The purpose of the Delaware Native Plant Society (DNPS) is to participate in and encourage the preservation, conservation, restoration, and propagation of Delaware’s native plants and plant communities. The Society provides information to government officials, business people, educators, and the general public on the protection, management, and restoration of native plant ecosystems. The DNPS encourages the use of native plants in the landscape by homeowners, businesses, and local and state governments through an on-going distribution of information and knowledge by various means that includes periodic publications, symposia, conferences, workshops, field trips, and a growing statewide membership organized by the DNPS.

How Can I Get Involved?

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

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

For more information, visit our website at www.delawarenativeplants.org. Our very informative, up-to-date website has all the contact information for the Society, along with a section on native plants, volunteering, and links to other environmental and plant related organizations.
**Thoughts From The Edge Of The Garden**

**Website Update**
Our website is just humming along and being as informative as can be. We did quite a bit of work to the site in February with Delware.net (our website hosting and design firm). They converted the site over to the new Content Management System, and changes to the site are now a breeze. The site can be accessed from any computer in the world now and changes can be made on the fly in just a few minutes. We have removed the blog and added a section on our Big Oak Park Adopt-A-Wetland site. We have also added Google Analytics to the source code to track a myriad of statistics about visitation to the site. Come check it out at www.delawarenativeplants.org.

**New Display Board**
Back in December 2008, we ordered a new display board for use at events around the state. It is almost completed (it’ll be a work in progress until a couple more photos can be taken later in the year), but so far it looks great. The new board has a different color scheme from our old black and gray one. The new one is dark green at the top, gray in the middle, and will sit on top of a dark brown table cover. All the artwork, photos, and text are brand new, and the entire board has been simplified to make it easier for visitors at the events to identify us and learn what we are about. Our old display board found a great new home with the DE Council of Wildlife Rehabilitators & Educators, and in the new Dupont Nature Center.

**Who Influences Purchases of Native Plants?**
(Editor’s note: From www.sciencedaily.com).

ScienceDaily (Mar. 25, 2009) — Native plants are a growing niche market in the southeastern United States. Researchers have documented recent trends toward increased interest in native plants by landscape architects, wholesale and retail nursery owners, and home gardeners.

But landscape professionals and amateur gardeners purchase native plants for distinctly different reasons. Statistics reveal that landscape architects most often select native species because they are suited to difficult or unique growing conditions, while retail plant buyers purchase native plants based on recommendations from landscape architects and contractors.

If landscape architects are the primary drivers of native plant sales in the southeastern United States, what impact does that have upon wholesale nursery growers and the retail market? What is the potential of the native plant market in this region, and what are the best ways of fostering its growth? To answer these questions, Robert F. Brzuszek and Richard L. Harkess, researchers at Mississippi State University, developed an e-mail survey for wholesale and retail nursery owners (members of the Southern Nursery Association) in the southeastern region of the United States. The survey results and recommendations were published in the latest issue of the American Society for Horticultural Science journal *HortTechnology*.

"The objective of this study was to understand how green industry professionals view the opportunities and constraints of the current southeastern native plant market, and to synthesize the connections between landscape architects' demands and the supplies of the nursery industry in the region", explained Brzuszek.

The survey respondents revealed that, while there is a perceived increase in customer interest in native plants, market demand and enhanced public education play a key role in further development of this growing market.

When asked the primary reason they carried native plants, respondents cited client request (25.6%), followed by ecological reasons (17.8%), adaptability to difficult site conditions (16.3%), and low maintenance issues (13.2%). These responses differed considerably from the responses of landscape architects, who replied that native plants were mostly used because of their ability to grow in difficult site conditions.

The study found that both nursery professionals and landscape architects see customer interest in native plants growing. Most respondents agreed that identifying methods to increase marketing of native plants was of significant interest. Survey respondents suggested that better and more information sources be provided for the general public, particularly through the use of specific marketing campaigns and point-of-purchase information. Presentations and displays at nursery trade shows were also recommended as effective methods for growers and retailers to learn about new native plant cultivars.

