective lining. Next was solving what potting soils that match the native soils. Without revealing the results of this experiment, leave it to this. Make certain that you prepare the soil for the plants that will grow there, with less drainage for those that like moister conditions and more for those that enjoy dryer situations.

What has he learned? Two types of plants do best in pots. First, are the heavier seeding annuals like partridge pea or horsemint. Second, are fibrous-rooted perennials, those without taproots. He cites asters and sedges as strong performers in his balcony container garden.

Want to know what native plants he recommends? Join us for our May 20th Wednesday Webinar at 7:00 pm featuring Jeremie Fant. He is Director of Conservation at Negaunee Institute of the Chicago Botanic Garden. Originally from Australia, Jeremie received his Degree in Horticulture from the University of Adelaide and then went on to get his Doctorate in Genetics at the University of Cambridge in the UK. Jeremie will educate us on successfully planting pollinator friendly perennials for small spaces!



# The Native Plant Society of New Jersey: A Hub for Ecological Learning

By Kim Correro

If you are serious about deepening your knowledge of native plants and ecology, there is no better place in the state than the Native Plant Society of New Jersey.

This winter and spring, NPSNJ launched five brand-new, members-only virtual courses designed for people who want native plant gardening advice and a deeper ecological understanding. These exclusive classes provide direct access to some of the most sought-after experts in the field, blending science, design, conservation, and hands-on learning.

The season opened with Jared Rosenbaum's highly anticipated botany course, **Native Meadows, Glades and Other Sunny Habitats: Ecology, Restoration, and Gardens**, followed by Sarah F. Jayne's interactive workshop, **Design Your Wildlife Habitat**, based on her acclaimed book **Nature's Action Guide**.

Coming soon, we welcome Dr. J. Drew Lanham one of the nation's most celebrated ornithologists and ecologists for **A Feel Guide to Birds: Convergence of Art, Science and Culture for Conservation**, a powerful exploration of birds through both ecological and cultural lenses.

Later this year, Jennifer Bakshi, instructor at the New York Botanical Garden, will lead our first-ever course in **Botanical Latin**, guiding students through taxonomy, grammar, pronunciation, and the rich language behind North America's native plants.

The spring season concludes with **Ecological Restoration: Principles, Practice & Local Action**, a four-session course taught by William E. Young. Focused on North-eastern ecosystems, especially New Jersey — this immersive program blends science, ethics, case studies, and hands-on exercises covering urban forests, coastal dunes, wetlands, meadows, and post-invasive recovery. It is practical, rigorous, and rooted in community-scale impact.

For professionals, serious gardeners, land stewards, and anyone committed to restoring the landscape, NPSNJ's courses represent some of the most comprehensive ecological learning opportunities in the state. Learn more at [npsnj.org/events](https://npsnj.org/events) or email [programs@npsnj.org](mailto:programs@npsnj.org).



J Drew Lanham



Jared Rosenbaum



Jennifer Bakshi



Sarah F Jayne

# NPSNJ Treasurer, Bob Swain, suggests these two events to attend



## 2026 NJ COASTAL & CLIMATE RESILIENCE CONFERENCE

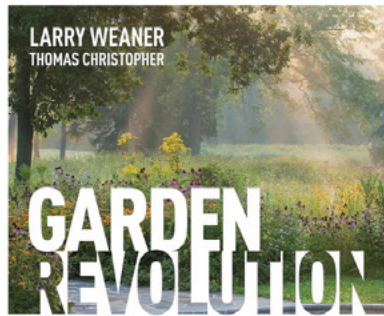
This year's conference will be held March 9-11, 2026, at the Seaview Hotel in Gallopway, NJ, hosted by the [New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative](https://www.njcoastalresilience.org/event/2026-new-jersey-coastal-and-climate-resilience-conference/) and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. The event focuses on coastal science, resilience planning, and restoration. For more information, go to: <https://www.njcoastalresilience.org/event/2026-new-jersey-coastal-and-climate-resilience-conference/>



