Marilandica

Fall 2010 | A Publication of the Maryland Native Plant Society | Volume 1, Issue 1

Tina Thieme Brown

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata L.
Milkweed Family (*Asclepiadaceae*)
By Melanie Choukas-Bradley

Milkweeds have long been magnets for children, with their irresistible feathered seeds bursting from canoe-shaped follicles in late summer and autumn. Thirteen milkweed species are indigenous to Maryland, serving as host and nectar plants for butterflies and attracting a wide range of other colorful insects that have found adaptive means to cope with the toxic milky sap that many milkweeds contain. Swamp milkweed's flowers are a deeper pink than the more familiar common milkweeds' (*A. syriaca*), their leaves are narrower, and as the name implies, they favor moist habitats. When I take my summer wildflower identification class to a pond near Sugarloaf Mountain, the students swoon over the swamp milkweed umbels lining the shore, and the haloes of butterflies surrounding them. Butterfly expert Pat Durkin says: "Whenever I see swamp milkweed, it's quite popular as a nectar source with all the butterflies in the vicinity. As soon as I spot it, I wade right over because they're all there, easy to observe." According to Stanwyn G. Shetler and Sylvia Stone Orli's *Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of the Washington-Baltimore Area* (Smithsonian Institution), most swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) plants in the Washington-Baltimore area flora fit the characteristics of variety *pulchra*. Wesley M. Knapp, Eastern Region Heritage Ecologist and Botanist with Maryland DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service, describes variety *pulchra* as: "…moderately to densely pubescent, with broader leaves having *(continued on page 4)*

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A Publication of the
Maryland Native Plant Society

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Letter from the President

Dear Members,

We're bucking a trend with this new print publication. Many organizations have abandoned traditional print-and-mail in favor of using all electronic communication. In the past year, we've experimented with that too, with our Upcoming Events emails, Facebook, and MeetUp. This saves money. But we found that many members, even the most computer-savvy among us, miss having a paper publication appear in their mailboxes, something to sit and actually read. So we've created this newly-styled *Marilandica*, edited by Board member Carolyn Fulton. I hope you will enjoy it, and contribute your ideas.

For me, our annual conference is always a highlight of the fall season. Those who attended our 2010 Eastern Shore Conference at Chesapeake College on September 25 and 26 will certainly agree that it was a huge success. Thanks to the Eastern Shore Chapter for the great job of organizing. For the first time, the conference was oversubscribed, and space limitations forced us to turn away late-registrants. Be sure to register early next year! Undoubtedly, offering on-line registration for the first time contributed to the high turnout. Thanks to Karyn Molines for this and all her work on our electronic capabilities.

Our first speaker on Saturday morning, Wesley Knapp of DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service, gave us an overview of Eastern Shore plant communities, with the emphasis on "community." Next, Joan Maloof, author of *Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest*, shared her research on forests of the Nassawango Preserve. Then, Sarah Tangren of Chesapeake Natives told us about the Maryland's rare native lupines and efforts to preserve them. After lunch, everyone set off on field trips in perfect weather. Later, we gathered back at Chesapeake College for dinner and a fascinating talk by retired DNR ecologist Nick Carter. On Sunday, more field trips. Many thanks to field trip leaders, Joe Metzger, Cris Fleming, Deborah Landau, Karyn Molines, Carole Bergmann, Leslio Cario, Dwight Johnson, and Nick Carter.

Planning for the 2012 conference has already begun. Watch for announcements for our return to the coastal plain, this time in Southern Maryland.

Happy Holidays!
Kirsten

Letter from the Editor

Dear Members and Readers,

This newly-styled Marilandica is sitting on the shoulders of giants: The bi-monthly Native News, created and guided by Meghan Tice First, and the in depth botanical publication, *Marilandica*, under the stewardship of Rod Simmons. Electronic communication, as Kirsten writes, has changed the way MNPS can communicate immediate news and events to its members, so this publication will have different missions from its predecessors. It shouldn't begin its venture, however, without a standing ovation to Meghan and to Rod for their immensely creative and long-time work on these two fundamentally important publications.

This *Marilandica* will be published three times a year, to precede fall/winter, spring, and summer. The color format will enable us to share some of the outstanding photos members capture of field trips, events, and of course Maryland's varied and stunning flora. Tina Thieme-Brown's beautiful art, which she has generously agreed to continue to do for us, will have the stage it deserves. Wildflower in Focus, illustrated by Tina and written by Melanie Choukas-Bradley will be an important feature. Advocacy articles will keep you informed of issues of importance and MNPS's involvement in them.