**Resources & Reviews**

**The Organic Lawn Care Manual**

Authored by Paul Tukey. Extend an organic lifestyle beyond the front door! Get your lawn off drugs with *The Organic Lawn Care Manual*, a comprehensive guide for creating a lush green lawn without chemicals and pesticides. Author Paul Tukey takes the mystery out of making a healthy and inviting outdoor play area for kids, pets and the whole family.
Resources & Reviews

Building a Healthy Lawn: A Safe and Natural Approach

Authored by Stuart Franklin. Included are chapters on mowing, watering, fertilizing, soil building, equipment selection, seeding, weed control, diseases and insects, ground covers, and mulches.

FEATURE ARTICLE
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LAWN CARE

(Editor’s note: This contains excerpts from articles in Mother Earth News, reprinted with permission).

Is your lawn chemically dependent? Every year, many of us treat our yards with pesticides and fertilizers in hopes of creating a healthy and attractive lawn. The problem is that many of the products we use on our lawns aren’t good for us or for the environment. The good news is that there are simple, nontoxic alternatives that can keep your lawn healthy naturally. Some of them can even save you money!

For most of us, this means eliminating chemical fertilizers, dyes and weed-killers from the lawn’s diet. Others have decided to plant drought-tolerant native plants that need less water. Or food-bearing plants, such as strawberries, which cover more of the ground so their lawns require less all-around maintenance.

The great news is that you can have a gorgeous, low-maintenance lawn that’s safe for your family and our environment.

What’s wrong with the usual fertilizers and pesticides?

Improperly used fertilizers can contribute to water pollution by contaminating groundwater and by encouraging algae growth in streams, which disrupts aquatic ecosystems. Pesticides cause problems, too — many are toxic to bees, birds, fish and other forms of wildlife.

Another cause for concern is that many common pesticides (and that category includes insecticides, herbicides and fungicides) have well-documented health risks including suspected roles in a number of kinds of cancer, as well as damage to the nervous system and developmental disorders. Even the common herbicide Roundup is associated with a number of health risks. Two good sources to learn more about the health risks of specific pesticides are the pesticide fact sheets of the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) and the National Pesticide Information Center.

So what do you use instead of chemical pesticides and fertilizers? In fact, some of the most effective methods for maintaining a beautiful lawn are both simple and nontoxic.

Here are several strategies to consider:

1. Plan ahead to minimize problems.
The easiest way to keep your lawn healthy and keep unwanted weeds out is with a little preventive maintenance that stops problems before they get out of hand. For example: Keep your lawn healthy from the beginning by choosing a type of grass suited for your region and climate. This is also a good way to minimize watering.

Stop weeds before they get started! In areas where you can’t mow, you can prevent weeds by using newspaper or plastic covered with mulch.

2. When you need fertilizers or pesticides choose natural, nontoxic options.
To find least toxic solutions for weed and pest problems, a good place to start is with the fact sheets from NCAP.

You may be surprised to learn that there’s no reason to choose commercial fertilizers over ones you can harvest yourself. One excellent option is grass clippings, which provide a natural, slow-release fertilizer for your lawn and garden. Grass clippings are not as harsh on your lawn as some chemical fertilizers, less likely to wash away — and they’re free!

3. Learn to live with (or even love) a few weeds.
Sometimes all that’s needed to fix a weed problem is a slight change of perspective. Clover is a good example of how personal preference determines whether or not we think of plants as weeds. Take a quick look online and you can find detailed advice both on how to get rid of clover in your yard, and

Continued on page 5
Gardening With Native Plants

Red Mulberry (Morus Rubra)

Natural History
Nan and I enjoy attracting birds to our yard here in Harbeson. We put out feeders, water, bird houses, misters and native plants in hopes of attracting a wide variety of birds. So in trying to decide what native plant to write about for this column, I’m often researching a plant to see how it might fit into our landscape. Such is the case with Morus rubra or Red Mulberry. In reading through the numerous periodicals we subscribe to, I’m often impressed with outstanding photos of cedar waxwings, mockingbirds, Baltimore orioles and others eagerly devouring a mid-summer crop of mulberries – WOW, this must be the tree for us! In fact, many species of birds and small mammals eat the fruits of red mulberry. Bird consumers also include wild turkeys, wood ducks, bluebirds, indigo buntings, gray catbirds, eastern kingbirds, towhees, orchard orioles, brown thrashers, tanagers, vireos, woodpeckers, great crested flycatchers and more. Other consumers include opossums, raccoons, fox squirrels, and gray squirrels. The twigs and foliage are browsed by white-tailed deer, beavers consume red mulberry bark and it is the larval host of the red cloak butterfly. The red mulberry is a tree of the rich woods, bottom lands, fence rows and edges. Its range extends from southern New England west to South Dakota and south to Texas and Florida.