## The 2026 Delaware Wetlands Conference

This year's conference will be held on March 4-5 at the [Chase Center on the Riverfront](https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/wetlands/conference/) in Wilmington, DE. This two-day professional event focuses on wetland science, restoration, and policy, featuring numerous presentations, exhibitors, and networking opportunities for professionals in the field. For more information go to: <https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/wetlands/conference/>

The 2026 NPSNJ Annual Conference will feature a book signing with keynote speaker and landscape designer Larry Weaver and The WildStory podcast co-host and poet Ann E. Wallace



How our landscapes can be a source of environmental change



Larry Weaver



ANN E. WALLACE



Ann E. Wallace

preorder their books with  the nature of reading bookshop

Preorder now: [thenatureofreading.com/npsnj](https://thenatureofreading.com/npsnj)

[Listen Here!](#)

# The Wildstory Premieres Season Four!

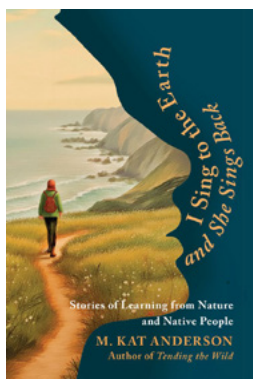
Season four of *The WildStory Podcast* with co-hosts Kim Correro and Ann Wallace launches this month, bringing a rich lineup of guests and conversations rooted in native plants, ecology, and the living world that surrounds us. The new season continues the podcast's exploration of how poetry, art, science, and environmental stewardship intersect.



The February episode features co-host Ann E. Wallace as guest poet, celebrating her new collection, *Keeping Room* (Nixes Mate Books, February 15th). Award-winning poet and mindfulness educator James Crews, author of the forthcoming *Breathing Room* (Battenkill Books, March 17th), hosts the season's first poetry segment,

guiding a conversation through poems that move from the New Jersey Pinelands after Hurricane Helene to the intimate ecology of Wallace's Jersey City backyard. With lyrical care, *Keeping Room* explores resilience, memory, and the quiet intersections of the natural world.

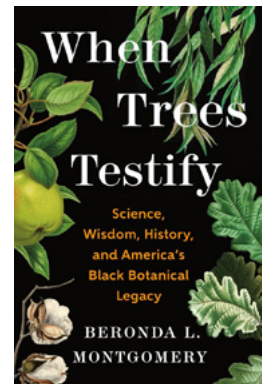
Among the collection's standout poems is "Such a Perfect Ecosystem" (please see next page), written for entomologist Dr. Randi Eckel, and centered on the native plant Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*). The poem reflects the overlooked elegance of this native and the complex ecosystems it sustains.



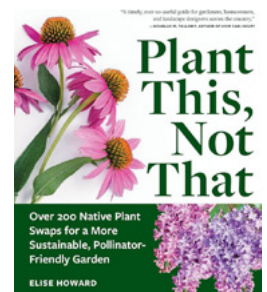
This season, listeners can expect a span of disciplines, from ecological landscape visionary Larry Weaner to ethnobotanist M. Kat Anderson, whose work centers on indigenous knowledge and land stewardship. Ecologist and educator Dr. Linda Rohleder will join us along with cultural strategist Beronda

Montgomery, discussing her new book *When Trees Testify*, and environmental justice advocate Dorsia Smith Silva, whose poetry collection *In Inheritance of Drowning* explores equity, survival and environmental devastation. Also coming this season is our conversation with Emmy Award-winning garden educator, author, and podcast host Joe Lamp'li; garden writer and educator Elise Howard for her exciting new book on natives called *Plant This, Not That*; We welcome Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer for the first time in May to discuss her grassroots movement *Plant, Baby, Plant*; N. West Moss on her middle-grade novel *Birdy*; and a special interview featuring the conservation efforts of the Cora Hartshorn Arboretum. The season carries into summer with a dynamic conversation with ecological restoration specialist William Young, honoring Bob Swain, founding member of NPSNJ, whose more than four decades of leadership leave an indelible mark.

Join The Wildstory email list and be the first to know when new episodes hit the airwaves! If you have a story idea for Kim and Ann, or a question for "Ask Randi" hosted by Randi Eckel, Founder of Toadshade Wildflower Farm email them to [TheWildstory@npsnj.org](mailto:TheWildstory@npsnj.org).