We hope to have a lot of feedback from members! Please do share field trip experiences, identification questions, books, volunteers deserving of a spotlight, your interesting photos. There will be a Letters to the Editor column, which we hope you will use to let us and others know what you would like to see in this *Marilandica*. I look forward to hearing from you: FultonCarolynO@gmail.com.

Happy Winter!
Carolyn

Fort Dupont Lawsuit Concluded

Most of our members know that in April 2008, MNPS — along with Virginia Native Plant Society and David Culp — filed a lawsuit against the National Park Service opposing a transfer of 15 acres of land in Fort Dupont to the District of Columbia. In July, we voluntarily dismissed our lawsuit, and the land transfer has taken place. So why are we claiming victory? Our experience shows what can be accomplished by taking a stand.

Blue Jay

Background: NPS had proposed the land transfer to allow construction of a baseball academy and expansion of an ice rink under the auspices of private non-profit groups. MNPS opposed the transfer: First, the development as proposed would likely have had a negative impact on the stream and woods adjoining the parcel, and it could set an unfortunate precedent for future transfers as undeveloped land becomes scarce in the District. Also, MNPS believes that government (that is, publicly owned) land should not be transferred for the benefit of private interests.

MNPS and VNPS members have long cherished the Fort Circle Parks. Led by Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica, we've spent many happy Sundays in the sun, the rain, and the snow, exploring high quality forests and other natural areas in those urban parks. Located mostly east of the Anacostia, the Fort Circle Parks have thrived under benign neglect. Fort Dupont Park, located in Southeast Washington, is the largest. It contains a globally rare remnant of a once-common ecosystem known as upland gravel terrace forests, containing plants adapted to dry acidic conditions, along with occasional bogs and stream valleys.

Pileated Woodpecker eating poison ivy fruit

MNPS has limited resources and must choose among many worthy conservation causes. The Fort Dupont transfer met all our criteria for active conservation advocacy: We have direct on-the-ground knowledge of the area; our botanical expertise is relevant to the issue; and no other parties were likely to step up. We were extremely fortunate to have, as our pro bono legal counsel, Jamie Pleune of Georgetown Law School's Institute for Public Representation. With their help, we filed public comments throughout the regulatory process, and when NPS issued its Environmental Assessment (EA) finding the project would have no significant environmental impact, we filed suit. Our basic claim was that the EA had failed to consider the impact of the development on the forest that directly abuts the land to be transferred, and that a full Environmental Impact Statement was required.

Jamie made it clear right from the start that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) doesn't carry the substantive force one might expect. NEPA only requires environmental study and disclosure. It does not prevent the agency from acting in spite of environmental hazards. Thus, our lawsuit asked the court to order NPS either to conduct a new Environmental Assessment or to prepare a full, detailed Environmental Impact Statement. But both those possibilities still would have allowed NPS to reject all our arguments about the potential impact on the forest. This being said, if NPS staff had been ordered to study and disclose detailed effects on the adjoining woods, we're confident that they would have done so in good faith. And, delaying development can itself have value, in allowing a full airing of all the facts.

As it happened, the negotiation between the District and NPS over the terms of the transfer was slow. Op-ed pieces by supporters of the project (e.g., Council Chairman Vincent Gray) complained that NPS was insisting on unreasonable terms. It was over a year after we filed suit that we were told they had reached agreement, and that the transfer was ready to be considered by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The transfer terms were critically important. So we were extremely pleased to learn that the final terms commit the District to develop and maintain the new facilities so as to minimize the impact on the adjacent forest, including compliance by both buildings and ball fields with LEED standards and the DC Green Building Act. Commercialization or privatization of the land is prohibited, and public access is guaranteed. The NCPC staff report states that all the projects will be subject to NCPC review and public comment. So we will have further opportunity for input into mitigation measures to protect the forest. Our lawyers at Georgetown advised, and we agreed, that we could not accomplish more by continuing the lawsuit.

MNPS and Anacostia Watershed Society joint native plant walk at Ft. Dupont Park

So – the end result was this: We accomplished less than our most optimistic hope, in that the transfer did go through. But the protections for the forest and the public that are now built into the project requirements are as strong as we could have asked. Also, we've established our interest, our vigilance, and the credibility of our expertise in the natural areas of the Fort Circle Parks. Our ongoing study of those areas turns out to mean a lot more than simply some fun Sunday outings.

