

THE TURK'S CAP

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE NATIVE PLANT

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NATURAL QUOTES

"I must favor the plants I have raised from seed. Propagation from seed has been my obsession for the last 25 years or more."

[Geoffrey Charlesworth](#) *

*see Resources & Reviews on page 2

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.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

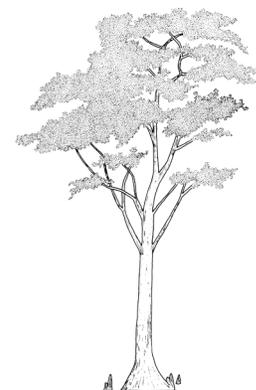
The Delaware Native Plant Society is open to everyone ranging from the novice gardener to the professional botanist. One of the primary goals of the society is to involve as many individuals as possible.

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. 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.



Winter at Newcroft



Notes from Newcroft

This January, I am thinking about ways to increase the enjoyment of my meadow at Newcroft. It borders a wetland and has some trees. I've noticed for many years that there are persimmon trees in Cape Henlopen State Park. Hal Bruce in his "How to Grow Wildflowers & Wild Shrubs & Trees in Your Own Garden" says persimmon trees withstand much wind and salt and can grow on barrier dunes. Therefore, I assume I can grow them at the edge of my meadow where conditions aren't as harsh as over by the ocean four miles away.

As a child visiting an uncle's farm in Southern Indiana, I was duped into tasting a persimmon from one of his trees before the first frost. As Bob Edelen mentions in his article on page 4, my mouth puckered from the affects of the astringent tannin of the unripe fruit.

Subsequently, I enjoyed many persimmon puddings prepared by an aunt when she could find the persimmon pulp. I just found that I could purchase [persimmon pulp online](#). I might resurrect that family recipe.

In checking with a local nurseryman, I discovered it might be many years before newly-planted trees would bear fruit (six to ten years). However, I'm willing to invest in a fruit-bearing tree for my grandchildren.

Cindy Albright
cindy@cindyalbright.com

Delaware Native Plant Walk

[Riverfront Wilmington—Riverwalk](#)

Park your car and stretch your legs along the Riverwalk. This 1.3-mile riverfront path provides pedestrian access to attractions from Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park to a nature center. Strollers can enjoy extensive *native plantings* with more than 5,000 trees and shrubs, 36,000 grasses, perennials and annuals, and 27,600 wetland plants. At the eastern end of Wilmington's Riverwalk lies



Native plants on both sides of the Riverwalk



the [Dupont Environmental Education Center at the Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge](#), one of the few urban refuges in the country.

What a great concept: an urban wildlife refuge along Wilmington's Riverfront. Not only do Riverfront visitors gain a unique environmental experience, the city's residents and schoolchildren have access to wildlife education and recreation. An extensive marsh restoration process began in 1998, and has already enabled beneficial vegetation to flourish in the marsh and provide habitat for wetland wildlife.

The refuge is named after 94 year-old Russell W. Peterson, 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. Our hero.

South Madison St., Wilmington, DE 19801 Phone: (302) 425-4890.
[Visit Website](#)

Resources & Reviews

[The Collector's Garden](#) by Ken Druse, Timber Press, 2004.

Geoffrey Charlesworth and Norman Singer proselytized using the power of propagation and practiced what they preached by starting seeds of 3,000 different plants every year. See pgs. 49-51

See Bob Edelen's column about starting persimmon trees from seed on page 4.

Resources & Reviews

[A Guide to Wildflowers in Winter: Herbaceous Plants of Northeastern North America](#)

Authored by Carol Levine, and Dick Rauh. This guide is intended to help both amateur naturalists and serious field botanists to identify non-woody plants - herbaceous weeds and wildflowers - as they are found in winter in the NE United States and E Canada.



2010 Native Plant Sale Results

Our 10th annual native plant sale was again a huge success thanks to everyone involved. We experienced a very chilly day which may have deterred people slightly as our numbers were down from past years. We did \$1,442.00 in pure plant sales, which yielded a "profit" for us of just under \$662.00 (we bulked up our inventory with purchased plants this year a little more than in past years). Our annual plant sale is our only true fund raising event of the year and every little bit helps! We'd also like to thank everyone who came out and helped to label, price, haul plants, or brought food. You are all essential and greatly appreciated!

