Wild Ones
NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

April 2022 Newsletter

April Meeting Highlights

Chapter Business.

Chapter membership now stands at 134.

Welcome to our new Treasurer, Denise Everett, and to Homeowner Advisory Committee Chair Ann Caulfield. This new committee will provide information to homeowners, HOAs, community groups, retirement communities, businesses, or townships that request advice on planting (or replanting) an area of their property with native plants. If you are interested in serving on this committee and have some experience planting and identifying native plants, please contact Ann at amcaulfield12@gmail.com

The chapter is looking for a chair for our Community Projects Committee. This person will coordinate chapter projects in the community -- for example, planting natives at a public park or school. Please contact wildonesofsepa@gmail.com if you are interested in serving on this committee.

Our chapter will be working with members of Phoenixville's Living Landscapes program to replant an area in Reeves Park with native plants. If you are interested in participating, please contact us at wildonesofsepa@gmail.com

Tell Pennsylvania To Ban More Invasive Ornamental Plants

Wild Ones' Pennsylvania chapters and the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society (PNPS) are teaming up on an email campaign to ask residents to help ban more invasive ornamental plants from sale in Pennsylvania. Invasive ornamentals like burning bush and Japanese honeysuckle, are invading our roadsides, fields, and forests, destroying native habitat.

Last fall, Pennsylvania banned its first invasive ornamental plants -- Japanese barberry and callery pear. The support of members of Wild Ones, PNPS, and many other organizations across the state was critical to this success.

We can't stop now. The Invasive Species Council has a list of the top 25 nonnative invasives that should be banned. Last fall, public comments from residents were key in getting the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee to ban Japanese barberry and callery pear. This year, we are asking the committee to ban more invasive nonnative plants, including privets, *Euonymus*, *Nandina*, butterfly bush, and Norway maple.

We need your help to make this happen. The committee's next meeting is April 21. Wild Ones and PNPS will be sending an email to our members, as well as members of many other nonprofits in Pennsylvania, asking you to submit a public comment to the committee via email or U.S. mail in support of banning these additional plants. Sample messages will be included, along with the committee's contact information. Please take a few minutes to send an email to support this effort. Thank you!

No Mow May

No Mow May is a community science initiative that encourages property owners to limit their lawn mowing practices in May. The goal is to provide early season foraging resources for pollinators that emerge in the spring, especially in urban landscapes when few floral resources are available.

By leaving your property unmown for the month of May, you're creating much-needed habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Recordings of past meetings are available on our youtube channel.
Visit us on Instagram and Facebook.

Presentation: Edible Landscapes

Permaculture refers to the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems that are diverse, stable, and resilient.

A guild is a collection of plants that work together to enhance each other through their various natural functions, providing things like physical support, nutrient sharing, and pest deterrence. With guild planting, you would plant supportive species alongside your main crop -- for example, to attract more pollinators to fruit-producing crops, to fix nitrogen for heavy feeders, or to shade the roots of larger plants.

American chestnut (*Castanea dentata x mollissima*) is a hybrid with the Chinese chestnut which provides resistance to the chestnut blight that eliminated native American chestnuts. The hybrid is 94% native. American chestnut requires 2 or 3 plants for best production.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*) produces small, tasty berries that resemble blueberries. It can be a multi-stem shrub or a small tree, 15 to 25 feet tall.

American plum (*Prunus americana*) is a small (10 to 20 feet high) thicket or understory tree that bears small, tart red fruit in fall. Its dense branching provides good cover for nesting birds.

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) grows 15 to 30 feet high and bears bright orange fruit that attracts wildlife. The fruits are edible after a frost but soften quickly, so the harvest window is narrow.

Paw paw (*Asimina triloba*) is an understory tree (15 to 30 feet high) that thrives in woodland areas. The large fruits ripen in late summer and resemble bananas in taste and texture.

Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*) is a dense, mound-shaped, thicket-forming shrub (to 12 feet high). Several plants are recommended for optimal nut production. The leaves turn an attractive copper to yellow in fall, and the nutritious nuts are enjoyed by deer, squirrels, foxes, and birds.

Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) is an upright, multi-stemmed shrub that needs acidic soil to thrive. Plant several cultivars for larger yield.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is a tall shrub that spreads by root suckers to form thickets. The flowers and fruit are used in winemaking, and the berries can also be made into pies and jelly. The thick growth provides nesting habitat for birds.

Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) is a tall suckering shrub or small tree (to 20 feet high) that works well in mixed hedgerows and yields blue-black berries that can be eaten raw or made into jelly.

Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) is a medium-height multi-stem shrub that adapts to a wide range of soil and light conditions. The fruit is best cooked into juice or jam, or added to baked goods.

Black raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis*) sends up canes that reach 6 feet in height and arch back to the ground. One-year-old canes produce small black fruit that are delicious raw or made into pie or jam.

Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) is a low-growing perennial (up to 6" in height) that spreads readily via rhizomes and produces delicious small red berries. The plant serves as a great living mulch or groundcover whose leaves turn deep red to maroon in the fall.

If these examples tempt you to start your own perennial food forest, you can find more information on edible landscape plants for our regions below.

Resources

What Is Permaculture? The Permaculture Research Institute

Foraging and Wild Edibles. Eat the Planet, Exploring Earth's Forgotten Edibles

Native Edibles. Grow Native!

More Edible and Landscape-Worthy Native Plants of New England. Ecological Landscape Alliance

Keystone Tree Crops Cooperative

Plants for a Future

SilvoCulture: Nuts for the Future

WO-SEPA 2022 Meeting Schedule

May 4: How To Design and Plant Your Home Landscape
June 9: Specialist Pollinators
July 6: Bondsville Mill Park
Aug. 11: Native Plant Guilds for Four-Season Interest
Sept. 7: Native Trees for Your Home Landscape
Oct. 13: To be announced
Nov. 9: Native Shrubs for Four-Season Interest
Dec. 1: Collecting Native Seeds

Thought of the Month -- Hedgerows

A hedge typically consists of many plants of the same species, often sheared to an uniform shape and size, whereas a hedgerow is a diverse planting of many different species of woody plants with herbaceous ground covers at their base. Plants are chosen that have similar growing requirements for soil type, moisture, and sunlight.

From left: Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), smooth hydrangea (*H. arborescens*), and raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*) perform well in shady locations. Photo: Wild Seed Project

In designing a hedgerow, think about layers. Small trees, shrubs of various shapes and sizes, and a mix of ground covers will create dense and diverse habitat. This will also help keep weeds at bay by cutting down on their available sunlight and ground space.

A mixed-species hedgerow provides privacy, serves as a windbreak, and prevents soil erosion on slopes. Most important, the mix of species creates important wildlife habitat.

Clockwise from upper left: Beach plum (*Prunus maratima*), wild rose (*Rosa virginiana*), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), and New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americana*) do well in sunny, dry locations. Photo: Wild Seed Project

A hedgerow should be at least 6 feet wide, and preferably double that. Connecting your hedgerow to other vegetation, such as woods, meadows, or wetlands, whether on your property or your neighbors', will link these habitats and be even more beneficial to plants and animals.

Hedgerows provide abundant options for nesting, cover, shelter, and food for wildlife, from insects to birds to small mammals. The larger your hedgerow, the greater the benefits to wildlife.

Clockwise from upper left: winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), pussy willow (*Salix discolor*), and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) all thrive in wet sunny conditions. Photo: Wild Seed Project

From left: Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), witherod or wild raisin (*Viburnum cassinoides*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) are all beautiful additions to a mixed hedgerow which provide berries to sustain birds and mammals over the winter. Photo: Wild Seed Project

Join Wild Ones and help heal the Earth one yard at a time! https://members.wildones.org/join/

Thought of the Month, continued from page 3

Here are some recommendations for hedgerow plants for specific site conditions, from *Native Hedges and Hedgerows: Beauty and Biodiversity*, by Heather McCargo.

For a **shady** area, such as under tree canopies or next to a building:

- Shadbush (*Amelanchier canadensis & A. laevis*)
- Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)
- White dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)
- Hobblebush (*Viburnum lantanoides*)
- Smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)
- Striped & mountain maple (*Acer pennsylvanicum & A. spicata*)
- Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
- Purple-flowering raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*)
- Pawpaw (*Asiminia triloba*)
- Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
- Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)
- Azalea (*Rhododendron prunifolium, R. viscosum*)
- Ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

For **wet soils in sun**:

- Pussy willow (*Salix discolor*)
- Sweetgale (*Myrica gale*)
- Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Inkberry & winterberry (*Ilex glabra* & *I. verticillata*)
- Silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*)
- Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

For a **mostly sunny site with medium moisture**:

