



*Hydrangea  
quercifolia*

# NativeSCAPE

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Learn more about our new plant of the year.

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##### About your membership in the Georgia Native Plant Society

Your membership dues and donations help support our mission which is:

To promote the stewardship and conservation of Georgia's native plants and their habitats -

By sponsoring meetings, workshops, an annual symposium, grants, scholarships, the native plant rescue program, and this newsletter - utilizing an all-volunteer staff of dedicated native plant enthusiasts. We look forward to and appreciate your continued support. Membership renewal forms can now be completed [online](#) or by completing the form on the last page of this news letter.

## NativeSCAPE January 2015



### President's Message

By Jacqueline McRae

#### Happy New Year!

So, are you ready to start working on all those New Year's resolutions? The to-do list is long again for our Society in 2015 but we are committed to making sure that all of the investments made last year come to fruition. Mostly I'm referring to the launch of our updated website, but also to the time spent working with our chapter presidents, getting to know new chapter applicants, and working at a Board of Directors level to understand how to better serve our members statewide.

On the heels of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration this past fall, 2015 will be a year of making history for GNPS. Our new restoration site on the Beltline provides us with an idyllic location for showcasing native plants to residents of Atlanta and visitors to our state Capital, while giving our city a sense of place. This wooded three-quarter acre site is in view of downtown Atlanta and is ripe for restoration using a wide variety of native plants. Many members have enthusiastically signed up to help during the various phases of the Beltline project. In the years to come, the volunteers will be able to walk past the site and know that they contributed towards making it a reality.

Our members across the state are eager to share in what we've accomplished in Atlanta, the birthplace of our Society. Growing our membership is as important to our Society as growing our native plants! New members want to replicate successes, benefit from lessons learned, and share new points of view. The Strategic Planning Initiative, launched in 2012, is the first agenda item for the Board of Directors in 2015. The Strategic Planning Initiative is a working document that we can all reference to reach as many people as possible across Georgia with our resounding mission: "To promote the stewardship and conservation of Georgia's native plants and their habitats through education and with the involvement of individuals and organizations."

Please watch out for special requests for help and raise your hand to volunteer – clearly there is a lot to be done and we will always need more legs and arms on the ground!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline



Photo by Naomi Smith



## Book Review: Trees of Eastern North America

Text by Ron Smith

The authors of *Trees of Eastern North America* [TREES] are Gil Nelson, Richard Spellenberg and Christopher J. Earle. Nelson and Spellenberg each previously authored one or more well-known tree field guides. Earle is an ecologist. The illustrator, David More, previously illustrated a number of tree guides. Their 2014 guide promises to be “the most comprehensive, best illustrated, and easiest-to-use field guide to the trees of eastern North America”.

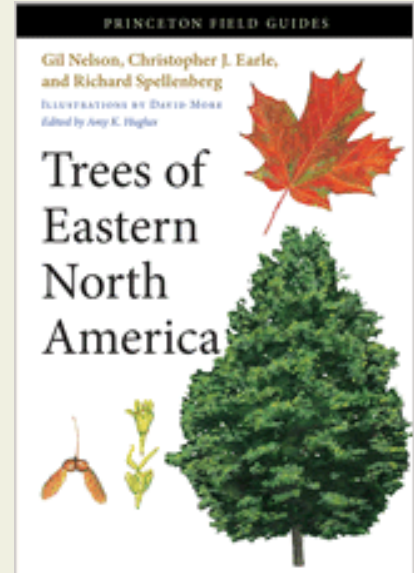
When first offered an opportunity to review *TREES*, I hesitated. While collecting several tree guides over the years, I failed in successfully navigating their identification keys. I’d get dazed by the plethora of technical terms, and developed a mental block. But now here’s this guide with an “easiest-to-use” label.

Perhaps this was my opportunity to get the tree ID bugaboo off my back. I agreed to write the review, borrowed a paperback copy from a friend, and headed to the woods.

The guide’s physical aspects stand out. At 1 5/8” thick and 720 pages, it has considerable heft. It does, however, tuck nicely in my backpack. With repeated use, I’ve come to view the guide’s size as a testimony to its comprehensiveness.

*TREES* covers 825 North American species, from the central portion of the Great Plains eastward, including Canada and tropical Florida. One resource, using the definition of a tree as a single-trunk woody plant at least 13’ tall, estimates this region contains 415 “native or indigenous” trees. *TREES* broadens its definition of a tree by including “a number of plants generally taller than a human that may be thought of as shrubs”. It also includes non-native naturalized trees and “a few prominent cultivated street and garden trees”.

My favorite *TREES* feature is its thorough and wonderful descriptions, which I found to be educational, interesting, and quite useful. It’s organized by taxonomic hierarchy with distinctive characterizations provided for each family, genus, section, and species. As examples of some distinctive characteristics I learned, the beech and oak family members’ fruit (nut) is enclosed in a cup shell, the oak genus members have a cluster of buds at the end of twigs, and the white oak section members lack the true bristles at the end of leaf veins that members of the red oak section have.





