

The Turk's Cap

The Newsletter of the Delaware Native Plant Society

Summer 2026 Volume 29 No. 2

DNPS Mission Statement:

Founded in March 1998, we are a volunteer-based, publicly supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of native plants and their natural habitats through education, science, advocacy, and land stewardship.

Discover more at <https://delawarenativeplants.org>

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President: Eric Wahl ● Vice-President: Rick Mickowski ● Treasurer: Eric Zuelke ● Secretary: Emma Johnson

President's Message: Welcoming Summer

As spring gracefully gives way to summer, we are reminded once again of the beautiful cycles that shape the natural world around us. Each season brings its own character and purpose. The delicate spring ephemerals that brightened our woodlands have now completed their brief but important role, making way for the vibrant blooms, lush foliage, and abundant wildlife activity that define the summer landscape.

Our native plants move through these seasonal rhythms with remarkable resilience. From the first emerging leaves of spring to the pollinator-rich gardens of summer and the seed-filled meadows of autumn, native species provide the foundation for healthy ecosystems. They support birds, bees, butterflies, and countless other forms of life while connecting us to the unique natural heritage of Delaware.

Summer is also a wonderful time to deepen our appreciation and knowledge of native plants. The Delaware Native Plant Society has an exciting lineup of programs, field trips, workshops, and educational opportunities planned throughout the season. Whether you are a longtime member or new to native plant gardening, we encourage you to participate in our events, connect with fellow enthusiasts, and explore the diverse habitats that make our state so special.

Be sure to read through this newsletter to learn more about upcoming activities, volunteer opportunities, and ways you can support our mission. Together, we continue to promote the conservation, appreciation, and use of Delaware's native plants for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

Wishing you a joyful summer filled with discovery, beauty, and time spent in nature.

Sincerely,

Eric Wahl
President, Delaware Native Plant Society

Visit us at <https://delawarenativeplants.org> and on [Facebook](#)

Donate [HERE](#) or [HERE](#)

Summer is for the Apiaceae family (By Emma Johnson)

Summer brings Apiaceous plants that from a distance resemble one another, but native or not, it's very important to tell them apart!

The Genus *Conium* (1 Species in DE, poison-hemlock)



The Genus *Cicuta* (2 Species in DE, both water-hemlock)



The Genus *Heracleum* (1 Species in DE, water parsnip)



Conium, *Cicuta*, and *Heracleum* are VERY dangerous. They all grow about 6ft tall. *Conium* and *Cicuta* have spotted ("maculate") stems.

The Genus *Daucus* (1 Species in DE, wild carrot)



This *Daucus* is queen Anne's lace, or wild carrot. Its flowers curl into a "basket" shape when done. The leaves look just like carrot leaves. For your safety, only eat cultivated carrot plants.

Introducing a New Reforestation Project!!

