

# THE TURK'S CAP

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

[www.delawarenativeplants.org](http://www.delawarenativeplants.org)

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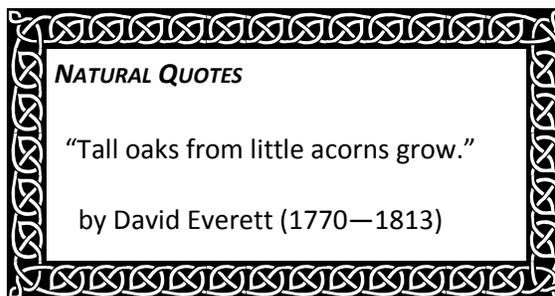
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## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Delaware Native Plant Society is open to everyone ranging from the novice gardener to the professional botanist. One of the primary goals of the society is to involve as many individuals as possible.

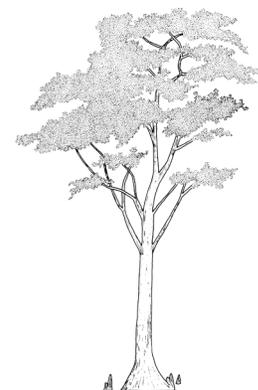
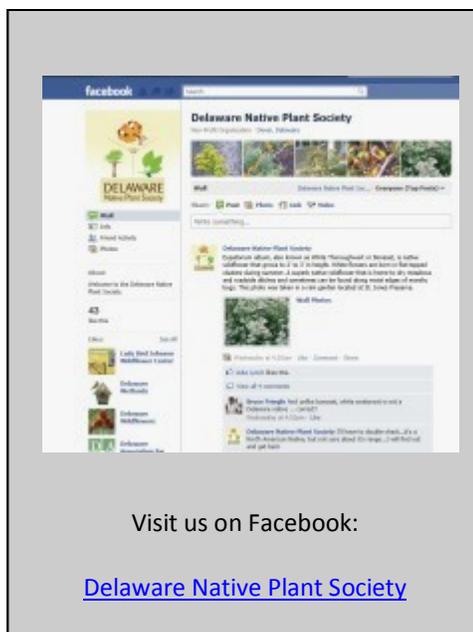
The DNPS is looking for volunteers to help with ongoing projects. One project is an effort to create a large and diverse seed bank that we can use for propagation of plants in our nursery. To accomplish this, we need to collect seeds from all over Delmarva. We have seed collecting guidelines on our website. We are also looking for volunteers to help with community outreach through staffing our display board at public events. We have a great display, but it is idle right now and needs a good leader or two to put it back into service.

For more information, visit our website at [www.delawarenativeplants.org](http://www.delawarenativeplants.org). Our very informative, up-to-date website has all the contact information for the Society, along with a section on native plants, volunteering, and links to other environmental and plant related organizations.



## The DNPS Vision

The purpose of the Delaware Native Plant Society (DNPS) is to participate in and encourage the preservation, conservation, restoration, and propagation of Delaware's native plants and plant communities. The Society provides information to government officials, business people, educators, and the general public on the protection, management, and restoration of native plant ecosystems. The DNPS encourages the use of native plants in the landscape by homeowners, businesses, and local and state governments through an on-going distribution of information and knowledge by various means that includes periodic publications, symposia, conferences, workshops, field trips, and a growing statewide membership organized by the DNPS.



## Notes from Newcroft

Among the eleven trees I have on my property at Newcroft I don't have an oak. But being a tree lover, I was attracted to the book *Oak: The Frame of Civilization* by William Bryant Logan in 2005. (see Review below). The author claims there are 250—450 different species of oak trees. Not all of them are deciduous, although in the eastern U. S. they are.

Hal Bruce mentions them in *How to Grow ...Trees in Your Own Garden*. In the autumn woods, the oaks do not as a rule show much color, however the Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*) does show a good clear red color. These are listed in the *The Flora of Delaware Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program* database that Bill McAvoy of DNREC is creating.



I checked with Richard Julian at Cape Henlopen State Park's Nature Center and he said the *Quercus falcata* Southern Red Oak is the most prevalent native oak in the park. While most grow from 60 to 80 ft. the ones I saw near Herring Point were only 20 to 30 ft. but thriving in that sandy soil. See Bob Edelen's article on page 4 for other information about this tree.