The red mulberry is a tree usually attaining 40 to 50 feet in height and occasionally reaching 70 feet with a diameter of 4 feet. In forested areas the red mulberry will grow tall and spindly with few branches, but in the open it is generally short and stout with a broad round configuration and a mass of intertwined branches popular as cover for numerous wintering birds. In late April and early May with the unfolding of leaves, 2 inch long male catkins and 1 inch female catkins are formed. Red mulberry is primarily a dioecious plant, with male and female trees, but can be monocious having both male and female flowers on the same tree. One inch jet black, blackberry like fruits ripen from late June through early August, and when fully ripe are soft, juicy, sweet and popular with birds, mammals, people, and neighborhood children.

Where to Grow
The red mulberry grows well under a wide variety of conditions. Best growth occurs in the open, on moist, well-drained soils. It grows well on a variety of soils including clays, sands, and loams and it tolerates a wide range of soil pH. However, the red mulberry may not be suitable for the average neighborhood yard. In urban areas it is often considered a nuisance where it’s abundant fruit litters and stains sidewalks and automobiles, and children must be forgiven for tracking berry juice onto mom’s sparkling cleaned floors when they proudly come home with a pail full of freshly picked berries. However, because this relatively large, sweet fruit is a favorite food of most birds and some small animals, most of the fruits are eaten and dispersed by wildlife before they fully mature. Having said that, if you have an out of the way place in a wildlife habitat, the back of the yard, the center of a bed planted with other native plants, a wet area where nothing else will grow, or perhaps along a fence row with that irritating neighbor who has a swimming pool, then the rewards of wildlife in your yard will far overshadow the red mulberry’s liabilities.

Propagation and Care
Seeds can be extracted from fresh fruits by mashing and soaking them in water. Viable seeds will sink to the bottom and pulp and empty seeds will float to the top where they can be skimmed off using a common household strainer. Several rinsings and subsequent skimming will result in cleaned seeds that can be sown in fall without stratification or in spring following 30 to 90 days of stratification at 33° to 41° F in moist sand. Red mulberry can be propagated from stem cuttings or by budding, but these methods are complex, require greenhouse facilities and are not particularly recommended. However, red mulberry is a prolific root sprouter and can be reproduced by layering. Because the red mulberry is a favorite browse for deer, be sure to protect your new seedlings if you live in a rural community!

Lore
The highest use of red mulberry is for its large, sweet fruits. In addition to their value to wildlife, the ripe fruits are eaten raw and have long been used in Appalachia for pies, jams, jellies, juice and wine. In the past, the fruits were valued for fattening hogs and as poultry food. The wood of the red mulberry is used locally for fence posts because the heartwood is relatively durable. Other uses of the wood include farm implements, cooperage, furniture, interior finish, and caskets. Native Americans used the fruits fresh and for beverages, breads and cakes, dumpings and preserves, and mixed dried fruits with animal fat for pemmican. Native Americans also used the plant medicinally as a worming agent, remedy for dysentery, laxative, emetic and ringworm. Choctaw Indians wove cloaks from the fibrous inner bark of young mulberry shoots. Finally, don’t be tempted to harvest your red mulberries before they are fully ripened! Unripe fruit and milky sap from all parts have low toxicity if eaten. Symptoms include hallucinations and stomach upset.

Bob Edelen, DNPS Member

Resources & Reviews

The Natural Lawn & Alternatives

Authored by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. A collection of articles including "Eight Steps to a Pesticide-Free Lawn," "Buffalograss Lawns," and others on moss, prairie, and other grass alternatives. "Turf Tips" has a map of grass zones for the U.S., regional guides for fertilizing and for grass types, plus mowing heights for different grasses. Great color pictures throughout.
Resources & Reviews

The Chemical-Free Lawn: The Newest Varieties and Techniques to Grow Lush, Hardy Grass


Feature Article
Continued from page 3

how to add more of it! Rather than fight weeds, you may discover that there are a few you can live with, and even enjoy. For example: Dandelions and purslane are two common “weeds” that some people deliberately plant in their gardens as food crops.