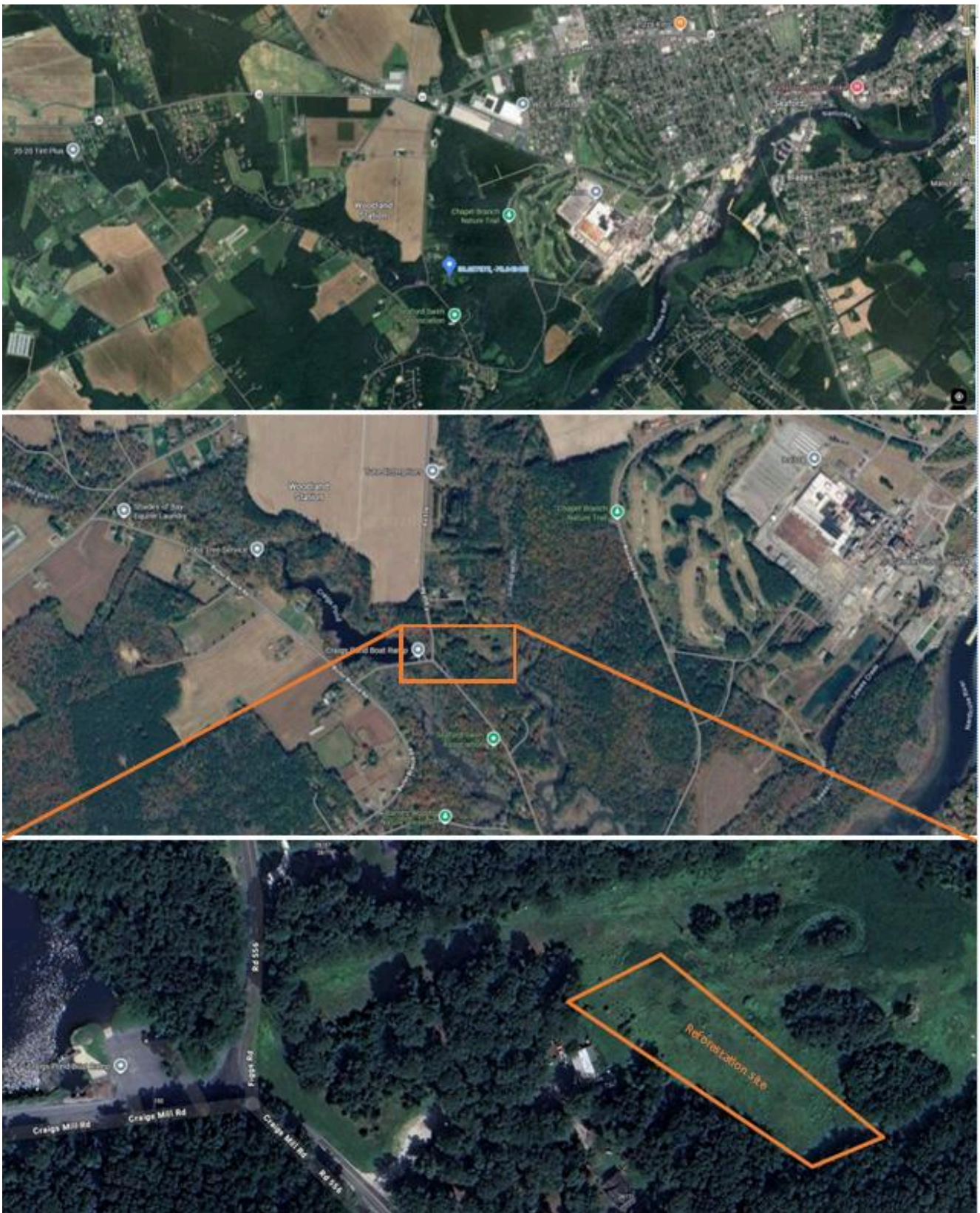
The Moore Farm Tract

Marlene Mervine is the Executive Director of the [Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy](#) (NRWC), and long-time friend of the DNPS. As the years rolled by, we have had many discussions with her about doing a reforestation project on one of the NRWC properties. Back in February of 2026, we had another one of those discussions, but this time it wasn't one of tentative consideration. This time it became a firm commitment as Marlene mentioned a perfect spot where they have wanted to grow forest for many years but just never got around to it. So the wheels were set in motion! Eric Zuelke wrote up a proposal that very same day. It was unanimously voted on at their next Board meeting. Then came the first site visit on 1 March 2026, then a Memorandum of Agreement which was also whole-heartedly approved and signed into being on 12 April 2026.

Eric has been growing oaks, chestnuts, hickories, and persimmons all season so far for the project in his make-shift backyard nursery in Dover. The first day of field work which will include planting and undesirable species removal is planned for early October. An announcement about that will be sent out later.

And, as with all our project sites, we will be posting on our website, a full and on-going report about all the activities there as time goes by.

So here it is; the new project site (exactly 1.009 acres in size):



Aerial photos from Google Maps and Google Earth, 2026



View from corner post A



View from corner post B



View from corner post C



View from corner post D

Dragonfly Encounters at Dover Park Wildlife Pond!

Photos by Samantha Stetzar, July 2026



Celithemis eponina (Halloween pennant)



Erythemis simplicicollis (Eastern pondhawk, male)



Pachydiplax longipennis (blue dasher, male)



Libellula luctuosa (widow skimmer, male)



Libellula incesta (slaty skimmer, male)



Plathemis lydia (common whitetail, male)

There is a wonderful diversity of Odonata at this project site. This is just a small sampling of it. You can read the full list of species (and more) in the history report of the site [here](#).

EVENT HIGHLIGHT: DNPS WORKDAY AND BUSINESS MEETING

APRIL 11, 2026

BOMBAY HOOK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Prepared by Rick Mickowski, Vice-President on behalf of Emma Johnson, Secretary.

Photos courtesy of Eric Wahl, Rick Mickowski, and Emma Johnson.