Cindy Albright  
cindy@cindyalbright.com

## Overfalls\* volunteers plant grasses



In July, a group of 16 people "past their teen years" planted 2,700 grasses while sinking in mud in about three hours. Wow!!!

The red ship\* in Lewes on the canal has been very fortunate over the past 12 years receiving support at all levels from federal to local and especially from her dedicated and hard-working volunteers.

A special thanks to Dr. Evelyn Maurmeyer. Besides designing the site, accurately calculating the number of plants needed, ordering the plants, and working hard planting them, she alone made it possible for the Lightship Overfalls to be berthed in an appropriate



Photos by Cindy Albright

bulkheaded site. Without her clout and respect in Dover our ship would be berthed in a bulkheaded slip in the middle of wetlands - a very inappropriate solution.

The state also has more wetlands than they had before since we replaced 6.013 sq. ft. with 7,000 sq. ft.

Bob Humes, President of Overfalls Foundation

\*Overfalls is one of only 17 remaining lightships out of a total of 179 built from 1820 to 1952.

## Resources and Reviews

*Oak: The Frame of Civilization* by William Bryant Logan, W. W. Norton & Company, 2005

There's good reason for the oak being called mighty. It's ubiquitous, highly adaptable and was once the most essential tree in the Earth's temperate zones. From *Homo sapiens'* earliest harvesting of acorns as a basic foodstuff to the durable oak ships of the intrepid armadas that circumnavigated the globe, oak has been a vital contributor to humanity's economic, geographic, and cultural evolution.

## Resources & Reviews

John Greenlee, dubbed "The Grassman" by Wade Graham of *The New Yorker*, established Greenlee Nursery in 1985 and is the author of *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses* (Rodale Press, 1992). He is also the author of *The American Meadow* published in 2009.

### Sedge Lawns for Every Landscape

By [John Greenlee](#) on December 31, 2001

Few breakthroughs in the history of turf have been as significant as the arrival of an entirely new kind of lawn—the sedge lawn. Sedges are close botanical cousins of the grasses and look a lot like them. Properly selected and planted, sedges can function as a traditional lawn, yet they require little or no mowing, fertilizing, or chemicals. Some require less water than many conventional turfgrasses. Others tolerate wet, moist areas, and many thrive in shade. What's more, sedge lawns restore something of the character of the native sods that existed before agriculture and development transformed the American landscape.

Conventional lawns consist of grasses from Africa, Asia, Europe, and other places. These foreign, high-maintenance species have largely replaced the native sods composed of sedges and grasses. Today very little remains of the native sods.

Part of the attraction of the genus *Carex*, into which sedges fall, is its tremendous variety and adaptability. There are more than 2,000 species of *Carex*, and they are found in a wide range of habitats in nature. They vary from miniatures with foliage only 1 to 2 inches high, to specimens growing to 3 or 4 feet. Some creep, some clump, some do a little of both. They can be found in sun or shade, in wet soils or heavy clay, from coastal dunes to alpine scree. In almost every ecosystem, there is at least one sedge with good, lawnlike qualities. Five sedges that have shown excellent promise as substitutes for traditional lawngrasses are catlin sedge (*Carex texensis*), Texas Hill Country sedge (*C. perdentata*), Baltimore sedge (*C. senta*), Pennsylvania sedge (*C. pennsylvanica*), and California meadow sedge (*C. pansa*). The Pennsylvania and Baltimore species are described in the next column.

These native sedges have been selected for their compact growth and good, green color; most are evergreen as well. Many will tolerate varying degrees of shade and competition from tree roots. They are best grown in the regions where they are native, although most have shown amazing adaptability and grow well in regions outside their native range.

### Planting Sedge Lawns

Sedge lawns are usually planted from plugs, as the seeds of many sedges are short lived and have low germination rates. The most important step in establishing a new sedge lawn is to start with weed-free soil.

When converting an existing lawn, make absolutely sure the old lawn is dead (see [Planting a Native Grass Lawn Step by Step](#)). Top-dressing newly planted plugs is far more beneficial than incorporating mulch into the soil. Fertilize as you would a lawn to speed establishment. Mowings every month in the growing season will speed tillering and help the newly

As more horticulturists become aware of the sedges' potential in gardens, many more species are being collected from remnant populations in nature. Hybridization is still untapped and offers enormous possibilities for lawns of the future.