Here are the results:

	2008	2009	2010
Species available	90	78	52
Plants available	1235	1113	908
Plants sold	603	661	440
Customers	70	74	48
Booklets sold	6	5	2
Checklists sold	0	0	0
Calendars sold	1	0	0

Website update



On 7 April 2009 we added Google Analytics to the source code of our site to track a myriad of statistics about visitation. Here are the stats through 31 Dec 2010.

*Note: This will be our last website update. The numbers have stabilized and averaged out to the point now where they don't change very much anymore. It was nice to track it in the beginning, but new data doesn't reveal much now, and the statistics and percentages you see in this last report are becoming relatively static.

Number of total visits: 7,242

Number that were absolute unique visitors: 5,906 (81.5%)*

New vs. returning visits: 5,886 new (81.28%), 1,356 return (18.72%)*

Average time spent browsing: 2 min. 28 sec.

Average # of pages browsed: 4.5

Pages with most clicks: Nursery, Plant Talk, Publications
Places: U.S.A. (all 50 states), 64 other countries/territories

How we were located:

62% from a search engine

25% from a referring site

12% from direct traffic

*Absolute Unique Visitors counts visitors, whereas New vs. Returning counts visits.

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS***Diospyros virginiana*****Natural History**

As a youngster growing up in the Maryland suburbs of Washington D.C., I was blessed to live in a home with uncountable acres of woodlands surrounding our backyard. One of the trees in our yard, as well as the adjoining woods, was *Diospyros virginiana* or American persimmon. My first encounter with the fruit of this exciting new tree was when a friend told me how delicious the beautiful 1 ½ inch orbs were. We eagerly took the first bite and immediately assumed we had been poisoned! Our mouths puckered from the affects of the astringent tannin of the unripe fruit – a lesson well learned. Well, since that time many years ago, I have enjoyed many persimmon fruits always being sure of their ripeness before that first bite! Did you ever hear the term ‘happy as a possum eating persimmons’? Well certainly people are not the only creatures that enjoy this popular fruit. Leaves and twigs of persimmon are eaten in fall and winter by white-tailed deer. The fruit is eaten by squirrel, fox, skunk, deer, bear, coyote, raccoon, opossum, and numerous birds, including quail, wild turkey, cedar waxwing, and catbird. Locally persimmons can take a variety of names including simmon, possumwood, date-plum, American ebony, white ebony, barabara, boa-wood, and butterwood. Persimmon ranges from New England to Florida, and west to Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. The fruit is round or oval and usually orange-yellow, ranging to bluish, in color and from 0.8 to 2.4 inches in diameter. The meaning of the name *Diospyros* is fruit of the gods. The common name, persimmon, is the American Indian word for the fruit. Persimmon produces fragrant flowers in March-June producing nectar significant for bees in honey production. Fruits ripen in September-November. A good rule of thumb for determining ripeness is to wait until a hard frost has occurred, although softened fruits freshly fallen from the tree prior to a frost should be fine, or you can simply get your spouse to try one first!

**Where to Grow**

Persimmon makes an absolutely beautiful addition to the landscape! In thick woods, persimmon will grow tall and upright. The *Big Trees of Delaware* identifies trees attaining heights of 62 and 67 feet. However, allowed to grow without competition, the persimmon tree will form a well rounded many branched specimen – beautiful! Persimmon is a hardy tree adaptable to a wide range of soils and climates and resistant to most insects and diseases. Moist, well-drained soils provide best conditions but the plant will tolerate hot, dry, poor soils, including various city conditions. Fruiting typically begins when the tree is about six years old with optimum fruit-bearing age at 25-50 years. Both male and female trees are necessary to set fruit. Good fruit crops are borne every two years. Persimmon sends down a deep taproot, which makes it a good species for erosion control but makes it difficult to transplant. It thrives in full sun but is also shade-tolerant and can persist in the understory. Persimmon is valued as an ornamental because of its hardiness, adaptability to a wide range of soils and climates, its lustrous leaves, its abundant crop of fruits, and its immunity from disease and insects.