Helping the Friends of Bombay Hook with habitat management started off the day.







DNPS members spent over an hour removing invasive plants from the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge visitor center's pollinator habitat hedgerow near the parking lot.

The annual meeting was then called to order at 11:50 a.m.



Eric Zuelke, DNPS Treasurer and Projects Coordinator, presented an update on current projects. There are 3 reforestation projects and 2 pollinator habitat projects.

Dover Park Wildlife Pond

Eric will be scheduling a volunteer workday at the pond. There is a lot of trash that needs to be removed. He installed metal posts to protect the native grasses and installed a new tree tube around the sycamore tree. He will check with Dover Parks and Rec Department again about signage and a garbage can for the site. If there is no response, he can develop some signage using plasticized paper.

UD Lewes Site at Cannon Lab

The site looks awesome! A total of 5 bluebird boxes are being installed. 2 boxes by UD, and 3 by DNPS. Eric bought one from an amish store and is reusing two existing boxes. Bluebirds have been sighted, and tree swallows are nesting in one of the boxes.

Blackbird Creek DNERR site

The latest plantings survived the winter. The original plantings date back to 2003. Eric continues to work on the sweetgum mitigation project. Two years ago DNPS planted

oak tree saplings from Octoraro Native Plant Nursery but the ants built colonies in the tree tubes and killed some of the trees. He is purchasing a new type of tree tube that has a honeycomb structure and are fully ventilated. He will redo all the tree tubes. Eric is growing some tree saplings and using some trees from a recent TEDI event. He also contends with deer and rabbits as no hunting is allowed on the DNEER site. The Youth Conservation Corps will be assisting with wineberry removal.

Woodland Beach

The site is full of rushes/*juncus* and multi-flora rose. He used the recently purchased Troy-Bilt brush cutter to remove some of the overgrowth and planted some of the oak trees from the TEDI program. The collected acorn seeds are spouting so there will be dozens of seedlings to plant. He received a donation from DelDOT and some discarded split rail fence posts from a fencing company that he is using to make deer exclosures around trees to minimize loss.

The formal business meeting was held and presided over by President, Eric Wahl.

Eric is a landscape designer for a consulting firm and does designs for large projects. He is working on a large project for a development in Milton that is connecting wetlands along an ecological trail project. He has contracted with Sussex Conservation District to install infiltration ponds. He tries to include as many native plants as possible into his designs.

Eric Zuelke provided a treasurer's report. The checking account balance is \$4,145.75. The fundraiser through See's Candies raised \$113 and the Do More 24 day of giving brought in \$133. There are currently 92 paid memberships.

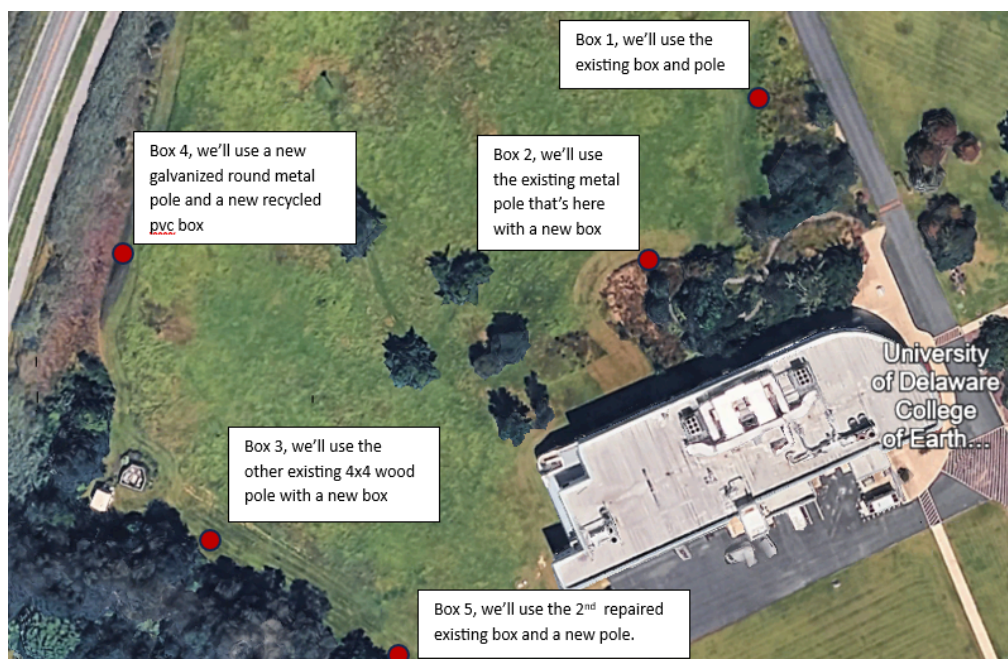
Officer elections were also held. There were no nominations received, so the current Officer team was re-elected to another term.

