

SEPTEMBER
2009

THE NATIVE PLANT CENTER

AT WESTCHESTER
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 23

FIRST NATIONAL AFFILIATE
OF THE
LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 4:

Family Day ~ At Play with Plants:
A Day of Discovery for the Child in All of Us
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

- ◆ Jeanné Chesanow, author *Honeysuckle Sipping*
 - ◆ David Mizejewski of the National Wildlife Federation presents *A Wildlife Garden for Your Family*
 - ◆ Jay Archer of John Jay Landscape presents *Through the Eyes of a Child*
 - ◆ Guided tour of the Rain Garden
 - ◆ Family Wildlife Scavenger Hunt
 - ◆ Story Teller and cider pressing
 - ◆ National Wildlife Federation Table
 - ◆ Bedford Audubon: *Intro to Bird-watching for Juniors & Where Do the Animals Play in Our Gardens?*, an information table and Kestrel
 - ◆ Pumpkin & face painting
- 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- ◆ BBQ Picnic lunch

FAMILY DAY ALL-INCLUSIVE TICKETS:

Adult Ticket - \$35
Family Package - \$80 (2 adults, 3 children)
Additional Child's Ticket - \$10
NPC Members deduct \$5 off Adult or Family Package price only, not add. child

OCTOBER 14:

FIELD TRIP & LUNCH - MEMBERS FREE
Fee Applicable for Non-NPC Members
Garden Education Center of Greenwich
Read article on page 3 for further details
Join as a Member, form on last page of newsletter

OCTOBER 29: ACORN AWARD RECEPTION

NOVEMBER 17: James D. Lewis
Invasive Species in the Northeastern U.S.

JOIN AS AN NPC MEMBER
RECEIVE MANY MEMBER PERKS

ADVANCE RESERVATION & FEE REQUIRED
WWW.NATIVEPLANTCENTER.ORG
PHONE (914) 606-7870 FOR DETAILS

FAMILY DAY ~ AT PLAY WITH PLANTS: A DAY OF DISCOVERY FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

by Nancy Inzinna, Editor

All ages are invited to participate in a fun-filled day of discovery and inspiration on **Sunday, October 4**. Whether you have children or not, this open-forum event is a perfect way to spend an autumn day in Westchester County. Come and learn how to use native plants in your landscape, and ways to attract and sustain wildlife in our area.

This all inclusive event features lectures, nature walks and bird watching, storytelling, face and pumpkin painting, cider pressing, a wildlife scavenger hunt, and barbecue picnic lunch.

David Mizejewski of the National Wildlife Federation presents *A Wildlife Garden for Your Family*. **Jeanné Chesanow**, author of *Honeysuckle Sipping*,

discusses her book and takes us on a trip down "memory lane." **Jay Archer** of John Jay Landscape will present *Through the Eyes of a Child*, and give a tour of the recently installed rain garden on the grounds of Westchester Community College. Representatives of the **Bedford Audubon Society** will lead a bird watching walk on campus, and bring along a kestrel for all to enjoy.

Additional events listed in side-bar. Information tables on-site for the National Wildlife Federation and Bedford Audubon Society. Visit www.nativeplantcenter.org to register. Join as an NPC member for a discount and help support future programming. Membership info on last page of newsletter.

GREGORY LONG TO RECEIVE THE ACORN AWARD

by Darrin Duling, NPC Director

It is with great pleasure we announce that Gregory Long, President and CEO of The New York Botanical Garden, will be the recipient of The Native Plant Center's Acorn Award for 2009. The Acorn Award was established in 2008 to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of NPC and recognizes individuals or



Gregory Long, president of
The New York Botanical Garden

groups in our region who inspire people to learn about native plants and habitat and encourages them to grow native plants in their gardens.

For the past twenty years Mr. Long has been devoted to

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INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

LECTURE ~ NOVEMBER 17: Invasive species have been identified as one of the three greatest threats to biodiversity worldwide. In the northeastern U.S., invasive species have dramatically altered the composition of native ecosystems, resulting in the near loss of native species including American chestnut, American elm, and the spread of purple loosestrife, phragmites and other species. Some current threats to native plants in our region will be discussed, as well as ongoing research into the effects of some invasive species on native and urban ecosystems. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Visit www.nativeplantcenter.org to register or phone (914) 606-7876.