Some weeds have medicinal value including plantain, stinging nettle and yellow dock. Other weeds may actually make your lawn or garden healthier. Dandelions are a good nectar source for many beneficial insects. So is clover, which is also recommended in this article as a cover crop that adds nitrogen to your soil.

4. Options to traditional yard care equipment

Person-powered reel mower. It’s not much more work to push one provided the ground is pretty level, but it isn’t effective on grass more than about 3 inches high. For smaller areas that are fairly level and mowed regularly, this option works.

Scythe. Yet another step even farther back in time. We are talking about the European scythe, not the American ones you still find at garage sales. With a few ifs, this option will work: If you’re willing to take some time to practice the right swing of the tool. If you’re willing to learn to sharpen it. And if you keep it sharp. There actually are ‘green landscapers’ who make a living cutting urban lawns this way! no pollution, no noise.

Electric rotary mower. One battery-electric mower can often replace multiple gas-powered ones. Along with the change in mowers, switching to a higher cut setting is better for the grass.

Electric weed whackers. For trimming in places where the other equipment has trouble.

5. Consider reducing the amount of grass you have in your yard.

It may sound radical, but do you need or want as much lawn as you have? Here are two popular alternatives to traditional turf:

Lose the lawn and try xeriscaping. This term means landscaping to reduce water use, and it can make a lot of sense in drier climates where a lawn simply isn’t practical. Xeriscaping techniques may include using more decorative rock in your yard, or focusing on a few drought-tolerant plants.

Put in less grass, more edible plants. Why not give your garden room to expand? You can grow a lot of food in the typical front and back yard. Another option to consider is edible landscaping, the idea of choosing decorative plants that also produce food crops, such as strawberry plants and apple trees.

If you decide to convert a section of lawn into a vegetable garden, don’t haul the turf away; cut it into rectangular blocks of manageable size and stack the moist blocks upside down in a metre-square (3-ft.) area in the middle of your new garden.

Between each layer of turf add a light dusting of lawn or high-nitrogen fertilizer. Cover the pile of inverted sod with black plastic and tie a cord around the base to secure the plastic.

After six to eight months or the next growing season, you can cut small holes in the plastic on the sides or top of the pile and plant seed potatoes that will grow and cascade down the sides of the pile. Any heat-loving plant, such as corn, cucumbers, squash or pumpkin will also respond well in a pile of old turf.

At the end of the growing season, remove the plastic and spread the well-decayed turf over the rest of your vegetable garden. If you have access to waste turf, the procedure can be repeated until you have enough topsoil for your raised beds.
Out Of The Wild & Into The Kitchen

Our Native Plant Highlight focused on the red mulberry. There are a quite a number of recipes out there using these sweet fruits in pies-like desserts. Here’s just a few from www.fooddownunder.com.

1850 Mulberry Pie

1 10" Unbaked Pie Shell
1 qt Mulberries
1 cup Flour
2 cup Granulated Sugar
1 cup Milk

Fill shell with berries. Mix flour, sugar, and milk. Pour mixture over berries. Bake at 350 for 45 to 50 minutes until center is set. If desired, brown under broiler. Serves 6 to 8

Crispy Mulberry Cobbler

FILLING
1 tbl flour
1 tbl sugar
3 cup mulberries

ASSEMBLY
1 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1 tsp baking powder
1/3 cup butter or shortening
1 egg lightly beaten

For the Filling: Gently rinse mulberries in cold water. Combine flour and sugar in medium bowl. Toss gently with berries.

For Assembly: Combine flour, sugar and baking powder in mixing bowl. Cut in butter with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add egg; mix slightly, stirring just to moisten.

Grease 8-inch square baking dish. Fill with berry mixture. Crumble topping over berries. Bake at 350 degrees until slightly golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes.

Serve with vanilla ice cream or chilled whipped cream. Yields 6 to 8 servings.