A New Bluebird Trail at the UD Pollinator Habitat

Photos by Jo-Anne Wazlowski (a.k.a. Jo), May, June, July 2026

For many years there have been two nest boxes situated within the borders of our pollinator habitat at the UD Lewes campus. Every year we have a pair of tree swallows nest in one, or sometimes both of them, but as time has gone on, one of the boxes became run down and wasn't used any longer. We had discussions with the UD Grounds Maintenance crew on several occasions about adding more nest boxes, but those talks never really resulted in anything; until this year!

On 6 Mar 2026, Jo and Eric had our yearly meeting with the maintenance crew to discuss plans for the growing season, and while we were there, we saw, for the first time, a pair of bluebirds flitting around. We decided then and there to finally create the bluebird trail we always talked about. Eric sent out a proposal and map that same afternoon.



Everyone unanimously agreed on the project, then we got to work. The DNPS needed to repair one box, and buy a new one. The university made the other boxes. Jo and Eric installed them, and then we waited. It wasn't until 16 May 2026 that the bluebirds decided it was time to begin nesting.



Then three weeks later, we had three chicks.



Then five weeks later, we had five chicks.

It wasn't long after, they fledged out of the box.

Find the Etsy AmishMadeStore bluebird box [here](#).



Tree swallows in two of the other boxes

Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for the Win!

Photos by Samantha Stetzar, July 2026

For the past two years, the DNPS has utilized the YCC to help out at our Blackbird Creek Reserve reforestation site pulling wineberry. You can learn more about their program on the [YCC website](#).

This year, we significantly expanded our collaboration with them, and we were able to successfully work at not only BCR, but also Dover Park, and Woodland Beach reforestation site. We also wanted to meet at the UD pollinator habitat, but the weather forced us to cancel that day.

We thank Porscha (team lead), Daniel, Bryce, Ethan, Trent, and Zac for all their hard work, and all under some pretty demanding conditions and while doing some very difficult tasks.



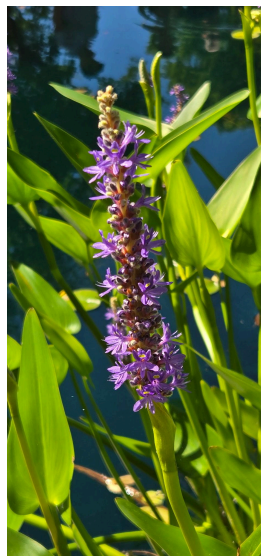
Event Highlight: Field trip to Marian Coffin Gardens at Gibraltar

Photos by Emma Johnson, and Rick Mickowski

On 13 June 2026, seven DNPS members met at the gardens to take a very nice tour of the grounds. The tour was led by Liz who was very knowledgeable about the property, and is the lead garden conservationist. They have been slowly introducing more and more native species into the gardens and it is a beautiful place.

After the tour, we opted to “pay” our tour fees by donating our time to help with non-native and invasive species removal for an hour or so.

You can learn more about them on the [preservationde website](#).



Nomad Farm is looking for summer interns!

**Attention
Native Plant Nerds**

Work Available Starting Immediately - Summer Internships Available

Key Skill Set:

- Enthusiasm
- An attitude of curiosity
- Ability to listen carefully
- MUST be able to measure properly
- Interest and ability in stonework a plus
- Must have valid drivers license
- Must be physically able to keep up with a physically difficult job
- Must be able to work independently
- Ability to work efficiently and safely
- Winning smile and a can-do attitude
- Have a quirky sense of humor

Typical Tasks:

- Plant Identification
- Garden Planting
- Weeding
- Mulching
- Proper bed cleanup
- Carrying rocks
- Stonework
- Maintain and care for tools, equipment and vehicles
- Transporting of materials & debris
- Maintain records of tasks performed, purchases, and mileage
- Carry and use a smart phone for communication purposes