- Shadbush (*Amelanchier* spp.)
- Wild plum (*Prunus americana*)
- Wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*)
- Hawthorne (*Craetageus* spp.)
- Chokeberry (*Aronia* spp.)
- Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
- Shrub dogwoods (*Cornus racemosa, C. sericea*)
- Viburnums (*V. opulus, V. americanum, V. lentago, V. nudum, V. dentatum*)
- Meadowsweet (*Spirea alba, S. tomentosa*)
- Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- Arbor vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

For a **shorter hedge** in a tight space:

- Witch alder (*Fothergilla gardenii*)
- Meadowsweet (*Spirea tomentosa*)
- Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*)
- Bayberry (*Morella caroliniensis*)
- New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americana*)
- Dwarf shadbush (*Amelanchier spicata*)
- Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)
- Shrubby St. Johns wort (*Hypericum prolificum*)
- Maple-leaf viburnum (*V. acerifolium*)
- Bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*)
- Lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)
- Yellowroot (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*)

Note: taller shrubs such as bayberry can be pruned to maintain a shorter stature.

Resources

https://archive.triblive.com/news/hedgerows-an-underappreciated-planting/

https://www.xerces.org/publications/habitat-installation-guides/pennsylvania-hedgerow-planting-422-for-pollinators

https://www.growingwithnature.org/what-is-a-hedgerow/

https://www.ecolandscaping.org/06/designing-ecological-landscapes/native-plants/native-hedges-and-hedgerows-beauty-and-biodiversity/

https://www.mofga.org/resources/pollinators/Plant-Corridors/

Tree of the Month -- American Hop-Hornbeam (aka Ironwood), *Ostrya virginiana*

This attractive small to medium size tree can grow 20 to 40 feet tall with a spread of 10 to 20 feet. It has a single trunk and a dense, broad, oval-shaped canopy when mature. This is a good choice for a street tree due to its compact shape, smaller leaves, and lack of susceptibility to disease.

Slender catkins emerge in early spring. Male and female flowers are borne on the same tree.

The catkins are followed by seed clusters that resemble hops.

These papery husks start out green and turn to a tawny brown by fall, remaining on the tree through winter to add an interesting note to the landscape. The nutlets inside are eaten by a variety of wildlife including grouse, bobwhite, deer, pheasant, rabbit and turkey.

Hop-hornbeam grows on rocky slopes and in the understory of acidic, upland forests along with oak, pine, birch, and chestnut. It is native to almost every state east of the Mississippi River.

As a young tree, hop-hornbeam has smooth grey bark. As the tree matures, its bark becomes darker and somewhat shaggy, appearing plated. The bark is a dependable way to distinguish this tree from its close relative and look-a-like, the American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*). The bark of hop-hornbeam becomes rough and shaggy with maturity, whereas the bark of *Carpinus* remains smooth. The rough texture of hop-hornbeam bark provides the perfect habitat for invertebrates, making ideal hunting grounds for insect-eating songbirds.

As an understory tree, hop-hornbeam provides important food and cover for ground-dwelling mammals and birds, as well as amphibians, reptiles, and insects.

The wood of hop-hornbeam is extremely hard and durable, giving it the nickname “ironwood.” It was used for sleigh runners, plane soles, and other hand tools.

Ideal placement for this tree in the landscape is in full sun to light, dappled shade. Soil should be moderately acidic. Moist, well-drained soil is ideal, but hop-hornbeam can tolerate dry soil once established. As with all new trees, provide consistent water during the first year and mulch beyond the expected canopy of the mature tree, to provide a soft landing area for insects that overwinter in the fallen leaves.

Hop-hornbeam -- Quick Facts

Height: 20-40 feet

Growth rate: Slow

Shape: Pyramidal when young, rounded oval when mature

Flowers: Male & female catkins

Fruit: Nutlets enclosed in hop-like papery capsules

Leaves: 2” to 6” in length, serrated, dark green above, pale green below, gold to orange in fall

Habitat: Full sun to part shade, slightly acidic well-drained soil, tolerates dry rocky soil, grows well on hilly sites, tolerates drought but not flooding; sensitive to deicing salt

Wildlife value: Fruits eaten by birds and mammals; host plant for swallowtail butterflies and several moth species

Zone: 3-9

Pledge To Rewild -- Stop Fertilizing and Spraying

In January, we invited readers to start off 2022 with a pledge to rewild. This initiative by the Wild Seed Project aims to meet the challenge of biodiversity loss head-on by restoring a minimum of 70% of native plant biomass to support healthy populations of butterflies, bees, birds, and insects that are crucial to a functioning ecosystem.