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## Book Review: Trees of Eastern North America

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The authors don't define "easiest-to-use". They do, however, propose that knowledge of plant family characteristics described by the guide allows for easier plant identification. Additionally, *TREES* features including the species "Quick ID" thumbnail of the most distinctive characteristics, the species range maps, and the "Similar Species" discussions are helpful ID features, although not unique. Ease-of-use was likely also intended through the tempered usage of technical terms, and through use of leaf and twig keys rather than the more technical dichotomous keys.

I selected a tree for identification that was rooted on a rock outcrop. Thumbing through the *TREES* leaf key, which groups leaves having similar attributes, I selected "Scarlet Oak" as the closest match and was directed to page 328. Flipping through the red oaks I landed on page 338, where the leaf shape resembled the Georgia Oak. The descriptions of leaf, twigs, bark, rock outcrop habitat, and similar species comparisons confirmed a match. It was a quick and easy identification.

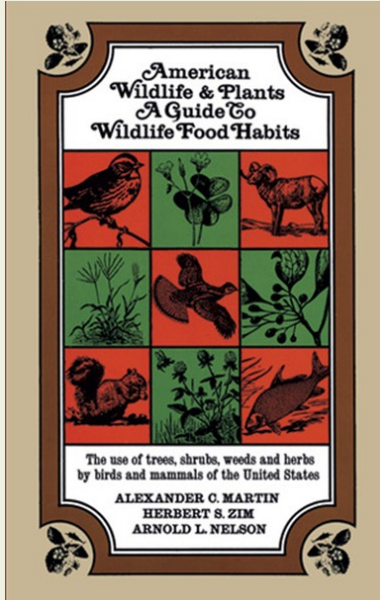
Although I was able to identify most trees with relative ease, a few times I got stumped to the point of turning to another resource with dichotomous keys. Several factors can complicate matching a leaf to the leaf keys. First, the majority of species leaves are not illustrated in the leaf keys. When a match is not forthcoming, one must settle on the closest match for direction to the appropriate family. Second, some species leaf shapes are variable. In one instance the illustrators' interpretation of a leaf shape differed from the norm of my samples. Third, at times I just overlooked a match that, in retrospect, was fairly obvious. All that being said, ultimately I attained a very good ID success rate. The more I played the leaf match game, the better I got. At times the bark illustrations left me Googling for photos.

Overall, *TREES* lives up to its billings for comprehensiveness, wealth of illustrations and ease of use. It's an excellent large-woody-plants foundational resource for any person wanting to learn tree biology and identification. I'm keeping the copy I borrowed from my friend and sending her a new copy. And I'm pleased to say, in working on this review I learned to use one dichotomous key that I'm packing as a backup.



## Book Review: Wildlife Food Habits and Favorite Native Plants

Text by Gail Farley



What do the following have in common? The Statue of Liberty arrives in New York Harbor. A patent is filed for the first roller coaster. Grover Cleveland becomes president of the United States. The Apache warrior, Geronimo, is fighting US troops. Louis Pasteur invents the rabies vaccine. The Georgia Institute of Technology (its future name) is established in Atlanta. The answer lies in the 19th century - the year 1885.

The outer coastal plain along the Atlantic Ocean in 1885 was in many places a shadow of its former self. The long leaf pine was logged to near extinction. Forests that greeted the early colonists were cleared for homes, crops and pasture. Marshes and swamps were drained to increase acreage for agriculture. George Washington made a failed attempt to wrestle land from the Great Dismal Swamp located in Vir-

ginia and North Carolina. Watershed quality declined as soil erosion from farmlands clouded streams, rivers and bays.

All the while, wildlife was pushed from native homes and forced to find new food and cover. Flocks of wild turkey moved out as jays, crows and starlings moved in. Cultivated crops of corn, oats, barley and wheat proved a boon for wildlife. Cleared forests created edges where grass, perennials and shrubs could grow and provide wildlife with seeds, fruit, insects and cover. The Ivory-billed woodpecker and the passenger pigeon became extinct while other wildlife flourished and adapted to the ways of mankind.

The ability of wildlife to adjust and adapt to altered landscapes and introduced foodstuffs had long been of interest to field naturalists. The famous author of *Birds of America* (1827-1838), John James Audubon, shot the birds he posed and painted. He studied their stomach contents and noted foods eaten as "wild fruits and grains", "weed seeds", or "insect and plant materials". With scalpel, tweezers, pencil, and journal in hand, Audubon became an early practitioner of studying bird food habits in a laboratory.

The traditional study of wildlife and food habits occurs in the field. The field naturalist needs a keen eye, patience, and excellent record keeping skills. Henry David Thoreau is an early example. Weary after writing the book *Walden*, Thoreau embarked on a labor of love as he began to observe and record the goings-on of the native plants and wildlife near his home in Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau writes of American chestnuts in the fall of 1850 that "the chestnuts are rattling out. The jays

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## Book Review: Wildlife Food Habits and Favorite Native Plants

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scream and the red squirrels scold while you are clubbing and shaking the trees." He found 35 chestnuts a mouse had stored in its passageways. Thoreau noted the fall chestnut harvest of 1852 "was more than the squirrels could consume".