For More Information, Please Text Your Email to: 302.332.7164

Text Your Email To: 302 332 7164	Text Your Email To: 302 332 7164	Text Your Email To: 302 332 7164	To:
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For more information, please text your email to 302.332.7164

DNPS Summer Calendar

UPCOMING:

7/26/26 8:30am -11am Arden Hike with Glenn Shealy

Arden Club Gild Hall, 2126 The Highway, Wilmington, DE 19810

Come take a cool hike in Arden Forest along the scenic and rocky south branch of Naaman's Creek. This will include a new section in the adjacent Sunnyside Nature Preserve. Local plant experts will discuss the reforestation efforts and notable flora. The hike will be challenging in that we'll be hiking over and through a boulder area and there are two difficult stream crossings. Bring poles if you have them.

3-4 miles

Access to bathrooms at the Gild Hall at the beginning and end of the hike

8/4/26 9:00 am -11am Meadow Walk with Bob Meadows and Glenn Shealy

DuPont Environmental Education Center (DEEC)

1400 Delmarva Lane, Wilmington, DE 19801

Come take a guided walk around the pond and down the boardwalk.

Bob Meadows will discuss the long term rehabilitation efforts at the site, including phragmites elimination and plantings in the marsh and wooded areas.

The walk will generally be flat with lots of boardwalk. No stream crossings.

2-3 miles

Bathrooms: At DEEC after the walk

See more trips and things to do below!

The “Native Plant Times”

Past:

- [Very far back, learning about the original Delawareans](#) Courtesy of the Delaware Astronomical Society
© 2024 by [Roslyn M. Frank](#). This is an open access book distributed in accordance with the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY 4.0\)](#)
- [A Shortage of Native Seeds is Slowing Land Restoration Across the US](#) shared by Vice President Rick Mickowski
- [Delaware Estuary Environmental Protections at Risk](#)
- This April, [Subaru](#) gave away Trees for Arbor Day!
6/15 10:30AM Restoring Nature with Native Plants UD Master Gardener Program
Spring Gardening Series Presented by Pam Nelson & Jill Beringer, Free 200 Whitechapel Drive, Newark, DE
- 6/25 5-7PM \$30 Summer Native Garden Workshop at Ashland Nature Center
- 7/12 Fishing Camp at Delaware White Clay Creek State Park, 9AM-2PM
- 7/12 & 8/23 Junior Ranger Angler Day, 405 Sharpless Rd, Landenberg PA, 10AM-2PM

Present:

- **The Pinelands are in danger!**
[Help maintain native plants in our sister state!](#)
- [New flower discovered in NJ!](#)
- Request [American Chestnut Trees](#)!
- Mountain choke-ash-cherry? Native [hybrids](#) surprise!
- [Rudbeckia laciniata](#)- deliciousness uncovered!

Future:

- [High-tech reforestation](#) shared by Project Manager & Treasurer Eric Zuelke

Books:

These were on display this spring in the Longwood Gardens gift shop. Find them wherever your favorite books are sold!



- How to Grow: Nurture Your Garden, Nurture Yourself by Marcus Bridgewater
- Seasons of Growth: A Journal for Well-Being Inspired by Trees by Marcus Bridgewater
- Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You find Health and Happiness by Dr. Qing Li
- The Tree Collectors: Tales of Arboreal Obsession by Amy Stewart

Do More with Native Plants!

Learning:

[Flora of Delaware Database](#) and [Mt. Cuba Center Publication](#)

[Mid-Atlantic Native Plant Directory](#)

[Native Gardening Guides](#)

More Fun Things to Do:

Visit [Shenks Ferry Wildflower Preserve](#)! Shared by member and hike leader Glenn Shealy

[White Clay Creek State Park](#)

- 9/13 Girl Scouts Love State Parks, Possum Hill Parking Lot, 195 Smith Mill Rd, Newark, DE, 10AM-1PM

[Delaware Nature Society:](#)