The pledge to rewild includes shifting away from intensively managed landscapes and harmful practices to actions that are better for wildlife and the planet's health.

Start with Soil

As we start potting up seedlings and planting out our natives this month, we are connecting with our soil in a very hands-on way. So let's take a minute to explore this foundation of our gardening activities.

We tend to think of soil as good or bad, which just means good or bad for our purposes. Soil certainly can be compromised by contamination with heavy metals, pesticides, and herbicide residues. Otherwise, it's just soil. Some is wet, some is dry; some is fertile, some is lean, but it all supports some kind of plant life.

We tend to describe our soil as rocky, sandy, or clayey. These are all components of soil. Want to find out what your soil contains? You can do this soil test at home with a quart mason jar. If you garden in a large area, test the soil in several locations. The results may surprise you!

- Sandy soil drains quickly because sand particles are relative large, leaving lots of space for water to move through. Plants that demand quick drainage, thrive in dry conditions, and can't stand wet feet over the winter can work well in sandy soil.
- Clay soil does not drain quickly, because clay particles are quite small and keep water from penetrating or draining. Plants with deep taproots and less sensitivity to wet roots can thrive in clay soil.
- Peaty soil holds water like a sponge and is relatively acidic. Certain families of plants are adapted to these conditions and require a low pH (acidity) in order to extract nutrients from the soil.
- Chalky soil is composed of larger particles and drains quickly, like sandy soil. It is composed mostly of calcium carbonate (limestone) and is alkaline (higher pH). It's usually shallow, stony, and quick to dry out unless it contains some clay. Chalky soil rarely becomes waterlogged, and it warms up quickly in spring.
- Silty soil is made up of finely textured mineral particles.
- Loamy soil is composed of varying percentages of clay, sand, and silt. Clay loam retains more water than sandy loam.

Certain plants are adapted to grow in each of these soil types. Matching the right plant to the right place includes figuring out what type(s) of soil you have, and which native plants thrive or can adapt to those soil types.

Beyond Fertilizer

We haven't mentioned fertilizer, because it's not a natural component of soil. Fertilizer is a soil enhancement, providing nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, sulfur, micronutrients, or biological organisms to facilitate or promote a plant's growth.

If you keep your soil supplied with compost and organic mulches, you won't need chemical fertilizers. These products are overkill for native plants, which don't need to be coddled with extra nutrients if the soil is appropriate for their needs and the plants are sited well. When you manage your garden as a natural ecosystem, your soil will provide what your plants need.

The top layer of soil is made up of decomposed material from the surface of the soil. In a natural system, leaves, stems, bark, and branches fall to the ground each year and begin to decay, aided by mil-

lions of microorganisms that make the resulting minerals and nutrients soil available to plants.

To mimic this natural system in your garden, use compost and organic mulches to insure a diversity of microorganisms in the soil. These mulches also hold moisture in the soil, helping plants withstand drought. Soil that's exposed to sun and rain is prone to erosion and nutrient leaching. Protect your soil by keeping it covered with plants or organic mulches.

Composted leaves, straw, rotted bark, and kitchen and yard trimmings make an excellent mulch that builds microbial life. You can set up a composting system to help you manage all the pruned vegetation you generate over the growing season and turn it into valuable compost. Leaves raked from your lawn and paths can be added to the compost bin or tucked between and underneath plants.

Knowing your soil, and understanding what your plants need from soil, are the keys to establishing a sustainable native plant community.

Dealing with Weeds

Your first reaction when seeing weeds in your garden beds probably is to pull them out. This might not be the best solution. Disturbing the soil by pulling weeds could encourage more weed seeds to germinate by exposing them to light. A newly planted area may have a large weed seed reservoir just waiting to sprout.

A better strategy might be to sever the weed's root just below the soil level with a scuffle hoe or clippers. Maintaining a thick layer of organic mulch will also prevent many weed seeds from germinating.

If you're converting an area from lawn or fields for a new native plant garden, check out some suggestions for site preparation in our March newsletter.

Many nonnative invasive plants require targeted techniques for effective removal. Check out this guide to identifying and managing some common invasives on your property.

