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

Most of us are familiar with jewelweed here in the Mid-Atlantic. I found it on a recent Inn-to-Inn hiking trip to Vermont. Our group walked along a 6-mile trail mostly covered with jewelweed and stinging nettles. It was along a creek bed and amply moist from the 30 straight days of rain. The guide mentioned using the crushed leaves to relieve the sting of nettles.

(See Bob Edelen’s article on pages 4 & 5.)

Native Cultivars—Good, Bad and Ugly
Excerpts from Native Plants & Wildlife Gardens
by Vincent Vizachero *

Native plant cultivars are a vexing topic. My experience has been that gardeners who are increasing their use of native plants are likely to find the topic of native plant cultivars to be confusing, and for good reason. There is a tremendous amount of variation in the traits for which cultivars are maintained, how the cultivars originated, and how cultivars are propagated.

See the complete article on this website for details about cultivars as related to native plants. He closes with this personal note:

“So, what is a native plant gardener to do? I have planted, and will probably continue to plant, cultivars of locally native plants. However, my first choice will always be a locally-sourced open-pollinated seed-grown plant. My second choice will be a cultivar that maintains the flower shape, berry size, and leaf color of the species. My goal is to never buy cultivars that exhibit radically different flower shape or color, but I will knowingly buy dwarf varieties which are otherwise similar to the species. And when I see a cultivar touted as resistant to insect damage, that one gets an automatic rejection. I also pay extra attention to observing my cultivars in the garden: if I don’t see pollinators on the flowers, or insect damage on the leaves, or birds eating the fruit then I am quite likely to rip out the cultivar and try the species. This is my policy because my primary motivation for using natives in the first place is that I want to support my local ecology. If I can’t see evidence that a cultivar is helping me accomplish that goal, I fire it and hire a plant that will.”

Also listed are 53 books which might be of interest to the native plant gardener. http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/books/

* Vincent Vizachero is a native plant advocate and social media coordinator in Baltimore, MD. He manages Herring Run Nursery, a native plant nursery operated by the non-profit watershed protection group Blue Water Baltimore.
The final DNPS Native Plant Sale in its current format was held on September 28th. Over 325 people attended the St. Jones Reserve “Arts in the Estuary” event which celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Reserve. Many members stopped by to purchase native plants and talk about the future of our plant sale. We give a big thank you to member Bob Meadows for the donation of blue flag iris and to member Rick Mickowski for the donated Cardinal flower and New York ironweed. The remaining plants being sold were left from the 2012 plant sale. We also thank Eric Zuelke for staffing the sale table and to Bill McAvoy and Mick Jones for assisting with customers. We made approximately $400 from the plant sale. DNPS Vice-President Eric Wahl staffed his own table to assist homeowners with potential landscape design questions.

For the first time, we had two commercial vendors – Nature Design Garden Center located in Frankford, Delaware and Yellow Springs Nursery located in PA near West Chester. The future plan for the plant sale is to continue to hold it in September as part of the St. Jones Reserve’s annual open house and to have commercial vendors sell plants. DNPS will no longer be in the plant nursery business due to lack of volunteers to grow, water, and care for the plants in the months before the plant sale.

DNPS will continue to hold a winter lecture/training workshop, the annual meeting, the plant sale, and the annual symposium. If you have any ideas or would like to work on one of these activities please contact one of the officers.

John Harrod, President  john@delawarenature society.org

John Wahl, Vice President  john EWahl@elementdg.com
GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

SPOTTED JEWELWEED (Impatiens capensis)

by Bob Edelen

NATURAL HISTORY

I remember my first experience with spotted jewelweed as a child playing with friends and the endless enjoyment of touching the swollen seed pods to watch them explode, scattering their seeds perhaps two feet in all directions. Spotted jewelweed, Touch-me-not, wild balsam, snap weed, orange balsam and silver weed are all common names for Impatiens capensis. Impatiens being the Latin word for impatient referring to the seed pods that burst open at the slightest touch – hence the common name ‘touch-me-not’, and the species name capensis meaning ‘of the cape’, referring to the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa where they were thought to have originated. The more common name of spotted jewel weed is thought to reflect the beautiful one-inch, orange-spotted flowers that bloom for up to two months in late summer and the way dew or rain beads up on the leaves forming sparkling droplets which give rise to the common name of jewelweed.