Propagation

I well remember the day of our first Native Plant Sale at the St. Jones Preserve. Keith Clancy and I went out to put up some signs and along the fence row leading up to the preserve, there were two persimmon trees loaded with fruit. We stopped, picked perhaps 20 fruits off the ground and I took them home to plant in my cold frame. The following spring after removing the blanket of leaves I customarily use to help over winter the plants, lo and behold every seed sprouted! Needless to say if I can do it anyone can! According to literature, seeds should be cleaned and spread out for drying for a day or two and then stratified under moist conditions for two to three months at 33° to 40° F. They should be soaked two to three days before planting. They should be planted in spring or fall in shallow drills in light soils with plenty of humus and covered to a depth of about 0.5 inches. Me, I cleaned the seeds, stuck them in pots in a good potting

Resources & Reviews**[Winter Weed Finder: A Guide to Dry Plants in Winter](#) by Dorcas Miller**

Key to identifying non-woody plants in late fall and winter by the dried structures that remain after frost, such as pods, dried flower heads, seed capsules, and burrs. Includes common native and naturalized herbs and native ferns. Area covered is the upper Midwest and eastern U.S. north of South Carolina and eastern Canada. Illustrated with line drawings. 64 pgs. 1989

A reviewer said “I love these ‘finder’ books. They are just the right size to grab and stuff in a pocket or hip pack before a nature hike or even a walk in an untamed yard. It identifies between 350-400 plants, giving both their common and Latin names.”

Resources & Reviews

[*Wildflowers and winter weeds*, 258 pgs. 1997](#)

Authored by Lauren Brown. "This book will be a joy to those wood-walkers and strollers who have been puzzled by the skeletal remains of herbaceous plants that they see in winter." Roger Tory Peterson

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

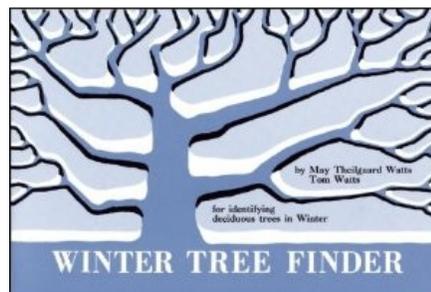
Continued from page 4

mix, put them on the cold frame, covered them with a thick blanket of leaves and said good night – worked perfectly!

Lore

Persimmon has been cultivated for its fruit and wood since prehistoric times by Native Americans. The inner bark and unripe fruit were sometimes used in treatment of fevers, diarrhea, and hemorrhage and indelible ink was made from fruit. In the American South and Midwest, the fruits are popular in desserts and cuisine. The fruit is high in vitamin C and may be eaten raw, cooked or dried. Molasses can be made from the fruit pulp. A tea can be made from the leaves and the roasted seed is used as a coffee substitute. Other popular uses include desserts such as persimmon pie, persimmon pudding, or persimmon candy – yum! The fruit is also fermented with hops, cornmeal or wheat bran into a sort of beer or made into brandy – yee-haw! The wood of common persimmon is hard, smooth, and even textured and its hardness and shock resistance make it ideal for textile shuttles and heads for driver golf clubs.

Bob Edelen



[Winter Tree Finder: A Manual for Identifying Deciduous Trees in Winter \(Eastern US\)](#) (Nature Study Guides) 1970

"The entire book is only 58 pages long and easily fits in a pocket or backpack. Page 1 includes a nice diagram and description of the parts of a twig. Then you progress through a series of questions and drawings that helps you arrive at the identification of the tree. The last few pages include an index and the rear cover has a little measuring rule."

Don't Use Cypress Mulch*

Why kill a tree to grow a flower? That's the question a Florida Native Plant Society chapter is asking in its [brochure urging people not to use cypress mulch](#). The next time you are tempted by the stacks of cypress mulch available at the garden supply store, consider this:

- ◆ Thousands of acres of cypress are logged every year from Florida's native wetlands simply to produce mulch.
- ◆ The old idea that cypress is superior to other mulches is not true anymore. The young cypress that are harvested today do not decay nor are pest resistant and do not make a superior mulch.
- ◆ Florida's unique cypress forest is a treasure with an important ecological role.

You can help save cypress forests by using environmentally friendly mulch. Switch to alternative mulches such as:

- ◆ Recycled yard waste
- ◆ Hardwood mulch
- ◆ Pine bark
- ◆ Pine needles
- ◆ Fallen leaves

* Article from the Autumn 2010 issue of the "Inpaws Journal", newsletter of the [Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society](#)

[Discover the Wonders of Gardening with Native Plants](#)

by Michael Dorn, 112 pgs, 2010

Choose from 85 native trees, shrubs, and vines to incorporate into your landscape in *Native Woody Landscape and Restoration Plants of the Eastern United States*. Expert Michael L. Dorn has written the new must-have native woody plant book for Eastern United States homeowners, designers, contractors, nurseries, and students.