The key to preventing the reappearance of many weeds is to create conditions that discourage them. High on this list is avoiding exposed soil; fill the spaces between perennials and underneath shrubs and trees with groundcover plants, and use organic mulches to cover bare ground until the plants are mature. This guide includes suggestions for native groundcovers to replace common nonnatives like *Vinca minor*, English ivy, and lily of the valley.

Managing Insects

What to do when you find insects on your plants? Well, that's the point of gardening with natives -- providing food and shelter for native insects includes leaves and bark as well as pollen and nectar. Native plants have co-evolved with their host insects, so the plants are unlikely to succumb to the insect attack, even if they lose some leaves to chewing, galls, or other predation.

Who could deny this cute face the leaves it needs to grow and turn into a beautiful spicebush swallowtail butterfly? Spicebush swallowtail larvae feed on the leaves of sassafras, tulip tree, and sweet bay magnolia as well as spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*).

Most insects are not pests. Get a good field guide and figure out what it is before you think of eliminating it. Chemical insecticides are toxic to native insects as well as whatever nonnative insect you are targeting.

Neonicotinoid insecticides (neonics) are especially problematic because they spread through a plant's tissues, poisoning native insects as they feed. Neonics are highly toxic to pollinators. These long-lasting systemic chemicals can harm pollinators even when applied months before bloom. Neonics are also used widely on farms and in urban landscapes, causing harm to water quality and aquatic ecosystems due to runoff and groundwater contamination.

Look for nurseries that sell plants grown without systemic pesticides like neonicotinoides.

Resources:

Primer for Ecological Gardening

Navigating the Nurseries

Understanding Neonicotoids

Plant This Not That -- Hedgerows A hedgerow -- a diverse planting of woody plants, from shrubs to small trees -- can serve as a living fence along a property line or a border within a yard. A low hedgerow can enclose a patio or separate a front yard from the street without blocking views. Because of the diversity of plants, a hedgerow can provide a tremendous amount of native habitat in a relatively small space.

Instead of These Nonnatives	Plant These Natives
Ligustrum sinense, L. vulgare **(Chinese/European privet)** Tall semi-evergreen thicket-forming shrub, small fragrant white flowers, black berries in fall. Spreads aggressively via root sprouts and seed. ***L. japonicum, L. lucidum*** **(Japanese/glossy privet)** Tall evergreen shrub, small fragrant white flowers small blue-black berries in fall. Spreads via root sprouts and seed.	***Viburnum nudum*** **(possumhaw)** Medium-height shrub (12-15'), white flower clusters, berries turn from pink to deep blue, good fall leaf color, very low maintenance. ***Aronia arbutifolia*** **(red chokeberry)** Multi-stem shrub, 6-10' tall, clusters of white flowers in spring, red fruit, good fall leaf color. ***Itea virginica*** **(Virginia sweetspire)** Fragrant white spring flowers, brilliant red to purple fall foliage, forms clumps via root suckers
Forsythia **spp** Deciduous shrub with cultivars from 2 to 8 ft tall, bright yellow early spring bloom. Some cultivars have variegated foliage and fall color. Spreads readily via root suckers and tip rooting.	***Lindera benzoin*** **(spicebush)** Fragrant yellow early spring flowers, red berries in fall (female plants), gold fall foliage, spicy scented leaves and bark; host plant for spicebush swallowtail butterfly. ***Hamamelis vernalis*** **(Ozark with hazel)** Very early fragrant yellow flowers, golden fall foliage, spreads via root suckers.
Rosa rugosa **(shrub rose)** Vigorous small shrub, small fragrant pink flowers, large edible orange to red fruits (hips); very thorny; forms thickets.	***Rosa virginiana*** **(Virginia rose),** ***Rosa caroliniana*** **(Carolina rose)** Abundant pink flowers, edible red fruit (hips), colorful fall foliage, host plant for *Polyphemus* moth. ***Myrica/Morella pennsylvanica*** **(northern bayberry)** Semi-evergreen shrub, fragrant leaves, small waxy silver berries (female plants), forms thickets via root suckers.
Eleagnus angustifolia **(Russian olive),** ***E. umbellata*** **(autumn olive)** Tall shrub or small tree, silvery foliage, fragrant flowers, spreads by seeds.	***Cornus racemosa*** **(gray dogwood)** Multi-stem shrub or small single-trunk tree, panicles of white flowers in spring, red to purple foliage in fall, white berries attract birds. ***Prunus caroliniana*** **(cherry laurel)** Tall, dense, evergreen shrub, white flowers, black fruit.
Euonymus alatus **(winged euonymus/burning bush)** Large multi-stem shrub or small tree, bright pink to red fall color, orange seeds, spreads via root sprouts and seeds.	***Itea virginica*** **(Virginia sweetspire)** Multistem shrub, fragrant white flowers, long-lasting red to purple fall foliage. ***Aronia melanocarpa*** **(black chokeberry)** Multistem shrub, fragrant white flowers, black fruit and brilliant red fall foliage. ***Physocarpus opulifolius*** **(common ninebark)** Mound-shaped shrub, white or pink flowers, red fruit, colorful peeling bark.
Berberis thunbergii **(Japanese barberry)** Short shrub, red berries and bright red fall foliage, spreads easily via root suckers and seed.	***Itea virginica*** **(Virginia sweetspire)** Multistem shrub, fragrant white flowers, long-lasting red to purple fall foliage. ***Rhus aromatica*** **(fragrant sumac)** Multistem short shrub, red to orange fall foliage, red berries (female plants).
Pyracantha coccinea (firethorn) Dense, thorny, fast-growing shrub, white flowers, orange or red berries.	***Sambucus canadensis*** **(elderberry)** Tall multi-stem shrub, white flowers, edible black berries. ***Ilex verticillata*** **(winterberry holly)** Suckering shrub, tiny white flowers, red berries.
Ilex crenata **(Japanese holly)** Small evergreen shrub, shiny round leaves, small white flowers.	***Ilex glabra*** **(inkberry)** Mound-shaped colony-forming shrub, glossy evergreen foliage, black berries.
Hibiscus syriacus **(rose of Sharon)** Tall, woody, vase-shaped shrub, large showy flowers, reseeds readily.	***Hibiscus moscheutos*** **(hardy hibiscus)** Tall, fast-growing multi-stem shrub, large colorful flowers.