The queen of the eastern forests fell victim to Chestnut Blight in 1904. The American chestnut was all but a memory by 1950. Thanks to Thoreau and his writings in *Wild Fruits*, we can wonder what it's like when "the chestnuts are rattling out".

In 1885 the study of wildlife and their food habits became a mandate of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Early research focused on wildlife food habits that can harm farmers' fields. It evolved to study waterfowl, upland game birds, fur and game animals and other species. Fish and Wildlife Service record #1 was of a song sparrow shot in a marsh near Sing Sing, NY at 6:00 pm on July 3, 1885. Its stomach contents were studied and recorded as 20% animal matter and 80% vegetable matter. Decades later, more than 250,000 records existed for birds plus thousands of records on mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

This vast reserve of federal food habits data, plus that gathered by state conservation and fish and game departments across decades, is the backbone of a unique book titled *American Wildlife & Plants - A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits: the use of trees, shrubs, weeds and herbs by birds and mammals of the United States*. This book was published in 1951 under the direction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, at the Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland. The authors who took on the challenging task to organize, interpret and publish this data are biologist Alexander C. Martin, Consultant Herbert S. Zim, and Arnold L. Nelson, director of the Patuxent Research Refuge, MD.

This book answers questions such as "What foods do the common goldfinch eat?" and "What foods do goldfinches prefer to eat?" The answer is that ragweed year round is 10-25% of the goldfinch diet; thistle and sweet gum are 10-25% of its wintertime diet and shepherds-purse is 10-25% of its summertime diet. Goosefoot, sunflower, dandelion, velvet grass and alder are 2-5% of the goldfinch diet, depending on the time of year. The data also shows that summer, fall and winter seeds make up 96%, 99% and 97%, respectively, of their diet. Its spring diet is 49% animal food (insects, etc.) and 51% plant food. This is outstanding information for anyone who wants to attract goldfinches to their landscape!

The book answers questions such as, "What wildlife utilizes sweet gums for food?" and "To what extent does wildlife *prefer* sweet gum for food?". The answer is: "Mallard ducks, bobwhite quail, Carolina chickadees, juncos, white-throated sparrows, towhees, Carolina wrens and the Eastern chipmunk eat sweet gum seeds as 12 - 20% of its diet; Goldfinches 5-10%, squirrels 2-5% and

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## Book Review: Wildlife Food Habits and Favorite Native Plants

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beaver (seeds and wood) 10-25% of their diet." The authors remark, "this plant is used to only a small extent by wildlife." This is excellent information! It helps a landscaper decide whether or not to include a native sweet gum tree in a landscape design or restoration project.

Duck hunters might be interested in the aquatic and marsh section where the food habits of specific water fowl are listed. Fur and game animals are listed with their food preference data. Cultivated plants such as corn, wheat and barley have their own sections detailing wildlife and food habit data. All this information can be used to invite wildlife home by planting favorite foods.

This information should stand the test of time. Bird food habits and woody plant preferences should be about the same in 2011 as in 1951. The only difference might be that the number of invasive plants as a percentage of wildlife diet may have increased as invasives have secured a stronger hold on the native landscape.

The chapter that brings closure to this article is titled "wildlife plants ranked according to their value." Songbirds are the greatest part of each plant value but the ranks also consider water, marsh, shore and upland game birds, fur, game and small mammals and browsers. The plants are listed by common name. Field and lab limitations made it difficult to drill down past genus to identify plant species.

The woody native plants that rank from #1 - #20 for their wildlife value in the southeast region of the US (includes piedmont and coastal plain of Georgia) are in *descending* order: Oak, Pine, Blackberry, Wild Cherry, Greenbrier, Grape, Blueberry, Hickory, Black gum, Holly, Poison Ivy, Beech, Maple, Virginia-creeper, Persimmon, Wax myrtle, Dogwood, Mulberry and Tulip Tree.

When cross-referenced with Douglas W. Tallamy's List of Woody Plants Ranked by Ability to Support Lepidoptera (butterfly) Species (*Bringing Nature Home*, 2007) the following are truly dual purpose, highly beneficial native plants: Oak, Wild Cherry, Blueberry, Maple, Pine, Hickory and Beech. In all categories, the mighty oak comes out on top. The U.S. Forest Service *Silviculture Manual* honors the White Oak, *Quercus alba*, as "an outstanding tree of all trees".

Welcome back native wildlife into your landscape by planting white oak trees. Many years may pass before acorns appear. In the meantime, the oak graces the land with its arboreal beauty and provides shelter and nest sites. Wild turkeys may not find their way back home, but others will. Woodpeckers, titmouse, nuthatch, brown thrasher, towhee, raccoon and gray squirrel will relish the oaks. Whether planting an oak tree or wild cherry, blueberry, maple, pine, hickory, beech or others, plant natives and wildlife WILL come home.