~ James D. Lewis is the Assistant Professor for Plant Ecology at The Louis Calder Center Biological Station in Armonk, New York. He holds a Master of Science in Ecology from Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. in Botany from Duke University.

MAY 3 - MAY 6, 2010

CAPTURE THE CAPITAL

GARDEN TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES TO (914) 606-7715 ~ SIGN-UP TODAY!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Our deepest thanks go to all our members who support us, and we encourage you to join them.

CONSERVATOR

Patricia H. Keesece* Phillis Warden*

SUPPORTING MEMBER

Darrin Duling* Ursula LaMotte*

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Keith E. Simpson Sarah Stern Henriette G. Suhr
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Alicia Ward Mayneal Wayland Anne Wood

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Ann Collins Susan Fragala
Megan Gladstone Shoko & Noriyuki Iwata
Ellen Klein Matthew D. Scherer
John Tweddle Mary V. Watson Mitzi Weissman

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

Rhona Johnson Leonard Panar

BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

Benedek & Ticehurst Landscape Architects & Site Planners
Philipstown Garden Club Rustic Garden Club
Rye Nature Center The Garden Club of Irvington
The Garden Club of Yorktown
The Little Garden Club of Rye
Wave Hill Greenhouse White Plains Garden Club

DONATIONS - MATCHING FUNDS

AIG Susan Apuzzo Linda & Bernard Haley
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UPGRADED RENEWALS

Michele Hertz* Patricia & Robert MacGregor

* Generous Supporter of The Lady Bird Johnson Center in Texas

COMPLETE LISTING OF MEMBERS

ON THE WEBSITE AT WWW.NATIVEPLANTCENTER.ORG

NATIVE PLANT CENTER

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cece Fabbro ~ Chairperson

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Patricia H. Keesece Lucille Werlinich

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ACORN AWARD

revitalization of The New York Botanical Garden, one of New York City's most prominent cultural institutions. During this period he has emerged as a leading figure for global environmental advocacy, and, specific to the Acorn Award, he has supported the scientific staff at the Garden in conducting invaluable research for the Flora of North America, overseen the restoration of the remnant Bronx River basin forest and currently is spearheading the planned restoration of the historic Native Plant Garden.

During his career, Long has held positions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, The New York Zoological Society and The New York Public Library. He holds an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from City College in New York in recognition of "his inspired stewardship" in helping to "make culture flourish in New York City." He also serves as a member and advisor to various organizations throughout the New York City region and beyond.

Mr. Long is the author of *Historic Houses of the Hudson River Valley*, and is the editor of *The New York Botanical Garden*, a beautifully illustrated volume documenting the institution's remarkable history and unparalleled collections.

Join us on Thursday, October 29 at a reception in Bedford Hills. If you have not received your invitation, visit us at www.nativeplantcenter.org for information and prices.

PRECEDING THE ACORN AWARD RECEPTION, ENJOY A
FANTASTIC EVENING TOUR OF A MAGICAL PRIVATE GARDEN.

THE "DIRT" ON EARTHWORMS

by Kim Eierman
Owner, Kim's Native Landscape Consulting

That seemingly harmless creature, the earthworm, revered so long as our ally in the garden, has become a foe in our forests. Surprisingly, earthworms are not native to the Northeastern United States. Glaciers in the Pleistocene period wiped out native earthworms in most of the Northern Continental U.S. Explorers and settlers introduced exotic earthworms possibly as early as the 1600s. These exotic earthworms were brought to America both intentionally and unintentionally from Europe and Asia through agriculture, horticulture and fishing.

Every gardener knows that earthworms are useful in aerating and improving the garden soil as earthworms eat and eliminate underground. What has been discovered over the past 20 years is the incredible destruction earthworms are causing to our forests. Earthworms have a voracious appetite and thrive as they eat their way through the decomposing leaf litter that covers the floor of a healthy forest. That leaf litter (aka forest duff) is composed of fungally dominated organic matter which decomposes over time and slowly releases nutrients to the plants in the forest, and is critical to a healthy forest system. The leaf litter also serves as habitat for valuable native creatures, such

as amphibians and invertebrates which are extremely sensitive to disturbances in their ecosystem. Earthworms are depleting this leaf litter and interfering with the cycling of nutrients in the forest, as well as causing structural changes to the native forest soils. There is a great deal of research currently being conducted on this problem, including locally at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY (see www.ecostudies.org).