Spotted jewelweed is a native of eastern North America occurring from Canada south to Oklahoma, Alabama and Florida. It is an annual plant of boggy, shady areas, typically occurring in low woodlands and thickets, along stream banks and in swampy areas throughout its range. It grows two to five feet tall on weak, watery stems that are translucent – you can see light through them! The beautiful trumpet shaped flowers have a long spur at the end enticing long tongued pollinators to its rich nectar reward. Spotted jewelweed is a magnet for humming birds, butterflies and moths that can reach the nectar and to bees and other insects that will chew through the flowers base to reach the nectar. The caterpillars of several moths feed on the foliage, including Obtuse Euchlaena, Pink-Legged Tiger Moth, White-Striped Black, and Toothed Brown Carpet. Upland game birds eat the large seeds, including the Ruffed Grouse, Ring-Necked Pheasant, Greater Prairie Chicken, and Bobwhite Quail. Among mammals, White-Tailed Deer browse on the foliage, while the White-Footed Mouse eats the seeds.

WHERE TO GROW

Spotted jewelweed is an annual plant in the balsam family that grows to a height of two to five feet and remains in the landscape through self-seeding and can become somewhat aggressive under ideal growing conditions. It will often form large colonies in the wild. Spotted Jewelweed is a plant of damp, low woods, stream and river banks, swamps, pond edges and moist disturbed areas. Though it will tolerate drier locations given a constant moisture supply it will do best in moist shade or woodland gardens, bog gardens, pond or stream margins and low spots. It prefers light shade to partial sun, and a fertile soil with an abundance of organic material. Submergence of the roots by flood water is tolerated without apparent ill-effects.

PROPARATION

In the late summer collect seeds by encasing the seed pods in a paper bag and shaking vigorously to cause expulsion of the seeds. They can be difficult to start from seed because they are double-dormancy species, and may need a cold moist period followed by a warm moist period followed by a second cold moist period implying the need for two years (winter, Summer and winter) for germination although some seeds have been reported to germinate the year following planting. Therefore it is best to directly sow the seeds immediately in the target landscape.

(Cont. on page 5)
**Resources and Reviews** (see editor’s column on page 2)

*The Forest Unseen* wins “Best Book Award” from the National Academies as the 2013 Communication Award.
“Giving voice to the incredible scientific stories that lie hidden away inside the ivory tower was one of reasons I started this project.”

David George Haskell

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**Gardening With Native Plants**
(cont. from page 4)

**LORE**
Native Americans used the watery plant juices to relieve itching associated with poison ivy, stinging nettle and insect bites. The Ojibwa applied the thick juice to skin rashes and rubbed it on the head for headaches. Native Americans had many other uses for the plant including treatment by the Iroquois for renal disorders, as a diuretic, as a febrifuge, and for sore eyes and by the Cherokee as a gastrointestinal and gynecological aid.

It is said to have value in easing of bee sting pain and mosquito bites, minor burns, cuts, acne and has been used for warts, bruises, and fungal skin infections such as athlete’s foot and ringworm.

But don’t forget its most popular use of entertaining children for the enjoyment of exploding seed pods at the slightest touch, submerging the leaves in water to watch the undersides turn silvery or misting with water to watch the water bead up creating the “jewel’ of jewelweed!

Jewelweed is listed in the “*The Flora of Delaware Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program*” - Bill McAvoy’s database.

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**Monarch Butterflies: The Last Migration**, by Benjamin Vogt

From 1999-2010, milkweed populations shrank 58% in the Midwest as agriculture adopted genetically modified (GMO) crops that accept mass spraying of weed killer. And from 1999-2010 monarch egg production dropped by 81% in the Midwest. This now threatened insect migration – one of the largest of its kind in the world, stretching from central Mexico to southern Canada – is a calling out to restore native plants and ecosystems. Only 3% of the original tall grass prairie remains as each backyard becomes a 21st century wildlife refuge. Learn about the monarch—its migration and preferred host / nectar plants—and what you can do ensure its survival. See below:

**Bring Back the Monarchs**

There are a number of websites devoted to making milkweed more readily available. Here’s one online source listing nine nurseries in MD:

http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/resources/plant-seed-suppliers

This one has free seeds: [http://www.livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds.htm](http://www.livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds.htm)