[NOTE: This article originally appeared in the July 2011 issue of NativeSCAPE, the newsletter of the Georgia Native Plant Society.]



## Understory Trees: Witch-Hazel and Snowbell

Text by Ken Gohring



Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

The witch-hazel (*Hamamelis* spp.) is a truly fascinating understory tree found throughout the eastern third of the country with extensions into southeastern Canada. It is usually found in ravines and along creek banks as well as upland hardwood forests close to a source of moisture. One feature that makes this a desirable plant is its unusual time of bloom - September to December, when virtually no other plant blooms. Its 1/2 to 3/4 inch long, yellow, fragrant petals, sometimes described as "squiggly," are frequently the only signs of color when most plants in the woods are dormant.

Another unusual feature of the witch-hazel is its fruit, which develops over the following spring and matures in the fall at the same time the blooms appear. In fact, the name "Hamamelis" is a Greek word that means "of the same time" or "together." These fruits, usually about 1/2 inch long, are brown, woody capsules that explode with a cracking sound, sending their small shiny black seeds up to 20 feet away in all directions. Frequently the fruits are eaten by birds and squirrels.

A third distinguishing feature of this plant is its medicinal properties. Native American peoples have long used the plant for numerous ailments. Usually the twigs and leaves were mixed with water and boiled or steamed to form a mixture that was applied as a conditioner for legs or used on aches to ease pain. Additional uses included treatment of cuts, bruises, and insect bites. Some primitive groups used the plant in treating such diverse ailments as venereal disease, tooth ache, and tuberculosis. Witch-hazel is still used as a treatment for sunburn, sores, bites, and sore muscles, as well as an aftershave lotion. It is an ingredient in many over-the-counter products. Witch-hazel is one of only three products approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as an astringent. Apparently it provides long lasting anti-inflammatory relief.

The witch-hazel plant is a round shrub that can grow into a small tree 20 to 30 feet tall with a spread of 20 to 25 feet. It is characterized by a short trunk and numerous branches while in shrub form. Its alternate leaves, which can grow up to 6 inches long, are nearly circular with five to seven veins. The blooms appear after the leaves have fallen. The witch-hazel probably derives its common name from colonial days when its flexible, forked branches were used as divining rods by dowsers searching for sources of water or metals. There is no connection to the word "witch" but to an old English word for limber branches called "wyth."

Witch-hazel is a slow growing plant suitable for rich, shady, well-drained sites. It does best in the





## Understory Trees: Witch-Hazel and Snowbell

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moderate shade of larger trees, but will grow in open sunny sites with good soil and adequate moisture. It is especially attractive during its bloom season in late fall or early winter.

There are two botanical varieties of *Hamamelis virginiana* and a separate species, *Hamamelis vernalis*, found primarily along stream banks in the Ozarks and farther south to Louisiana. There is one cultivar which has red blooms. The modern witch-hazel industry is centered in the state of Connecticut, where the branches are usually harvested from the wild by cutting them off at ground level. The plants regenerate and can be cut again a few years later.



Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

Witch-hazel has been found on at least one GNPS rescue site in Cherokee County. Propagation in the wild is primarily from seeds, which can take up to 18 months to germinate. Collected seeds that have been allowed to dry must undergo stratification. The plant can be propagated by layering, and soft wood cuttings can be rooted under mist in the summer.

If for no other reason than its bloom season, witch-hazel should be considered for the native plant garden.

### **Snowbell (*Styrax spp.*)**

I first encountered snowbells on a plant rescue in Carroll County at a large site being developed for personal residences. Plans for the site included a lake that was to be constructed with an earthen dam across a small creek flowing through the interior of the property. Since the creek would be flooded, the usual stream setback conditions concerning removal of vegetation did not apply, and rescuers were able to dig plants in the creek area. The site yielded many gentians, grass of Parnassus, and other



Bigleaf Snowbell (*Styrax grandifolius*)

Picture By Ellen Honeycutt

*(Continued on next page)*



## Understory Trees: Witch-Hazel and Snowbell

*Continued from previous page.*

wetland plants normally off limits for rescuers. Facilitator Lisa Betz discovered a small shrub adjacent to the creek that she identified as American snowbell (*Styrax americanus*). Her identification was later confirmed by Mike Strickland.

Later at the site, facilitator Greg Kohlbacher, who has the ability to explore large areas in relatively short periods of time, discovered a small grove of bigleaf snowbell (*Styrax grandifolius*) growing on a hillside not far from the stream. I wasn't able to get either of the two species that I rescued to live.



Bigleaf Snowbell (*Styrax grandifolius*)

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

Mike Strickland's efforts succeeded, and he indicated that he was also able to root cuttings from his rescued plants.

Subsequent rescues in Cherokee, Paulding, and Cobb yielded additional specimens of *Styrax grandifolius*. I was able to get plants from these sites to live. Most references indicate that, indeed, the species *americanus* is normally found along stream banks and other water form edges, with *grandifolius* normally in drier sites along slopes and ravines, much like

the experience at the site in Carroll County.