Diary of a Rewilder

If you're new to rewilding, you might be thinking -- how does this work in practice? We would like to share with you some personal experiences that could help with your own rewilding projects.

This month we spoke with a gardener who is working on a large suburban yard, about an acre and a half in size. Most of the yard was a spacious lawn with some mature trees in the front yard and a row of evergreens along the rear property line.

Shortly after moving in, the evergreens had to be removed due to disease. The owner took the opportunity to replace them with a variety of natives. The location is a dry, sunny slope, rocky in places. The owner planted hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), black oak (*Quercus velutina*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*). A swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) was planted at the base of the slope, where the soil is wetter.

A large area in the front yard between the driveway and the house had been planted in shrubs, including nonnative rhododendron and azalea that were very overgrown, and a lot of very invasive Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). The nonnatives were removed, leaving just two mature white dogwoods (*Cornus florida*).

The owner's first idea was to plant a wildflower meadow. The flowers were beautiful, but the legacy weed seeds soon took over, due to incomplete site preparation. The result was lots of Canada thistle.

The next approach was to mow the area low and replant with layers of native trees, shrubs, and perennials. The owner ambitiously ordered over 100 plants for this area, including fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), common ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), and inkberry (*Ilex glabra*). Perennials included wild petunia (*Ruellia humilis*) in the sunny areas, and foamflower (*Tiarella* spp.), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia syphilitica*), white wood aster (*Aster divercatus*), and several native ferns in the shade. One benefit of the former wildflower meadow was the unexpected emergence of some of the perennials that were in the mix, including *Echinacea purpurea*, wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), and gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta*).

After tackling such a huge project, the owner's advice is not to take on too much at once! This is a challenge when working on a large, open yard with few defined spaces. If possible, divide your area into smaller, more manageable sections and try to complete area one before moving on to the next.

One place that offered a different challenge was a courtyard between the house and garage, enclosed on three sides and facing north. It had been planted with rhododendrons that were too large for the space, resulting in a tangle of crowded, overgrown plants. The owner removed them and planted shade-tolerant inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), and *Pachysandra procumbens*, while leaving a well-behaved nonnative holly.

In the large front yard, the owner planted several large trees, including river birch (*Betula nigra*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), *Arbor vitae*, and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*).

Along the property line with the neighbor, the owner created a hedgerow with arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), and cranberry viburnum (*Viburnum trilobum*). This connects to a bed of edible/medicinal plants that includes pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), ground nut (*Apios americana*), and *Echinacea purpurea*. To prepare the area, the grass was smothered using cardboard covered with mulch.