*Carex pennsylvanica* Pennsylvania sedge has a wide distribution throughout the eastern and central

U.S., with one form, *C. pennsylvanica* var. *pacificum* reaching all the way to Puget Sound in Washington state. With such a wide distribution in nature, this sedge and its hybrids hold much promise for natural lawns of the future. Many distinct and varied clones are being evaluated by nurseries throughout the country. Typically found on sandy soils in dappled shade or as a constituent of low prairies, Pennsylvania sedge can tolerate less than ideal conditions in the garden. Its noninvasive, creeping foliage forms dense mats of medium green, fine-textured foliage growing 6 to 8 inches unmowed. As a mowed lawn, this sedge looks best cut two to three times per year at 3 to 4 inches high. Plant Pennsylvania sedge from plugs 6 to 12 inches on center in fall or spring.

#### *Carex senta* Baltimore sedge

This native eastern sedge is essentially a refined version of catlin sedge—identical except for shorter flower spikes, which lend a neater, more lawnlike appearance when unmowed. Discovered originally by Briar Hoffman growing in the lawn of a church in Towson, Maryland, Baltimore sedge is one of the best low-growing, lawn-forming sedges for deep shade. Treat this sedge as you would *C. texensis*. Plant plugs 6 to 8 inches on center. Like all sedges, plugs of Baltimore sedge planted in spring or fall will establish quickly.

**GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

by Bob Edelen

**Southern Red Oak**  
*Quercus falcata*

**Natural History**

According to Bob's theory of acorn availability, this is going to be an excellent year for acorn production! Bob is very scientific in his approach to determining the availability of acorns each year and goes about making his determinations in a deliberate and painstaking manner. First, Bob walks out into the woods, stands under an oak tree and looks up! If there are acorns on the trees, bingo – it's gonna be a great acorn year! Of course it doesn't hurt to have a hurricane come along as this year and knock a few acorns onto the ground to solidify the analysis. This analysis however, only applies to the white oak family where the acorns do not appear year after year. As for *Quercus Falcata* or southern red oak, Bob needs not worry, in the fifteen years of so he has performed his analysis; there has not been a single year when this great tree has failed to produce copious numbers of acorns! Why is this important? Because incredible numbers of birds and wildlife depend on acorns to get them through the winter months! From jays to crows, turkeys and woodpeckers to deer, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons and more, the presence of acorns means good foraging through the winter months. I remember looking out my window one late fall day to see an American crow neatly holding three southern red oak acorns in its mouth – neat!

Fortunately for us (and wildlife), the southern red oak is present in most forests throughout the region. Southern red oak, also called Spanish oak, water oak, or red oak extends from Long Island, NY, southward in New Jersey to northern Florida, west across the Gulf States to the valley of the Brazos River in Texas; north in eastern Oklahoma, Arkansas, southern Missouri, southern Illinois and Ohio, and western West Virginia. Southern red oak is a medium-sized tree, reaching heights of 50-90 ft, and trunk diameters in excess of 4 ft. The Delaware tallest southern red oak is 125 feet and can be found in Wilmington, Delaware. The National Champion, growing in Upson City, Georgia, is 150 ft. tall with a spread of 156 ft. and a trunk circumference at breast height of 26 ft! Seed production usually begins when a tree is about 25 years of age, but maximum production is usually between the ages of 50 and 75 years.

**Where to Grow**

Southern red oak are usually found as individual trees in mixed stands of loblolly pine, Virginia pine, white oaks, maples, poplars and other native forest trees. In forest stands it develops a long, straight trunk and upward-reaching limbs that form a high, rounded crown. The trunk is shorter and the crown is broader and much more spreading in trees grown in the open. Southern red oak needs full sun to grow to its maximum potential. The southern red oak is a handsome and stately tree, suitable for any large landscape. It is a popular street tree. Deciduous in winter, the fast growing and long-lived southern red oak makes an outstanding shade tree. In fall, the leaves turn a less-than-spectacular reddish brown.