- Adult Farm Hike at Coverdale Farm Preserve - 1st & 3rd Saturdays April-August 1-2PM, Free
- Bird Banding at Bucktoe Creek Preserve - Wednesdays April 8 - November 25 7:30-10AM, Free
- Bird Walks at Middle Run Valley Natural Area - Wednesdays April - November 7:30-10:30AM, Free
- Music at the Mill at Abbot's Mill Nature Center - 2nd Thursdays June - Sept
- 7/20 9-11AM \$30 Wood Thrushes and Wood Lots at Flint Woods Preserve
- 7/30 6-8PM \$60 (Ages 21+) Crafting Cocktails with Nature at Coverdale Farm
- 8/26 5:30-8PM \$30 Woods, Wildflowers, and Warblers at Flint Woods Preserve
- 8/27 8:30AM-2:30PM \$60 Serpentine Barrens in Nottingham Park, PA and visiting Octoraro Native Plant Nursery through Ashland Nature Center
- 9/19 Delaware Nature Society's Fall Native Plant Sale at Coverdale Farm
- 9/24 Taste of Coverdale Fundraiser at Coverdale Farm Preserve
- 10/3 Delaware Nature Society's Fall Native Plant Sale AND Autumn at Abbott's Mill at Abbott's Mill Nature Center
- 10/24 Halloween at Coverdale Farm with Guest-Participation Halloween Parades at 11AM & 2PM!

Symposia and Conferences:

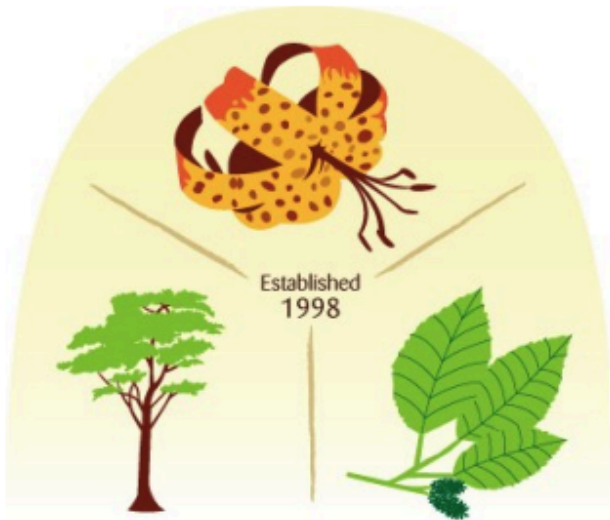
- 7/17 [Woody Plant Conference](#): Woody Plants for the Mid-Atlantic Region & How to Use them in Landscapes at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College (In-person or virtual)
- 9/24-9/25 2-Day Symposium: [Marian Cruger Coffin at 150](#): Celebrating the Legacy of a Pioneer in Landscape Architecture (9/24 at Winterthur, 9/25 at Univ of DE)
- TBD Autumn 2026 - [Delaware Native Plant Society Symposium](#)
- 10/16 [Perennial Plant Conference](#) at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College

Other Programs and Places:

- Arden Gardeners Gild events
- [American Fern Society](#) and spore exchange
- [American Horticultural Society](#)- nationwide Garden Network
- & Museum of Art - gift shop sells native seeds with provenance near NCC DE
- Programs and Events, visit Thu-Sun 9AM-4PM
- [Delaware Cooperative Extension & Master Gardener Workshops](#) -Live & Zoom
- [Green Drinks Online](#) Third Mondays Monthly 6:15-7:45PM
- [Wilmington City Council](#) and [Northeast Rising](#) [Wilmington Initiatives](#) at Conscious Connections Urban Farm

Local Native Plant Nurseries: See a full list on the DNPS website here.	Sister Societies: • Virginia Native Plant Society • Maryland Native Plant Society • New Jersey Native Plant Society • Pennsylvania Native Plant Society
Volunteer Opportunities: • Herbaria - Del State Claude E. Phillips Herbarium • Certifications - Master Gardener, Master Naturalist • Delaware Habitat Guardians	Gardens: • Delaware Botanic Gardens • Mt. Cuba Center • University of DE Botanic Gardens

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



DELAWARE Native Plant Society

Levels

-  Student\Individual
\$2.00\Month - \$24.00\Year
-  Family
\$3.00\Month - \$36.00\Year
-  Business
\$5.00\Month - \$60.00\Year
-  Reforestation
\$10.00\Month - \$120.00\Year
-  Lifetime
\$500.00 - One time

Membership benefits include:



Our quarterly newsletter-*The Turk's Cap*, and website resources



Tips and tricks on gardening and landscaping with native plants



Annual workshop, symposium, and project work days

Member Information

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

If you prefer to use a check, please make payable to:

Delaware Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 369
Dover, DE 19903

If you prefer to use our online method with a credit card or cash pay app, please click on the link below:

[DNPS Online membership](#)