Create woodland gardens, restore stream banks or wetlands, stabilize shorelines, construct buffers, enhance habitat, and more. Dorn's 246 color photographs show beautifully, the physical characteristics of each plant. Reference charts help you locate specific plants for particular purposes. *Native Woody Landscape and Restoration Plants of the Eastern United States* is the most valuable native plant reference guide available today.

Michael L. Dorn received a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture and a Master of Science in Botany from Clemson University. There, he propagated and grew native plants for a shoreline restoration and wetland research project. Taking part in experimental projects involving erosion control, restoration, and habitat enhancement, Dorn's passion for native plant use flourished.

Today, Dorn's Landscape Services, LLC, provides traditional landscaping, in addition to shoreline stabilization design services, incorporating native plantings. The author's designs often enable lake property owners to acquire shoreline stabilization permits.

Dorn's new book describes the physical characteristics like size, shape, flowers, and leaf color, of each plant. Ideal soil conditions, light exposure, and pruning times are shared in an easy to use reference every student, landscaper, or gardener will keep by their side. The types of wildlife the plants benefit (butterfly, songbird, turkey, deer, etc.) are also discussed.

Native Woody Landscape and Restoration Plants of the Eastern United States sells for \$29.95, and can be purchased from Michael Dorn. The contact number for ordering is 864-324-4040. The author is also available for speaking engagements.

Purchase online at: www.nativeplantbook.com in both book and Kindle formats. Published by Shore Publications, www.ohiopyle.info; shorepublications@yahoo.com. 145 River Street, Adah, PA 15410 Cell: 724-710-7801 shorepublications@yahoo.com

Current Articles and Booklets***January's Golden Bouquet***

"While most of the plant world sleeps, a few twigs are blooming."

[The Washington Post "Urban Jungle"](#) column recently highlighted plants that bloom in the winter. Included was Witch hazel *Hamamelis virginiana*. Robert Frost lamented "The flowers of the witch hazel wither" in his poem *Reluctance*. For most of us in the Mid-Atlantic area the blossoms are probably also withered.

The National Arboretum in Washington, DC has a selection of witch hazels. The native witch hazels have clear, lemon-yellow blooms that look like shredded coconut. The leaves turn yellow in the fall and it is moderately drought tolerant. These can be found in Fern Valley at the arboretum (which is their native plant collection) and in the azalea collections.

The Brooklyn Botanical Garden (BBG) has a large collection of witch hazels, some native. A native son of Delaware, Ulrich Lorimer, is curator of Native Flora and a contributor to one of their booklets "[Great Natives for Tough Places](#)."

The Arnold Arboretum has claimed that there is a tree or shrub in bloom every month of the year on its grounds in Jamaica Plain, Mass. In many years this assertion is true, but only because of a single genus of plants, *Hamamelis*.

Editor's note: I'll never forget buying a house in Wilmington, DE in which the previous owner, a botanist for the Dupont Company, had edged the backyard with a number of native and non-native small trees and shrubs. After reading about witch hazel blooming in the winter, I dragged my two young sons over to Winterthur for an outing. I was able to find the Winterhazel *Corylopsis* plants, but not witch hazel. When we returned home, I dug out the forgotten list of plants I had made on a walk around the backyard with the previous owner. Lo and behold, there was a witch hazel blooming in my own backyard.

Upcoming Events

Spring 2011—Mt. Cuba Center

Going Native Mini-Symposium

"A sneak peak at native plant research and nursery trends"

Saturday, March 12

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

\$75 (morning refreshments and lunch included)

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

Winter/Spring 2011—Adkins Arboretum

"Landscape Audits—Sustainability of Your Landscape"

Wednesday, March 16, 1-2:30 p.m.

Your home landscape should be more than just a pretty face. It should also be a healthy ecosystem, supporting biodiversity, infiltrating water, storing carbon, cooling the air, and supplying all the functions known as ecosystem services. In this presentation, look at your landscape through a "green" lens, learn the basics of landscape audits, and find out how to analyze your landscape to improve sustainability and enjoy functionality as well as beauty. More information or to register for this or other classes, visit adkinsarboretum.org.

April 2011—[Delaware Nature Society's Native Plant Sale](#)

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.

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

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. One idea that we are pursuing is having up to four other types of events per year (so quarterly instead of bi-monthly), such as one workshop, one symposium, and an annual meeting which would include a field trip and lunch, and each one of these meetings would include a short business section (though most day-to-day business is now going to be handled through email among the officers). 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 if interested, and details of each meeting will be on our website: 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**

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