Mulberry Angel Torte

2 cup Mulberries
2 tbl Sugar
2 tbl Mulberry Jam, Melted
10.5 oz Angel Food Cake
6 tbl Amaretto, Divided
3/4 cup Vanilla Low-Fat Yogurt
1/2 cup Blueberries
8 tsp Sliced Almonds, Toasted

Place first 3 ingredients in a food processor, and pulse 3 times or until coarsely chopped. Set aside. Line an 8 inch loaf pan with plastic wrap, allowing plastic wrap to extend over edge of pan. Cut cake horizontally into 6 slices (slices will be very thin). Place 1 cake slice in bottom of pan. Brush cake slice with 1 tablespoon amaretto. Spread 3 tablespoons Mulberry mixture over cake slice; top with another cake slice. Repeat layers, ending with cake slice (do not put amaretto or Mulberry mixture on top cake layer). Cover and chill 2 hours. Place a serving plate upside down on top of pan; invert cake onto plate. Remove plastic wrap. Combine yogurt and remaining 1 tablespoon amaretto in a small bowl; stir well. Cut torte crosswise into 8 slices. Dollop 1 1/2 tablespoons yogurt mixture onto each slice. Sprinkle each with 1 tablespoon blueberries and 1 teaspoon almonds. 🍃
Upcoming Events

Tuesday, 28 April 2009—Maryland Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting. This meeting’s topic will be spring flowering native plants of Maryland. Starting at 7:30 PM. More information on the web at http://www.mdflora.org.

Saturday, 2 May 2009—Delaware Nature Society Annual Native Plant Sale. Open to the public on both May 2nd and 3rd at Coverdale Farm in Greenville, DE. Directions and more information at 302.239.2334, or on the web at http://www.delawarenaturesociety.org/nps.html.

Friday, 8 May 2009—Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve annual native plant sale. Held on May 8th to 10th from 10 AM to 4 PM. More information on the web at http://www.bhwp.org/calendar.htm.

Saturday, 9 May 2009—Adkins Arboretum Annual Native Plant Sale from 9 AM to 1 PM. Adkins Arboretum holds two major plant sales each year on the Saturday before Mother’s Day in May and the second Saturday in September. More information on the web at http://www.adkinsarboretum.org/

Saturday, 16 May 2009—Center for Inland Bays Annual Native Plant Sale. From 9 AM to 1 PM at the James Farm Ecological Preserve. For more information call 302.226.8105, or on the web at http://www.inlandbays.org/

Tuesday, 19 May 2009—Delaware Native Plant Society Bi-Monthly Meeting. This meeting will be at our New Castle County meeting location. See below for location details, and on our website.


Thursday, 4 June 2009—Native plants in the landscape conference at Millersville University. From June 4th to the 6th. Speakers will include W. Gary Smith, Rick Lewandowski, and Doug Tallamy. Topics will include native lilies and roses, streams, landscape design, deer management, and hardscaping. Call 717.871.2189, or on the web at www.millersvillenativeplants.org for more information.

Spring and Summer 2009—Continuing education at Mt. Cuba Center. This non-profit organization has a fantastic education department. They offer dozens of classes and symposia throughout the year. For more information call 302.239.4244, or on the web at http://www.mtcubacenter.org.

DNPS Bi-Monthly Meetings for 2009—are currently scheduled for 20 January, 17 March, 19 May, 21 July, 15 September, 1 November (not a meeting, but the annual plant sale) and 17 November. All meetings are on the third Tuesday of every other month at 7 PM, unless otherwise noted. The meeting will be held in 3 locations around the state. The Kent County location is at the St. Jones Reserve, the New Castle County location is at the New Castle County Conservation District office at 2430 Old County Rd., Newark, DE, 19702, and the Sussex County location is at the Redden State Forest Education Center at 18074 Redden Forest Dr., Georgetown, DE, 19947. See our website for maps and directions to each meeting location. See our website (www.delawarenativeplants.org) for more details, and for details on upcoming field trips.
Membership Application

DELTAWARE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Member Information

Name: ________________________________

Business Name or Organization: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

City and Zip Code: ________________________________

Telephone (home/work): ________________________________

E-mail address: ________________________________

Full-time Student $10.00
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Make check payable to:
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