It should be noted that the species of worms commonly sold for vermicomposting, *Eisenia fetida*, *Eisenia andrei*, and *Lumbricus rubellis*, known as red wigglers or red worms have not been identified as a problem in our forests.... yet. In fact these earthworm species may not be able to survive our cold winters. Vermicompost worms are used in enclosed bins to manufacture vermicompost; they should never be released in regular compost piles. Before adding vermicompost to your garden soil, it is advisable to freeze it first in air tight bags for a week to kill off any remaining worms.

Beginning October 1, the "Invasive Series" articles on deer, invasive plants and invasive insects will appear weekly (Thurs.) at www.nativeplantcenter.org and The NPC Blog <http://npcnativeplants.blogspot.com>

FALL FIELD TRIP

October 14: 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Free - Join Now - Member Form Last Page

Autumn Walk on the Wild Side at the Garden Education Center of Greenwich

Free to NPC Members - Non-NPC Members \$20

Bring your own lunch

Join Darrin Duling, NPC director and Lisa Beebe, GEC director of horticulture on an exclusive guided tour of the historic Montgomery Pinetum and antique sunken conservatory, followed by a woodland walk to take in the glorious autumn color. We will have lunch in the "lost" lakeside garden of Ernest Seton which was recently "re-discovered" and revealed. The day will conclude with an opportunity to shop at the Garden Ed Center Gift Shop and greenhouses.

REGISTER BY THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 ~ PHONE (914) 606-7876 TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE!

NATIVE NOTES

Darrin Duling

After an exceptionally grey, wet and chilly spring we are enjoying long-awaited summer sunshine and warm temperatures. The plants in the Stone Cottage and Lady Bird Johnson Demonstration Gardens are responding accordingly and we are witnessing an explosion of coneflowers, bee balm, milkweed, coreopsis, cardinal flower, St. Johnswort, joe-pye weed, black-eyed Susan and other vibrant flowers. The gardens are alive with bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. This glorious spectacle will be with us until frost hits.

In April we created a small fern and wildflower garden that surrounds an existing bench dedicated to Betsy Stern, one of the founders of The Native Plant Center. This garden contains Virginia bluebells, bleeding heart, evergreen ginger, white trout lily, maidenhair fern, royal fern, cinnamon fern, Goldie's fern, and many other beloved wildlings. From my office window I see that it is becoming an increasingly desirable resting spot here on campus. Other new additions involve enhancements to the Stone Cottage Garden; specimens in the raised bed at the rear of the cottage had grown very large and were obscuring the facade - those specimens have been transplanted in order to expose a handsome faux-archway original to the structure. A stone mask and a small stone bench have been added to complement this feature. This new seating area will be made accessible by building in a step and a stone pathway to connect it with existing paths in the main area of the garden. We will also be opening up a view into the new rain garden by cutting a seat into the wall that divides it from the Stone Cottage Garden. When all is completed, three formerly separate elements will be

brought together as a cohesive whole.

Phillis Warden, one of our Steering Committee members, has generously donated a choice specimen sourwood tree (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) that is flourishing in its new home on the east side of Stone Cottage. Sourwood is a showy native tree offering all-season interest; a member of the heath family, it sports dangling racemes of tiny fragrant white flowers in mid-summer that are reminiscent of lily of the valley. The flowers are followed by putty-colored seed pods that, from a distance, make the tree appear to be in flower right until frost. Its' reddish-green foliage assumes a striking burgundy-scarlet color in autumn and the dried racemes with seed pods attractively persist into the winter months. Sourwood is rated as hardy in USDA zones 5-9 and will eventually achieve a height of 60' - - I say eventually as this tree tends to be slow-growing in juvenile stage. Once established, sourwood is a tough, easily-maintained tree that offers a lifetime of beauty and enjoyment.