The flowers of the genus are showy, fragrant, and five-petaled. The bell-shaped, white flowers usually form in clusters. The species *americanus* is also known as storax. It grows up to 12 feet tall with stalks up to 2-1/2 inches in diameter, and it frequently clumps. The flowers of this species hang in clusters of up to four flowers, which appear in March and April. The plant's fruits are brown, single-seeded, egg-shaped drupes 1/4 to 1/2 inches in diameter. The alternate leaves are elliptical or oblong in shape and are 1 to 2-1/2 inches long. The range of the American snowbell is Virginia south to Florida and west to eastern Texas. It is found rarely north in Missouri and the Ohio River valley.

*Styrax grandifolius* is distinguished from *Styrax americanus* by its bigger leaves, larger flower clusters, and overall larger size. Their ranges are similar. The leaves of the bigleaf snowbell grow up to 6 inches with occasionally toothed edges. The flower clusters contain up to 20 individual flowers up to 3/4 inches wide. This deciduous tree grows up to 20 feet tall.

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## Understory Trees: Witch-Hazel and Snowbell

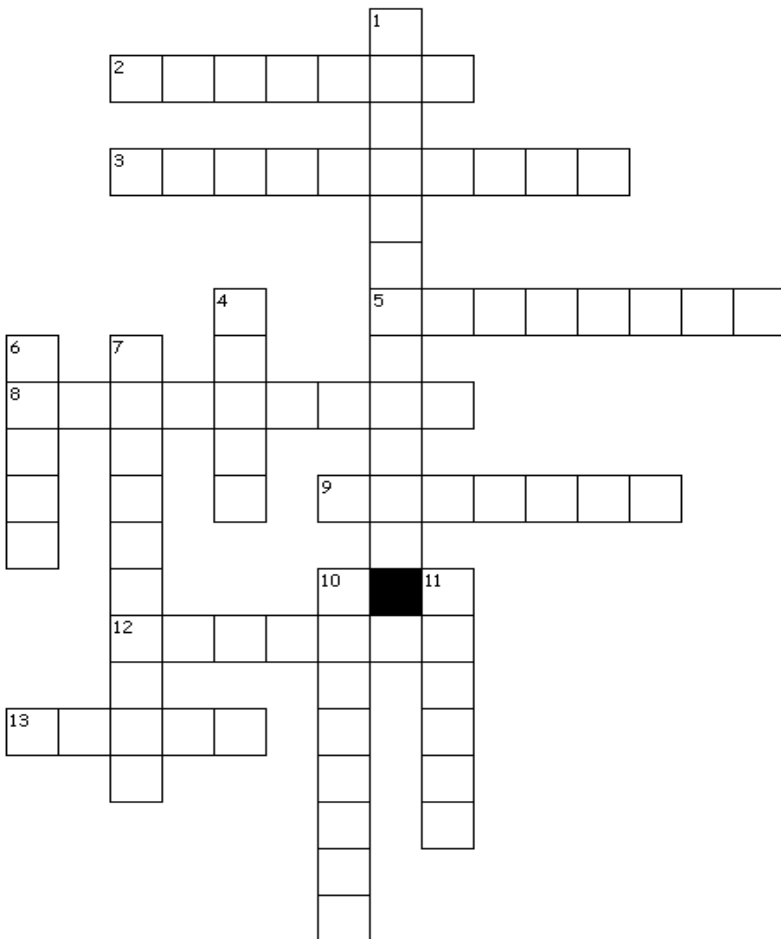
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Many times the snowbell is confused with a close relative, the silverbell (botanically *Halesia*, discussed previously in this series). However, some of the distinguishing features are the styrax's five petals per flower and round fruit, as opposed to the silverbell's four petals and winged fruit. Some writers indicate that snowbells are becoming endangered because of encroachment into their native habitat. It is said that it is easier to find an American snowbell in arboretums and botanical gardens than in the wild. Snowbells are planted in landscapes, usually in shaded sites. Japanese snowbell (*Styrax japonica*) a native of China is more easily found in the trade, but some Internet sites offer the native American species.

[NOTE: This article originally appeared in the January 2005 issue of NativeSCAPE, the newsletter of the Georgia Native Plant Society.]



## Native Criss-Cross Puzzle



### Across

- 2. Encourages Wildlife to Come Home
- 3. Native Look-alike
- 5. Author of Birds of America
- 8. Host to a Swallowtail Caterpillar
- 9. Site Ripe for Restoration
- 12. Birthplace of GNPS
- 13. Most Comprehensive Field Guide

### Down

- 1. Plant of the Year
- 4. Traditional Place to Study Wildlife
- 6. Bees and Deer Love to Eat
- 7. Slow Growing Medicinal Shrub
- 10. Flowers are fragrant and showy
- 11. Thoreau's Labor of Love

*Answers in April issue.*



## GNPS 2015 Plant of the Year: Georgia aster (*Symphotrichum georgianum*)

Text by Denise Hartline and Karen McCaustland

**We are proud to announce that the Georgia Native Plant Society's Plant of the Year for 2015 is Georgia aster!**



Unopened disk flowers are light colored.