**Propagation**

The fruit ripens in September and October, the second season after flowering, and seed-fall occurs during these months. The acorns of oaks have hypogeal germination, meaning they develop a root before developing stem and leaves. Therefore I have found it best to harvest the acorns soon after the fall and plant immediately! Cool, moist stratification is required for best results. I have had excellent results planting acorns approximately one inch apart in pots of loam, placing them in a cold frame and covering them with leaves or straw to prevent freezing and thawing during the winter months. The covering also serves as a protection against rodents. The acorns should germinate the following spring!

**Lore**

The hard strong wood of southern red oak is coarse grained and used for general construction, furniture, and fuel. Native Americans used southern red oak to treat indigestion, dysentery, sores, chapped skin, chills, fevers, lost voice, asthma and as an antiseptic.

**Mt. Cuba Center Workshops**

Download the PDF brochure from the Continuing Education page here:

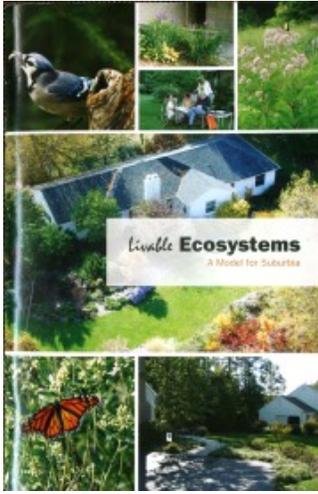
<http://www.mtcubacenter.org/education/continuing-education/>

10/21	Moss Garden Workshop	1/14	Enhancing Your Winter Landscape
10/26	Autumn Native Fruits	1/21	Sensory Appeal of Native Plants
10/29	Planting for Native Bees	2/8	Native Plant Cultivars
11/16	Growing Wildflowers from Seed	2/18	Woody Plant Identification in Winter

## Resources and Reviews

*Weeds: In Defense of Nature's Most Unloved Plants* by Richard Mabey

Weaving together the insights of botanists, gardeners, artists, and writers with his own travels and lifelong fascination, Mabey shows how these "botanical thugs" can destroy ecosystems but also can restore war zones and derelict cities. Hardcover: 336 pages Publisher: Ecco (June 28, 2011)



### *Last of Series*

*Livable Ecosystems: A Model for Suburbia* is the fourth in a series of brochures available from the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension.

A suburban livable ecosystem is a landscape that takes advantage of natural processes while providing tangible benefits to its owner. By

using more plants and less lawn, planting more natives, planting to conserve energy, and incorporating managed meadows and forest fragments into yards, suburbia can become a valuable substitute for the long-gone, predevelopment forests and meadows which once existed.

Chapter 1 discusses the ecosystem service of clean water; chapter two the ecosystem service of clean air; chapter three the ecosystem service of wildlife; and chapter four the ecosystem service of human wellness. Other chapters give details on rain gardens, planting a windbreak, planting a forest, managing a meadow, and planting a butterfly garden. Copies are available at the county extension offices and one copy will be mailed upon request. Eventually, it will be on their website as a PFD document.

The first three publications in this series are "Controlling Backyard Invaders", "Plants for a Livable Delaware", and "Livable Plants for the Home Landscape". They all are available at <http://ag.udel.edu/extension/horticulture/index.htm> and may be printed on your local computer.

### Delaware Native Plant Society Accepting Nominations for 2012 Delaware Native Plant of the Year

Do you have a favorite Delaware native plant that you would like to see promoted for use in landscaping or wildlife habitat restoration?

If so, we'd like to hear from you!

We're looking for nominations for the 2012 Delaware Native Plant of the Year. Because the Delaware Native Plant Society would like to make the chosen plant species available for purchase at the annual Native Plant Sale (1st Saturday in November, 2012), we would prefer that nominations be restricted to species which meet the following criteria:

- 1) Plant species is native to Delaware
- 2) Plant species is common or relatively common throughout both the Coastal Plain and Piedmont in Delaware
- 3) Plant can be easily propagated
- 4) Plant is attractive as a landscape plant and/or valuable for use in wildlife habitat restoration (e.g., provides important food or cover to native wildlife)

The winning species receives the prestigious title of DNPS Plant of the Year, will make appearances at all DNPS events during its winning year, and will be the featured plant species to purchase at the annual Native Plant Sale.