Guest Dorsia Smith Silva



Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer

**WildStory email list:**

[npsnj.org/the-wildstory-podcast/](https://npsnj.org/the-wildstory-podcast/)

**Kim Correro:** [instagram.com/kimcorrero](https://www.instagram.com/kimcorrero)

**Ann E. Wallace:** [annwallacephd.com](https://annwallacephd.com)  
[AnnWallace409@gmail.com](mailto:AnnWallace409@gmail.com)

**The WildStory Podcast:** <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-wildstory-a-podcast-of-poetry-and-plants/id1703650112>

**James Crews:** [jamescrews.net](https://www.jamescrews.net)

**James Crews' book *Breathing Room*:**  
[battenkillbooks.com/book/9798887621517](https://battenkillbooks.com/book/9798887621517)

**Larry Weaner:** [lwladesign.com](https://www.lwladesign.com)

**M. Kat Anderson:** [tendingthewild.com/about](https://tendingthewild.com/about)

**Linda Rohleder:**  
[wildwoodsproject.org/who-we-are/](https://wildwoodsproject.org/who-we-are/)

**Beronda Montgomery:**  
[www.berondamontgomery.com](https://www.berondamontgomery.com)

**Dorsia Smith Silva:** [dorsiasmithsilva.com](https://dorsiasmithsilva.com)

**Joe Lamp'l:** [joegardener.com](https://www.joegardener.com)

**Elise Howard:** [hachettebookgroup.com/contributor/elise-howard/](https://hachettebookgroup.com/contributor/elise-howard/)

**Robin Wall Kimmerer:** [robinwallkimmerer.com](https://robinwallkimmerer.com)

**Plant Baby Plant:** [plantbabyplant.com](https://plantbabyplant.com)

**N. West Moss:** [hachettebookgroup.com/contributor/n-west-moss/](https://hachettebookgroup.com/contributor/n-west-moss/)

**Cora Hartshorn Arboretum:**  
[hartshornarboretum.org](https://hartshornarboretum.org)

**Toadshade Wildflower Farm:** [toadshade.com](https://toadshade.com)

## From the Poetry Collection of Keeping Room

### *Such a Perfect Ecosystem* By Ann E. Wallace

Yesterday I celebrated small things  
in a room packed with people who oohed

when the entomologist told of the magnificence  
of the spring beauty, a plant with pale pink blossoms

so petite and fleeting that most Jersey lawn  
tenders miss them flickered through the grass.

I don't mean we long for or regret no longer seeing  
them. I mean we don't see the flowers at all.

But they are not invisible, not to the mining bees  
who light upon the tiny petals and coat

their fuzzy bellies with the sweet pink nectar  
these beauties create just for them

To order a copy of *Keeping Room*, go to:  
[annwallacephd.com](https://annwallacephd.com)

SEASON 4  
PREMIERE EVENT



# The WildStory

A Podcast of Poetry & Plants

Join us for an evening where stories, science, and the natural world collide.

**Thursday, March 12 | 7:00-9:00 PM**  
The Cora Hartshorn Arboretum  
324 Forest Drive South, Shorthills, NJ

Tickets: \$10 | Light snack served

Book signing to follow. Order books from The Nature of Reading Bookshop!

*Hosted by Kim Correro & Ann Wallace  
Come for the stories. Stay for the conversation.*

### IN-PERSON EVENT FEATURES A DYNAMIC PANEL:



**N. West Moss,**  
author of  
*Birdy*



**Elise Howard,**  
author &  
gardener,  
*Plant This, Not That*



**Ann E. Wallace,**  
poet,  
*Keeping Room*



**Ask Randi – LIVE!**  
**Dr. Randi Eckel,** Entomologist &  
Owner of Toadshade Wildflower Farm

Click or  
scan to  
register



# The Native Plant Society *of New Jersey*

Our mission is to promote the appreciation, protection and study *of* New Jersey's native flora.

[npsnj.org](http://npsnj.org)