My Discovery of Pipsissiwa

*Chimaphila maculata*

By Ed Crawford

My discovery of Pipsissewa began last spring during the annual Spring Roundup bird count, sponsored by the Delmarva Ornithological Society. This is an all-day bird count and I spent a good part of it at the Delaware Wild Lands (DWL) Cypress Swamp preserve in Southern Delaware. Between bird sightings, our DWL guide told me that some years back he had found surviving American chestnut sprouts on the Angola Neck Preserve. This was interesting news because I live on Angola Neck and, second, the previous autumn I had come across chestnuts for sale at the local produce market. Like American Chestnuts, these chestnuts had been on the small side, and I had never before come across locally grown chestnut. Energized by the latest information, I revisited the market and, after giving the owner an enthusiastic presentation of the history of the American chestnut, got the name and an address of the chestnut lady. She promised to call ahead and pave my way. The next week, I drove to the chestnut lady’s house and knocked. Concerned she wouldn’t open the door to a stranger, I prominently displayed a copy of *The Journal of the American Chestnut*. The chestnut lady soon flung open the door and exclaimed, “Why, you are the chestnut man!” “Yes, indeed,” I replied. She listened to my chestnut stories and told me some very interesting anecdotes about old land transfers and life on Angola Neck in the old days. She lamented the sharp declines in birds, wildlife, and wild plants caused by the loss of habitat to development. We then turned our attention to her chestnut trees.

There was almost zero chance of finding nut bearing American chestnut trees, but I maintained my delusion until she told me the trees had been planted 40 years ago by her late husband. The trees were Chinese chestnut. With this resolved, she gave me a tour of her property.

At a dappled shade side garden near the chestnut trees, she made a point of showing off two small plants with beautiful striped dark green leathery leaves. She said that Pipsissewa was one of her favorite plants, but it had become very hard to find. Pipsissewa was a new plant for me and I liked it a lot. We said our good-byes and I went to the Angola Neck Preserve and explored it without success for signs of American Chestnut.

As I walked back to the car I kept my eyes down to avoid tripping over the many briars. Just as I left the forest, I spied a small plant with striped green leaves peeking out of the brown duff. Instantly, I realized it was Pipsissewa! I looked around and found just seven plants, many of which were displaying attractive round green seed capsules. Despite its diminutive size, the bright leathery green leaves made it really stand out from the surrounding brown leaves. It was easy to understand why it was one of the chestnut lady’s favorite plants. After expanding my search in all directions with no success, I realized how lucky I had been to stumble upon this small colony. With my luck changed, I drove off thinking that sometimes the path taken to avoid tripping on a briar makes all the difference.

Common names for PIPSISSEWA are Striped Wintergreen, Spotted Wintergreen, Rheumatism Root, Rat’s Bane, and many others. It is a delicate plant that likes shady sites, acidic loose sandy soil, and expands slowly through underground runners. It has an interesting history as an herb and was listed in the US Pharmacopeia from 1820-1916. It blooms in early summer, bearing very pretty drooping pinkish and white flowers followed by attractive round seed capsules. It can be found in Southern Delaware on the Pine Trail at Prime Hook NWR, and in the North at White Clay Creek State Park.
Upcoming Events

Delaware Coast Day
Sunday, October 6, 2013   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

Fall/Winter 2013—Mt. Cuba Center  Your pathway to native plants

Lectures in the Copeland Native Plant Series are:

Native Plants for Fall Color  
*See them all - reds, yellows, burgundies, and oranges!*

**Date:** Thursday, October 24  
**Time:** 10:00 am – 12 Noon  
**Cost:** $15  
**Instructors:** Renée Kemmerer and Daniel dePersia, Mt. Cuba Center

Discover Our Natural Lands  
*The splendor of our forest, meadow and pond awaits you*

**Dates:** Thursday, November 7, Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
**Cost:** $15  
**Instructors:** Eileen Boyle & Nathan Shampine, Mt. Cuba Center
Visit the website for more details and to register.

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Fall 2013—Adkins Arboretum  
Sustainable Lawns—The Backyard Revolution  
Wednesday, October 9, 2013 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Tom Christopher, founder of Smart Lawn LLC, will discuss the different grass mixes and techniques he is using to create locally adapted, biodiverse lawns that need only three to four mowings per year, no summertime irrigation, and little or no fertilization.

Register for classes adkinsarboretum.org.

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Fall 2013—Delaware Nature Society  
October 5 & 6: Harvest Moon Festival, Saturday and Sunday, 10 am - 5 pm. Click for more information

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* Rick says “While biking along a trail near my home in New Castle County, I spotted a big patch of passion flower vine, which is a native of the southeastern United States.” If you find an interesting native plant, submit to the editor for inclusion in one of our newsletters.
Membership Application

DELAWARE native Plant Society

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
* 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