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

A sun loving plant, Georgia aster was once widespread across southeastern meadows and prairies, but is rare today because of habitat destruction and wildfire suppression. As the natural succession from field to forest progresses in meadows where Georgia aster grows, it can compete well for resources until it begins to get shaded out by woody plants. Georgia aster is endemic to (i.e. occurs only in) a total of about 34 counties in Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas. Disjunct populations have been reported in Leon County, Florida, and possibly in Louisiana. Georgia aster's rarity rank in Georgia is S2, meaning it is imperiled because of rarity or because other factors demonstrably make it very vulnerable to extinction.

Its legal status in Georgia is threatened, meaning that it is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future. It is currently a candidate for federal legal status. In May 2014, a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for Georgia aster was signed. This voluntary conservation agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service enables nine federal, state, private and public partners to work together to conserve Georgia's remaining estimated 65 populations. The CCA's goal is to keep Georgia aster from being added to a list of endangered plants by being proactive in managing our existing populations through prescribed fire, protection from herbicides, canopy thinning, and/or appropriate mowing. Georgia aster is now managed on 10 state lands, at least 6 sites in the Chattahoochee National Forest, 6 sites in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and along several major power lines.

Georgia aster's native habitat is open, sunny areas



Disk flowers turn dusky purple after pollination.

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

(Continued on next page)



## GNPS 2015 Plant of the Year: Georgia aster (*Symphyotrichum georgianum*)

*Continued from previous page.*



Georgia aster has the largest flowers of any native aster in Georgia.

*Picture by Ellen Honeycutt*

(compared to the light lavender rays of *S. patens*) and white to reddish-purple disk flowers (compared to the yellow disk flowers of *S. patens*).

Various butterflies and bumblebees have been observed pollinating Georgia aster flowers, but these have yet to be identified to species. Deer have also been known to browse on it.

Most Georgia aster plants are self-sterile and need cross-pollination from another colony to produce fertile seed, so its main mode of reproduction in the wild is by spreading underground roots, also known as rhizomes. The best method of propagation is by digging up rhizomes in the spring.

where it grows along edges and openings in rocky, upland oak-hickory-pine forests and along rights-of-way. The primary controlling factor for its occurrence seems to be the availability of sunlight.

Regarded as the aster with the brightest and most vividly bluish-purple flowers, Georgia aster blooms from late-September through November. The composite flowers are 2 to 2 ¾ inches wide, consisting of both small disk flowers in the center and long ray flowers that radiate from the center. The disk flowers are white at first and become reddish-purple as the bloom ages, the ray petals are bluish-violet, and the purple-tipped stamens produce white pollen. Its leaves, often seen in the middle part of the stem, clasp the stem. The stems grow 20 to 40 inches or taller, and the plant spreads by underground roots at a moderate rate to form a clump. Georgia aster can be distinguished from the similar late purple aster (*Symphyotrichum patens*) by its dark purple rays



Pair Georgia aster with yellow fall flowers such as goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) or sunflowers (*Helianthus porteri* shown here).

*Picture by Ellen Honeycutt*

*(Continued on next page)*



## GNPS 2015 Plant of the Year: Georgia aster (*Symphotrichum georgianum*)

*Continued from previous page.*

Georgia aster is an excellent plant for the garden. It will grow in filtered shade but won't flower as profusely as it does with more sun. It grows best in moderately acid to alkaline soils, is tolerant of various soil types, and prefers growing in drier sunny areas.

Once established, it is very drought-tolerant. It grows happily in average soil with good drainage and as much sun exposure as possible. It is a wonderful choice for planting in a perennial border or in a native meadow garden. The abundant and spectacular flowers look lovely scrambling over the garden in late fall, but its height can be controlled by cutting it back about 50% in mid-summer, which will result in shorter, more erect stems.



Bees collect pollen and nectar from Georgia aster.

*Picture by Ellen Honeycutt*



## Native Plant Rescue News

By Ellen Honeycutt and Marcia Winchester



Welcome to a New Year! You're probably all fired up with ideas for your garden: attracting more pollinators, supporting more caterpillars, hosting more species of birds, and bringing in unique and beautiful plants to help you with that. Of course, all those things are possible by increasing the diversity of regionally native plants in your garden. Make one of your resolutions a goal to plant more natives.

Participating in our members-only rescue program is one way to get more regionally native plants. In some cases, the plants are growing within just a few miles of your own garden. While none of us are happy that plants are being lost to development, we appreciate the opportunity to give a portion of them a chance to flourish elsewhere.

The witch-hazel plants (*Hamamelis virginiana*) that we literally pulled out of a bulldozed pile of plants in Cherokee are thriving now (see pictures on pages 8 and 9). The spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) that was rescued in Cobb hosted a spicebush swallowtail caterpillar this year. Birds are feasting on the mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) berries that are on the plants rescued from Fulton County. These examples are a tiny fraction of what our members have rescued over almost 20 years.



Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

Remember, even if you don't have room in your own garden (or you rent or live somewhere temporarily), you can still rescue plants and give them to friends, to schools, to public gardens or restoration projects. And of course, you can also give them to GNPS! Rescued plants are an important component of the plants we offer in our Spring and Fall plant sales.

The 2015 Spring plant sale is being chaired by Greta Slee this year and she and the plant sale committee are already on the hunt for plants to pot up for the April sale. If you can pot up your donations in advance that would be most appreciated, but if you can't then you can give your freshly dug plant in a bag to your facilitator and he/she will get it to the team.



## Native Plant Rescue News

*Continued from previous page.*

The Spring plant sale is both a major fundraiser for GNPS as well as an educational event to reach new people. New people come to find native plants, learn about them from our colorful signs and informative volunteers, and often join the organization too. By the way, if you haven't volunteered to help at that event, look for the announcement to sign up when it comes out in February. It's really fun and a great way to learn more yourself as you help.

So now that we've got you all fired up to rescue plants ... you might have to take the month off. We don't conduct scheduled rescues in January, but if the weather is fine and the facilitators are willing ... there might be a pop-up rescue. If there is, we'll let you know by email.

Happy Rescuing!

*Ellen Honeycutt and Marcia Winchester*

Remember, never dig native plants on public property, or on private property without the permission of the owner, and ONLY if the plants will be lost to development. Join a GNPS rescue instead and help us save the plants legally with other people who love native plants.





## Chapter News— West Georgia Chapter



The account of frenetic activity along Buffalo Creek Nature Trail that opened the last bi-monthly report culminated during the final month of this reporting period. While much will continue to be done at the project site, the surge of action will now diminish for the winter season.

The two busiest days on the trail occurred on consecutive weeks in November when Ernest Koone delivered truckloads of his native azaleas to be planted. Having walked the trail earlier in the year with WGC members to identify sites for each species, Ernest and Chapter volunteers along with help from many Carroll County Master Gardeners planted over fifty natives each day. Now it's time to water, watch, and look forward to a stupendous spring bloom period.

The planting of native azaleas is only one component of the project activity along BCNT. In addition to the trillium planting reported previously, several plant rescues have provided additional natives that now are in the ground and ready to contribute to the beauty of the trail. A restoration rescue aimed exclusively at collecting plants for BCNT was conducted November 21 resulting in dozens of additional natives for the project site.



The reference to Carroll County Master Gardeners above leads to the next item of attention over the past two months for West Georgia Chapter. Many members of WGC are also CCMG's, and the relationship between the two organizations is mutually beneficial. We not only share a common interest,



we also share common space within the area for which a master plan was created by WGC through funding provided by the Community Foundation of West Georgia. Collaboration among environmental groups to further the goals of each is a simple and logical way to achieve success. Members of WGC were invited to participate in the CCMG compilation of their first five year plan of work ever undertaken, and we sincerely appreciate their inclusion of us. They intend to use the master

plan created by WGC as their roadmap for future development within the tract of land that includes Buffalo Creek Nature Trail and the Master Gardeners Demonstration Beds.

Members of WGC were pleased to meet Atlanta chapter member Susan Hanson along the trail and point out some of the accomplishments to her. It's always a pleasure to have fellow GNPS members from other parts of the state over to the West Georgia area for a visit.



## Chapter News— Coastal Plain Georgia Chapter

The Coastal Plain Chapter held their Annual Members Business Meeting on November 15, 2014, at the Gaskin's Forest Education Center, 3359 Moore Sawmill Rd., Alapaha, Georgia. Twenty (20) members were present, including a quorum of the board.

Sally Revoile asked to be excused as secretary due to personal reasons.

The following proposed slate of officers was unanimously passed:

Karan Rawlins – President

Amy Heidt – Vice President

Norris Wootton – Treasurer

Evelyn Ting – Secretary

Robert Hattaway –Director Education and Outreach

(All of these officers were present at the meeting)

The following board positions remain open:

Director of Communications

Director of Conservation

Director of Membership

The new model by-laws were also voted on and passed unanimously.

There were three speakers, a native plant swap and a long lunch to give us time to chat and get to know each other. Jim and Debi Rodgers from Nearly Native Nursery donated native plants for door prizes.

We had two new members join at the meeting.

Thanks,

Karan



## Upcoming Events and Announcements

**Stone Mountain Propagation Project Workday** - Saturday, **January 10, 2015**, from 10:00am to 12:00pm, marks the eighth year of the Stone Mountain Propagation Project. Many thanks to the original organizers, to the Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA) for access to the Park, and especially to the volunteers who continue to support the SMPP. To have the gate fee waived you must mention code SG05 to the gate attendant. For more information, please email [Karen McCaustland](mailto:karen@stone-mountain-propagation-project.org).

