

# THE TURK'S CAP

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Spring 2011

*THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY*

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### ***NATURAL QUOTES***

"A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."\*

\*By William Wordsworth, so that  
probably wasn't the Evening primrose

## **The DNPS Vision**

**T**he 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.

## ***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 working on some significant projects at this time. We have completed four reforestation projects in the Prime Hook area, at Blackbird Creek in New Castle County and Cedar Creek in Sussex County where we have installed tree tubes around newly sprouted seedlings, and are performing annual management of the sites. Help is also needed at our native plant nursery at the St. Jones Reserve with the monitoring and watering of plants along with many other nursery activities.

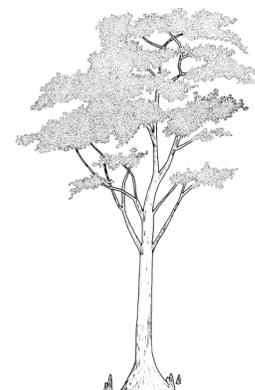
For more information, visit our website at [www.delawarenativeplants.org](http://www.delawarenativeplants.org). Our very informative, up-to-date website has all the contact information for the Society, along with a section on native plants, volunteering, and links to other environmental and plant related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



Springtime at Newcroft

**Note:** In the [online](#) version, blue links go to additional information.

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



## Notes from Newcroft

My meadow is slowly waking up after an interesting winter although snow is still on its way this weekend. I remember planting Joe-Pye weed there 15 years ago. They survived for a few years but must not have been in soil they liked or suffered from lack of water because they died.

What has survived are the daffodils that the previous owner planted near what I'm told was the area around the farm house. They brighten the meadow before the grasses get tall. Some daylilies also thrive in that area. Perhaps I'll try some other flowering native plants in that area.

Recently, a book club I'm in, *Natural Selections*, discussed [The Queen Must Die and Other Affairs of Bees and Men](#) by William Longgood. The discussion leader was an apiarist. She provided a firsthand demonstration of the beekeeping process. To make plant selections that will enhance the habitat on my property, I plan to use the new *Attracting Native Pollinators* resource mentioned on the next page.

Cindy Albright  
cindy@cindyalbright.com

## Into the Woods

*Trees are growing again to restore one of Delaware's lost forests\**

In 2003, the Nature Conservancy acquired 908 acres near Milton from the Glatfelter Pulp Wood Co. That Ponders Tract property was renamed **Pemberton Forest Preserve** and is located near the Redden/Ellendale forest, one of the largest wooded areas remaining on the Delmarva Peninsula. In 2010, 10 miles of trail were opened. Since acquiring the [Ponders tract](#) in 2004, the Conservancy staff and volunteers have been thinning a former loblolly pine plantation and planting habitat islands as a way of welcoming back the native coastal hardwood forest that once covered the landscape. In tandem with this hands-on approach to mimicking natural disturbances, the Conservancy has witnessed the natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs in additional parts of the preserve.

\* News Journal, 2006 and Cape Gazette, 2010.

## Delaware Hero Russell Peterson Dies

In the previous issue, Russell W. Peterson, was mentioned as former Governor of Delaware who gained international recognition as an environmentalist, scientist, activist and public servant. He created the Coastal Zone Act in 1971 which ensured that industry has not developed along the Delaware River and the DE Atlantic Coast. The [Dupont Environmental Education Center at the Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge](#), one of the few urban refuges in the country was named after him.



His statue graces the Riverwalk at the refuge by the river at South Madison St., Wilmington, DE 19801  
Phone: (302) 425-4890.

## South Bethany Beach to plant grasses and perennials

The town's Beautification Committee has taken another step to improve curb appeal by adopting a new landscaping plan for the Route 1 corridor. Beginning next month, different types of grasses and perennials will be planted along the median, pedestrian walkways and vehicle crossovers.

Since last August, the committee has worked to create an overall vision for the town. It developed a plan that incorporates the use of hardy, colorful trees and native plants, addresses canal water quality and will project a look that's welcoming to residents and visitors.