There is a tremendous amount of debate these days about exotic vs. native choices for our gardens. What I find extremely interesting is that the "lure of the exotic," in my perception, is now becoming applicable to many native species that earlier generations grew up with as an integral part of their lives, but are now scarce due to habitat loss, encroachment by invasive species and depredation from overabundant deer populations. A burgeoning contingent of "new" gardeners become enthralled when introduced to our once-common natives

and their passion for these plants increases exponentially when it is learned that they are rare and endangered, adding a "need-for-rescue" element into the mix. I trust that this newfound awareness will serve to increase the livelihood of our native plants through conservation and horticulture.

Gardeners do play an important role in furthering the cause of our natives, and many die-hard native plant aficionados mercilessly exclude all other plants from their gardens while trumpeting their actions as an exclusive road to salvation. This behavior may seem a bit aggressive and intimidating to those newly-initiated - - I recently visited a lady in her garden who apologized profusely for three crepe myrtles that she had planted the year previously ... "before she knew better." As she said this, she furtively looked around her property as if expecting someone to spring out of the bushes and flog her for her lack of discretion. Smiling to myself, I assured her that she shouldn't lose sleep over this non-native plant choice, as there are indeed exotic plants that are very useful for landscape purposes, pose no threat to the environment and play well as companions with our natives. I pointed out that if we all went entirely native we would exclude many non-invasive garden favorites, such as: boxwood, peony, lilac, Japanese maple, Chinese magnolia, English laurel, daffodils, tulips, tea roses, apple trees, etc., not to mention most of our agricultural food crops. However, I was quick to remind her that it is important to remain ever-vigilant against introducing known or potentially invasive exotic species. No matter how pretty that exotic plant may be, if it looks like it is trying to naturalize itself outside of it's designated spot, be ruthless and rip it out!

Photo by: Matthew D. Scherer





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 E-mail: wcc.nativeplant@sunywcc.edu

Nancy Inzinna, Newsletter Editor

You are not currently a NPC Member. Member support allows The NPC to provide community outreach which affects all of us. Please consider purchasing a membership and keep us strong. New members receive one free lecture.

MEMBER DONATIONS CONTRIBUTE 22% OF *THE NPC* OPERATING BUDGET - JOIN TODAY!

Help fulfill Lady Bird Johnson's vision of a more naturally beautiful America. Past contributions have enabled us to enter the new millennium with the assurance that our native plants will be a permanent part of our local landscape.

\$45 Friend

Help support the educational programs and operations of *The NPC*.

Benefits include:

- 10% discount on NPC Symposia and Lectures - **One Free Lecture**
- Discount on Pre-Sale plant order - Early Admission on Plant Sale Day
- Monthly e-mail of the *Wildflowerwire* Newsletter from our affiliate the Lady Bird Johnson Center in Austin, Texas
- Invitation to *NPC Members Only* Field Trips

\$80 Household Member and Garden Clubs/Organizations

Benefits include all of the above, plus:

- 10% discount on Symposia and Lectures for **TWO** household members

For an additional \$30, purchase a Membership to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center benefits:

- Award winning magazine, *Native Plants*
- 10% discount on *Wild Ideas: The Store and Catalog*
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\$125 Supporting Member

Benefits include all the above plus:

- "Free" Membership to the Lady Bird Johnson Center

\$250 Advocate

Benefits include all the above plus:

- Free "Friend" Membership for a garden enthusiast of your choice

\$500-\$999 Sustaining Member

Benefits include all of the above, plus:

- An invitation to the Director's Tour of our Demonstration Gardens

\$1,000-\$2,999 Conservator

Benefits include all of the above, plus:

- Gift book about wildflowers

\$3,000 + Heritage Circle

Assume a leadership role in *The Native Plant Center*

Benefits include all of the above, plus:

- Teak garden bench at West. Comm. College with inscribed brass plaque

NATIVE PLANT CENTER MEMBERSHIP FORM - DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Phone: (914) 606-7870 Fax: (914) 606-6143 E-mail: wcc.nativeplant@sunywcc.edu

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL \$ _____ ADDITIONAL LBJ \$30 YES / NO TOTAL AMT. DUE \$ _____
(Circle One)

And/Or I am enclosing a donation of \$ _____ *Gift membership in the amount of \$ _____

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Educating people about the environmental necessity, economic value, and natural beauty of native plants in the Northeast.