**From Art to Zombies: A Peek into the more Esoteric Utilization of Fungi** - Tuesday, **January 13, 2015**. Rod Stafford, Vice President of the Mushroom Club of Georgia, will speak on this topic. Of the major kingdoms of living organisms on earth, the fungi certainly contain some of the most bizarre and fascinating species. Knowledge of fungi and mushrooms is generally limited to eating a limited variety purchased at the local grocery. Yet mushrooms play many roles in our local ecosystems and environments besides serving as a food source. Some of the more interesting uses we will discuss include: cleaning contaminated soil and water; imitating plastics by replacing Styrofoam packing materials; providing a full-spectrum color palette for dyeing fabrics; producing a wide range of medicinal products; brainwashing living hosts and sporulating from their heads; and ridding a home of evil spirits, to name a few. Rod Stafford is the Vice President of the Mushroom Club of Georgia (MCG) and has been a regular speaker for MCG over the past five years. Rod has an academic degree in biochemistry and was a toxicologist for the State of Georgia before switching careers to become a web application developer. He has led various workshops on growing mushrooms, and can usually be found in the woods during MCG's many public walks in metro Atlanta and North Georgia. The presentation will take place during the GNPS member meeting at the Atlanta Botanical Garden Day Hall, at 1345 Piedmont Avenue, NE, Atlanta, GA. The normal schedule for the meeting includes the social hours at 6:45 and the speaker at 7:30pm.

### Restoration Workdays

GNPS has regularly scheduled workdays at a variety of locations in the metro Atlanta area: Smyrna, Marietta, Stone Mountain and others. Chapters have restoration projects as well. You can learn a lot about native and invasive plants and take pride in helping to restore areas back to their natural state. Our Stone Mountain Propagation Project helps you learn more about propagating native plants. Come join us anytime.

Learn about [our restoration projects here](#).

Find regularly scheduled workdays on [our calendar here](#).

Please refer to our [website](#) for more details and current information on announcements and events.

Thank you!



## Upcoming Events and Announcements

*Continued from previous page.*

**West Georgia Chapter Member Meeting** - Tuesday, **February 17, 2015**. Topic to be announced. The meeting starts at 7:00pm at the Carrollton Ag Center, 900 Newnan Road, Carrollton, GA 30117-6426.

**20<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgia Native Plant Symposium** - Please mark your calendars for the *20<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgia Native Plant Society Symposium* to be held **March 7, 2015** at the Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston campus, Atlanta, GA, from 8:00am until 4:00pm. We have a great program lined up. The keynote speaker is Dr. Alan Weakley, Director of UNC Herbarium, North Carolina Botanical Garden and author of *Flora of the Southern & Mid-Atlantic States*. Other speaker symposium speakers include: Patricia-Kyritsi Howell, a clinical herbalist, author, chef, and teacher; Georgann Schmalz, an ornithologist, three-time Past-President of the Atlanta Audubon Society; and George Sanko, a CEO of the GPC Botanical Garden. The symposium will include an optional tour of the Georgia Perimeter Native Plant Botanical Garden. Hope to see you there!

**Spring Native Plant Sale** - Save the date. The plant sale is **April 18, 2015**, at McFarlane Nature Park in Marietta. More information is forth coming.

### Extra! Extra! Chapter Update!

**New GNPS Chapter** - The Coastal Plain Chapter has satisfied the requirements for official chapter status in our Society. Affiliated members live across the Coastal Plain. Chapter activities will reflect this broad geography. The chapter website is found at [www.georgianativeplantsociety.org](http://www.georgianativeplantsociety.org).

**GNPS Chapter Application Accepted** - The Redbud Project chapter application was recognized and granted new chapter provisional status in the Society. The Redbud Chapter is being formed by a group of members in the Gainesville, Georgia area.

**Chapter Affiliation** - If you would like to become affiliated with any of our three chapters please log into the website ([www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org)) and use Account Settings to update your own chapter affiliation setting. This is exciting news and a great way to kick off 2015!

Please refer to our [website](#) for more details and current information on announcements and events.  
Thank you!



## Georgia Native Plant Society Membership & Renewal

Memberships are effective for one calendar year, beginning January 1st.

### Choose membership level: (Select one)

- Individual/Family (\$25/1 year or \$60/3 years)       Senior, 55 and older (\$20/1 year or \$45/3 years)  
 Full-Time Student (\$15)       Corporate/Commercial/Educational (\$50)  
 Lifetime Individual/Family (\$250)

### Chapter Affiliation:

- No Affiliation       West Georgia Chapter       Coastal Plain Chapter       Redbud Project Chapter

Check here if in addition to your membership renewal, you have included \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be distributed as follows:

- Education       Conservation/Propagation/Restoration  
 Jeane Reeves Memorial Grants and Scholarship Program       Unrestricted

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Trade Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If Family, list additional names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Email address is required if you wish to receive the Listserv and/or Electronic Newsletter.)

Check here if you prefer NOT to receive emails from our list server which contain information about meetings, plant rescues, work parties and other items of interest to the membership.

The full-color newsletter will be sent electronically. If you require a print version, which will be black and white, check here: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed renewal form to the following address: GNPS, PO Box 422085, Atlanta, GA 30342-2085