Recently, 18 crape myrtle trees were planted in the median across from York Beach Mall. The trees are 12-14 feet tall and will produce a light purple blossom. "We're trying to create a wow effect," said Rick Gentile, project consultant and owner of Bethany Beach Gardens. "

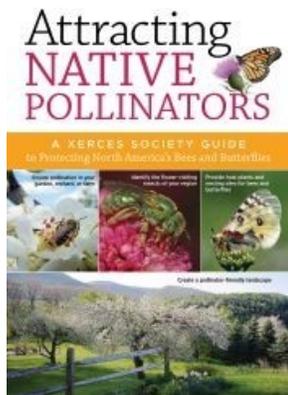
The committee selected *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah' grass to be planted around the trees, and rain gardens were created to capture rainwater and reduce runoff. *Juncus* grass was chosen for the nine circular beds in the median near the vehicle crossovers.

[Delmarva Now](#) "Beautification panel to approve curb appeal" March 26, 2011

## Resources & Reviews

[A Walk Through the Year](#) by Edwin Way Teale 1978

Daily reflections and observations of the seasons and nature. "Warmth is winning over cold. The optimism of spring is in the air." From the Walks of Spring chapter p. 11.



### [Attracting Native Pollinators: Protecting North America's Bees and Butterflies](#)

Published and sold by [The Xerces Society](#)\*, 2011

"This book is a step-by-step guide for changing our stewardship of the earth. By planting native flowers, you will be increasing natural diversity and ecological resilience through pollinator gardens, bee pastures and flowering field borders that stabilize the soil, filter water runoff and pack carbon into the roots of native prairie plants."

From the foreword by Dr. Marla Spivak, Professor of Apiculture and Social Insects, University of Minnesota.

\*The Xerces Society is a nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat. Established in 1971, the Society is at the forefront of invertebrate protection worldwide, harnessing the knowledge of scientists and the enthusiasm of citizens to implement conservation programs.

"Flowering Earth"  
By Donald Culross Peattie, 1939

"With their pollen baskets or pouches the honeybees are as if created expressly for plants that were reciprocally evolved. Honey and beebread are the future of the hive; without the bee, some seed will not set. The mutual dependence is complete. As the dazzling spectacle of the great insect-flower symbiosis unfolded to the realization of men, wonder evoked piety."

### ***The Great Pollinator Partnership\**** ***"Dynamic Duos: Plants and Pollinators"***

Virtually all of the world's seed plants need to be pollinated. Rooted in place, plants need an agent to transfer pollen for them. Wind, water and a wide host of animals move the pollen from plant to plant. About 200,000 species of insects visit flowers, incidentally picking up pollen and leaving some behind on floral stigmas.

Follow these simple steps to create a pollinator-friendly landscape.

- ◆ Avoid modern hybrid flowers, especially those with "doubled" flowers. Often plant breeders have unwittingly left the pollen, nectar and fragrance out of these blossoms while creating the "perfect" blooms for us.
- ◆ Spare that limb! By leaving dead trees, or at least an occasional dead limb, you provide essential nesting sites for native bees.
- ◆ Create a damp salt lick for butterflies and bees. Mix a small bit of table salt (sea salt is better) or wood ashes into damp area.
- ◆ Plant larval host plants for caterpillars. Place them where unsightly leaf damage can be tolerated.

\* From a poster at the 2004 exhibit at U. S. Botanic Garden. North American Pollinator Protection Campaign's (NAPPC) mission is to encourage the health of resident and migratory pollinating animals in North America. NAPPC partners gather from throughout the North American continent and beyond to:

- Raise public awareness and education and promote constructive dialogue about pollinators' importance to agriculture, ecosystem health, and food supplies;
- Encourage collaborative, working partnerships among participants and with federal, state and local government entities and strengthening the network of associated organizations working on behalf of pollinators;

## GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Common Evening Primrose

*Oenothera biennis*

by Bob Edelen

### Natural History

As I write this article, I'm looking out my rear window at what appears to be a pretty incredible six-foot tall weed patch, but wait, feasting on these weeds are innumerable goldfinches, house finches and pine siskins. Then just below the weeds are white-throat sparrows, a song sparrow, cardinals and dark-eyed juncos feeding on fallen seeds. To my delight, this scene has repeated itself often daily throughout the winter months. I think back to the spring when my thoughts were to clean out this weed-bed, but as luck would have it, time didn't allow and soon it was sprouting with perhaps hundreds of *Oenothera biennis* or Common Evening Primrose, or, depending on where you are from; weedy evening primrose, German rampion, hog weed, King's cure-all, fever-plant, Bastard evening primrose, yellow lamb's lettuce, sun-cups, sundrops, evening star or oldalmaidziggot. But I regress! I watched the weed-bed grow and by late summer through fall, every evening the tops of the weeds

were covered with one to two inch golden yellow flowers. Then one evening I was joined by friends on my deck for crabs and beer and as the light grew dim, suddenly the flowers were abuzz with sphinx moths (*Sphingidae*) sipping the lemony fragranced nectar – a delight for all!



*Oenothera* comes from the Greek *oinos*, "wine," and *thera*, "to imbibe," because an allied European plant was thought to induce a taste for wine. *Biennis*: biennial, completing the life cycle in two growing seasons, usually blooming and fruiting in the second. The more common name 'common evening primrose' comes from the fact that the flowers open in the evening and remain open



They have a mild lemony scent, and bloom from mid-summer to fall across eastern and central North America, from Newfoundland west to Alberta, southeast to Florida, through early morning, perhaps longer on cloudy days. and southwest to Texas. As mentioned earlier; common evening primrose is favored by moths for its nectar and birds for its seed. It is also a favorite of hummingbirds, honeybees and bumblebees for nectar and the caterpillars of several moths feed on the foliage. Small mammals eat the roots and leaves of young plants and deer graze older plants. The flower has a bright nectar guide pattern visible under ultraviolet light, which assists its pollinators.

As you can tell from the host of common names above, *Oenothera biennis* isn't all things to all people! It may be viewed as an invasive weed, a miraculous medicinal plant, feed for wildlife or a beautiful flowering plant. Well come to think of it, perhaps it as all of the above!

### Where to Grow

In the wild, common evening primrose acts as a primary colonizer, quickly appearing wherever a patch of bare ground may be found. This means that it tends to be found in open, disturbed environments such as roadsides, lakeshores, railway embankments, forested edges, abandoned fields, vacant lots, slopes of drainage ditches and wasteland. As evidenced by my 'weed-patch' it can really take off given the opportunity, so care must be given when planning where to plant your common evening primrose. It is ideally suited to a dry, well drained meadow. It is drought tolerant, prefers full sun, average moisture, and a soil that is somewhat sandy, but other growing conditions are acceptable. Because it is tall growing (four to eight feet tall) it may be well suited to the back of a native plant flower bed, along a wooded edge or the against the house with a sunny exposure. Common evening primrose will do well in newly established landscapes, but does not persist. Seeds stay, however, and will germinate if soil is disturbed.

### Propagation

As I have observed, common evening primrose doesn't require a green thumb to be successful! Since it is a biennial, it takes two years to complete its life cycle.

## Resources

Flowering Earth

By Donald Culross Peattie

"By night the moths take over, fertilizing the night-blooming flowers. This tribe of the feathery antennae have some of them tongues incredibly long, coiled like a watchspring that can probe the deepest corolla."

## Review of "[Flowering Earth](#)" by Donald Culross Peattie, 1991 ed.

First published in 1939, this beautifully imaginative book is about botany much in the same sense that Walden is about a pond. Part natural history, part biography, and part philosophical reflection, *Flowering Earth* is written in a warm, lyrical style that made poet-scientist Donald Culross Peattie one of America's best-known naturalist writers.

### **GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

*Continued from page 4*

Therefore, sowing seeds in the fall will yield a basal rosette of leaves in the spring with flowering to take place the following summer. Once established in this manner and keeping free from competing plants, the common evening primrose will continually reseed year after year. Plants can be transplanted while young, but the plant will develop a thick tap-root that resents disturbance once it is established.