Some advice from this ambitious, hard-working rewilder:

- Researching the right plants for your site's conditions is time well spent.
- Don't spend so much time designing that it keeps you from actually planting.
- You can read every book ever written about gardening, but the best learning comes from doing.
- Don't expect everything to be perfect or finished. Our gardens are a work in progress.

Buy Native Plants in Bulk and Save

Maximize your spring planting with flats of perennial plugs from North Creek Nurseries. Email your orders to SecretaryWildOnesSEPA@gmail.com.

Orders from Wild Ones members (any chapter), are due April 15. Orders must include the following:

- Complete name of plant as it appears on the North Creek AVAILABILTY list, including size (LP32, etc.). Make sure the plants you're ordering are available on or before April 25.
- Quantity of FULL FLATS you are ordering. No partial flats may be ordered. No cancellations.

Totals will be calculated once the order has been finalized. Payment must be received before pickup, which is scheduled for April 28 in Pottstown. You must pick up your order on April 28th unless other arrangements are made.

Events in the Community and Beyond

Apr 10 - 15 Plant Sale, Stoneleigh; shop on line, pick up Apr 30/May 1
Apr 14 Wild Ones members-only garden tour, 4:00, Doylestown. RSVP to wildonesofsepa@gmail.com
Apr 16 Wildflower Walk: Spring Ephemerals. 10 a.m. - noon, Lancaster Conservancy, Shenks Ferry
Apr 18-May 2 Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy Native Plant Sale on-line advance ordering
Apr 21 Spring Ephemerals Stroll, 10-11 a.m. Jenkins Arboretum
Apr 22 Earth Day of Action. 1-4 p.m., Lancaster Conservancy, Climbers Run Nature Preserve
Apr 23 Native Plant Sale & Swap, 1-4 p.m. Briar Bush Nature Center, 1212 Edge Hill Rd, Abington
Apr 23 Rodale Institute Earth Day Celebration & Plant Sale, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Kutztown
Apr 23 Spring Plant Walk. 10 a.m.-noon. Horn Farm, York, PA
Apr 23 Keystone Wildflowers Native Plant Sale, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., 675 Hill Rd, Robesonia
Apr 23 Berks County Conservation Celebration. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. 1238 County Welfare Rd, Leesport
Apr 24 Philadelphia County Master Gardeners' Plant Sale, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Fairmount Park Hort. Center
Apr 29-30 Univ. Delaware Plant Sale. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 531 S. College Ave, 152 Townsend Hall, Newark
Apr 29-May 1 Wildflower Weekend, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mt Cuba Center
Apr 30 Lancaster Native Plant & Wildlife Festival, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. 595 Granite Run Drive, Lancaster
May 7-8 Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy Native Plant Sale, 2030 Shearer Rd, Lansdale
May 7 Central PA Native Plant Festival, Boalsburg
May 7 Native Plant Sale, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Manada Conservancy, pre-order on line through April 20
May 7-8 Lancaster County Master Gardeners Plant Sale, 8 a.m. - noon, 1383 Arcadia Rd Lancaster

Educational Opportunities

Apr 12 "Native Plants -- The Good, Better, and Best" 7 p.m., webinar, Brandywine Conservancy
Apr 13 "A New Garden Ethic" Benjamin Vogt. , 7-8:30 p.m., webinar, Grow Native Massachusetts
Apr 14 "Native Plants for Improving Outdoor Air Quality" Eric Fuselier, 7 p.m., webinar, Wild Ones
Apr 20 "April Showers Bring May Flowers" 6:30 p.m. webinar, Brandywine Conservancy.
Apr 21 "Native Plants To Remediate Soil Contamination" Eric Fuselier, 7 p.m., webinar, Wild Ones
Apr 23 "Terrific Trilliums" 10 a.m.-noon, Mt. Cuba Center
Apr 26 "Natives Can Love Containers Too" noon-1 p.m. webinar. Brandywine Conservancy
Apr 27 "Spring Groundcovers" 6-7:30 p.m. webinar, Mt. Cuba Center
Apr 30 "Nuts and Bolts of Successful Containers" 10-11:30 a.m. webinar, Mt. Cuba Center
May 4 "Urban Landscape Inspirations from Native Plant Communities" 7-8:30 p.m. webinar, Grow Native Massachusetts
May 6 "Window Boxes for the Sophisticated Gardener" 10 a.m.-noon, Mt. Cuba Center