Richard C. McCorkle  
Fish & Wildlife Biologist  
[Richard\\_McCorkle@fws.gov](mailto:Richard_McCorkle@fws.gov)  
[302-653-9152, ext. 117](tel:302-653-9152)



Photos by Rick Mickowski

# 11th Annual Native Plant Sale

When: **Saturday, 5 November 2011, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Where: DE Native Plant Society's native plant nursery.

Directions: The nursery is located at 818 Kitts Hummock Road, at the St. Jones Research Reserve in Dover. Take Route 113 to the Dover Air Force Base. Kitts Hummock Road is directly at the southern border of the air base at the cloverleaf intersection of 113, Route 9, and Kitts Hummock Road. Kitts Hummocks Rd. only goes east, and if you go almost one mile you'll see a large sign for the St. Jones Reserve. Turn right onto the gravel road and the nursery is all the way in the back to the left of the parking lot.

What's for sale: Hundreds of trees, shrubs, herbaceous species, ferns, vines and grasses will be available at very reasonable prices.  
Come early, some quantities are limited!

For more information: Call 302.735.8918, email [ezuelke@juno.com](mailto:ezuelke@juno.com), or on the web at [www.delawarenativeplants.org](http://www.delawarenativeplants.org)

**Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) credit may now be given for some DNPS Continuing Education courses. Before attending, receive authorization from:**

Valann Budischak  
Delaware Cooperative Extension  
Univ. of Delaware Botanic Gardens  
Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association1  
52 Townsend HallNewark, DE 19716-2170  
Ph #: (302) 831-4188 or (888) 448-1203

# Upcoming Events

## Delaware Coast Day

Sunday, October 2, 2011 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

College of Earth, Ocean and Environment  
Lewes, DE

Includes many exhibits related to Native Plants and their environment [www.decoastday.org](http://www.decoastday.org)

Fall/Winter 2011—[Mt. Cuba Center](#) *Your pathway to native plants*

## Fall 2011—Adkins Arboretum

Register for classes [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org).

## Fall 2011—[Delaware Nature Society](#)

Lectures in the Copeland Native Plant Series are:

**October 1 & 2: Harvest Moon Festival, Saturday and Sunday, 10 am - 5 pm.** [Click for more information](#)

**October 1 & 2: Farm to Fork, Saturday and Sunday, 1:30 - 4:30 pm.** [Click for more information](#)

**November 17** 7:00-8:30 p.m. Maintaining Curb Appeal with Native Plants by Dr. Doug Tallamy, Professor and Chair, Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, U of D. Held at Ashland Nature Center.

**January 12, 2012** 7:00-8:30 p.m. Rare and Endangered Plants of Delaware by William McAvoy, Botanist, Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife. Held at the Ashland Nature Center.

## Delaware Invasive Species Council Annual Meeting on

Wednesday, October 19 at the Blue Ball Barn in North Wilmington.

[www.delawareinvasives.net](http://www.delawareinvasives.net) for agenda and to register

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**DNPS meetings for 2011**—As part of our organizational restructuring, and as of 1 January 2011, we will no longer be having bi-monthly meetings. The annual native plant sale is still going to be held on the same date (the first Saturday of each November). We are still working on this and if anyone is interested in helping us to plan these workshops and symposiums, we could really use the help. Please contact Eric at [ezuelke@juno.com](mailto:ezuelke@juno.com) if interested, and details of each meeting will be on our website: [www.delawarenativeplants.org](http://www.delawarenativeplants.org).

# Membership Application

## DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### Member Information

Name:

Business Name or Organization:

Address:

City and Zip Code:

Telephone (home/work):

E-mail address:

- Full-time Student \$10.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family or Household \$18.00
- Contributing \$50.00
- Business \$100.00
- Lifetime \$500.00
- Donations are also welcome \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership benefits include:

- \* The DNPS quarterly newsletter, The Turk's Cap
- \* Native plant gardening and landscaping information
- \* Speakers, field trips, native plant nursery and sales

**Total Amount Enclosed: \$**

**Make check payable to:  
DE Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 369, Dover, DE 19903**

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**DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 369  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19903**

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