#### **Lore**

Native Americans used root tea for obesity and bowel pain, made a poultice of the roots for piles and bruises, and rubbed the roots on muscles to give athletes strength. Young roots of evening primrose can be eaten like a vegetable and flowers have a sweet taste and have been used in salads or as a garnish.

A seed is a small embryonic plant enclosed in a covering called the seed coat, usually with some stored food. It is the product of the ripened ovule of gymnosperm and angiosperm plants which occurs after fertilization and some growth within the mother plant... Evening primrose oil contains an omega-6 essential fatty acid, gamma-linolenic acid. The oil has been studied in a wide variety of disorders, particularly those affected by metabolic products of essential fatty acids. However, high-quality evidence for its use in most conditions is still lacking.

Bob Edelen

### **Current Articles and Booklets**

#### [Native plants support backyard ecosystems](#)

*Plan larger gardens, less lawn this year\**

By Rachel Swick Mavity

Doug Tallamy, a University of Delaware researcher specializing in native plants and backyard biodiversity, did a survey in DE, MD and PA looking at neighborhoods and the plantings contained in yards. He found that 92% of the landscape was lawn. Then he looked at the plants and found 79% were nonnative. Of those, 9% were invasion species. He encourages people to stop thinking about plants only as decoration, because they provide vital services to living animals and to ourselves. They clean our water, produce oxygen and create food for other animals.

Some of the best trees were oaks, wild black cherry, willow, birch, poplar and crabapple. Native pines provide more biodiversity than smaller plants. Top on the plant list were seaside goldenrod, asters, sunflower and Joe-Pye weed. The entire list may be found at [bringingnaturehome.net](http://bringingnaturehome.net).

#### **Adapt to region**

Look at native species that are adapted to sandy soil which lawns don't like. Put a lawn only where residents walk. For a list of native plants suited for sandy soils with descriptions of the plants, visit: [www.plantnative.org/rpl-denjny.htm](http://www.plantnative.org/rpl-denjny.htm).

Read Ann Raver's NY Times review of Doug Tallamy's book "[Bringing Nature Home](#)".

*\*Article from Cape Gazette Garden & Farm section of the March 15, 2011 issue.*

## Hooked on Host Plants\*

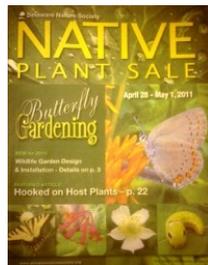
Nancy Carol Willis  
Delaware Nature Society, Naturalist

With the right mix of native plants, you could enjoy many species of butterflies and moths from March through Thanksgiving. Early season nectar plants that adult butterflies need, include Serviceberries *Amelanchier* Trumpet honeysuckle *Lonicera sempervirens*, and Wild Columbine *Aquilegia Canadensis* are critical to their survival.

Because many species of butterflies and moths complete more than one life cycle per season, late emerging adults need late blooming nectar sources. Good choices include Joe-Pye weed, several varieties of aster, goldenrods, ironweed and milkweeds.

Plant some host plants for your favorite species and enjoy watching adult butterflies lay their eggs, larvae chomping up leaves, pupae hanging from twigs and adult butterflies emerging to lap up bountiful flower nectar from your garden.

**\*Article from Native Plant Sale brochure** for Discover the DCH Week May 6-15 for a packed week of events with something for everyone — bring a friend! **If you are a member you will receive the \*Native Plant Sale brochure which lists the offerings. You are asked to bring the brochure with you to the sale.** See dates and times on next page.



Delaware Nature Society  
P.O. Box 700  
Hockessin, DE 19707  
Questions about plant sale: Greg Gagliano  
302-239-2334 or email:  
[greg@delawarenaturesociety.org](mailto:greg@delawarenaturesociety.org)

## Annual Meeting featuring Shade Gardening Program Slated for Saturday, May 7 3—5 pm

[Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge near Smyrna, DE](#)

Program by Dr. Jim McClements, an award-winning photographer and avid gardener for woodland gardening with natives and near natives. The election of a new slate of officers is planned as well. The slate of Officers and Directors is:

**President - John Harrod** - current Vice President of the Society, author of *Controlling Backyard Invaders*, former Backyard Habitat Coordinator with the Delaware Nature Society and Manager, DuPont Environmental Education Center at the Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge

**Vice President Eric Wahl** Landscape Architect-Element Design Group, Lewes, DE, and Board of Landscape Architects

**Secretary - Rick Mickowski** - former Secretary for the Society and Education Coordinator for the New Castle County Conservation District

**Treasurer - Eric Zuelke**

**Elected Directors** (The incoming President may appoint two additional Directors in addition to the four below)

1. **Nancy Davis** - Master Gardener and Past Secretary of the Society
2. **Bill McAvoy** – current President and former Vice President of the Society, symposium speaker and Botanist for The Delaware Natural Heritage Program
3. **Jennifer Holmes** - currently serves as the Education Coordinator Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve and is coordinating the native plant nursery transition.
4. **Rick McCorkle** - currently is a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for Delaware Bay Estuary Project U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and past Vice President and Secretary of the Society

Nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee. Contact Quentin Schlieder, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, at 302-653-6449 or at [gcsjr@comcast.net](mailto:gcsjr@comcast.net).

Members will consider three amendments to the Bylaws. Currently, the Bylaws read: “8.051 Meetings. Meetings or field trips must be held at least six times each year.” The proposed change will be “8.051 **Meetings**. Meetings or field trips must be held at least *four* times each year.” A second amendment will split the office of Vice President Secretary. The third amendment will change Board of Directors’ meetings from “quarterly” to “at least twice annually.”

Members can receive a plant dividend *Aster ericoides* ‘Snow Flurry’. Following the meeting, members are invited to enjoy a reception honoring the Society’s retiring and newly elected officers and directors.

# Upcoming Events

## Spring 2011—Mt. Cuba Center (22 events over the next three months)

[Visit the website for more details and to register.](#)

## Spring 2011—Adkins Arboretum

More information or to register for this or other classes visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org).

## April 2011—[Delaware Nature Society's Native Plant Sale](#) (see article on the opposite page)

April 28 - 29, 2011 - 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm (DNS Members Only Sale)

April 30, 2011 - 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (Open to the public)

May 1, 2011 - 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm (Open to the public)

Native Plant Sale features more than 300 rare, unusual and favorite varieties of native wildflowers, trees, shrubs, ferns and aquatic plants for all growing conditions, including drought-tolerant. Some are introductions from the nearby Mt. Cuba Center and many species attract wildlife such as birds and butterflies. (See previous page for info about plant brochure.)

Location Delaware Nature Society's [Coverdale Farm](#) in Greenville, DE.

## Saturday, 14 May—The Center for the Inland Bays

7th Annual Native Plant Sale

9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

James Farm Ecological Preserve

Go to website for directions [www.inlandbays.org](http://www.inlandbays.org)

## Save the Dates

Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at 7 p.m.

*In celebration of National Garden Week*

The Delaware Native Plant Society will partner with the Bombay Hook Garden Keepers in free activities which will be held in the Auditorium at the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge near Smyrna, DE. Dr. Jules Bruck of the University of DE "Harmonizing with Herbaceous Native Plants." Dr. Bruck, who is currently collaboration on a book with noted entomologist and award-winning author Doug Tallamy. (See article on page 5.) A complimentary plant will be given to each attendee.

## 7th Annual Native Plant Symposium

Saturday, September 24, 2011 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Program: Mosses and Moss Gardening

Guest speakers: Dr. Susan Munch, author of *Outstanding Mosses & Liverworts of Pennsylvania & Nearby States* and David E. Benner, co-founder of Moss Acres his nationally renowned shade garden near New Hope, PA. A complimentary lunch is included. Following lunch there will be an optional field trip. The symposium is free but registration is required and space is limited. To register, contact Quentin Schlieder by phone at (302) 653-6449 or by e-mail at [gcsjr@comcast.net](mailto:gcsjr@comcast.net) after September 1, 2011. The Symposium is always oversubscribed so mark the date now and be sure to register in early September!

# Membership Application

## DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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

### 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

**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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