~ Kirsten Johnson

Winterizing Your Garden for Our Wildlife Friends

Now that winter has arrived it's a great time to evaluate our home gardens and landscaping to see how wildlife fit into the plan. By providing nutritious food, clean water, and protection from predators and the cold, gardeners can make a big difference for our wildlife friends, especially during the winter.

Here are some tips that we use on our property that and can be used in your gardens too. Your location and species might be different but the same basic principles will apply. Do your research.

One of the best ways to provide essential habitat elements in your garden is to use plant material that is native to your region and in most cases indigenous to your own micro climate and soil conditions. See what plants are native to your area and what kinds of plant-animal relationships you have.

Most often when we think of feeding wildlife in the winter it relates to birds. Providing bird food is a great way to attract and help our feathered friends. Native plants produce berries, nuts and seeds that birds relish. Think of bird feeders as providing a supplemental food source for birds when natural food is scarce.

If you do decide to use a bird feeder be sure to keep it clean. Small mammals might be attracted to these feeders and in turn feed some of our predators like foxes and raptors. If you live in the city and don't want to attract rodents, use only seed that will not be wasted or tossed out by a finicky visitor. The best combinations are hulled sunflower seeds, thistle and suet. This will attract and sustain the largest variety of bird species.

Here in suburban Maryland we have provided native tree and shrub species such as winterberry holly, viburnums, dogwoods, and sugar maple to help support our winter birds. It's important to remember to not cut back native perennials with seeds in the fall.

We leave all of the plants standing such as coneflowers, sunflowers, blazing star, and black-eyed susans and watch the small birds like finches snack on them through the cold and snow. These plants provide native wildlife food, garden interest and overwintering shelter for many insects, eggs and larva. Remove any non-native, invasive species that birds may carry with them to deposit in sensitive natural areas.

Winter shelter is extremely important to our critter friends. Loss of habitat is the biggest threat to many wildlife species today. By doing our part to provide shelter from predators and winter weather we increase the chances for their survival. Planting native evergreen trees like spruce, cedar, hemlocks and firs will provide essential shelter for many songbirds and small mammals.

If you have a deciduous wooded lot with dead trees standing, please consider leaving them standing if there is no risk of injury if they fall. These provide important habitat for our cavity dwellers. Birdhouses can serve as winter roosting boxes. Prepare the birdhouse by cleaning it and stuffing it with a lining of dry grasses or shredded newspapers.

Another great way to provide shelter is to construct a brush pile. Throughout the year we gather mounds of yard debris including twigs and branches. This plant material can be recycled into a wonderfully diverse mini-habitat of its own. Think of the brush pile having multiple layers for different species. On the bottom layer you would have logs or large branches. As the pile grows, build it up with yard waste like leaves, small branches and twigs. The size of your brush pile can vary depending on the space and location you have available. These brush piles invite small mammals, salamanders, insects and birds. For best results do not disturb the site except to gently add new material in the fall.

Flowing water is an important element for winter survival. Most of us don't have a natural spring or creek in our yards. In the winter birds are looking for water to bathe in and to drink, and small mammals need water too. Water can be provided in something as casual as a heated dog dish all the way up to an elaborate pond with a flowing stream and waterfall. It's important to have water that's not frozen. Ponds with some debris and potted plants at the bottom provide overwintering places for frogs and other aquatic life.

Winter is the time we step back and evaluate

(*continued on page 9)*

left: The Baltimore Checkerspot, Maryland's state butterfly (endangered), eating and laying eggs on its larval host plant, the Turtlehead, Chelone glabra. Middle: Emerging monarch butterfly. right: Night flying hawkmoth in the photographer's garden.

(Milkweed cont. from pg 1) rounded to subcordatebases, apex acute to short-acuminate, and plants relatively strict [straight and upright]." Another subspecies or variety of the plant that may be found in Maryland and Virginia is *incarnata*, which Wes distinguishes by: "stems and leaves sparsely pubescent to glabrescent, leaves narrow, the base obtuse to truncate, with a long-acuminate apex. These plants are usually much branched."

Flowers: Small, ¼ – ⅓ inches long, usually rose-pink, in large, rounded, upright umbels. Flower configuration unique to milkweeds: the 5 petals are reflexed beneath a 5-parted crown-like corona containing 5 "hoods" and 5 incurved "horns." Each anther bears two waxy masses of pollen [called a *pollinium* plural = *pollinia*). According to Alonso Abugattas, Arlington County naturalist and director of the Long Branch Nature Center: "These [pollinia] attach to potential pollinators' legs when they stop by to collect the vast amounts of nectar *Asclepias* species produce. Occasionally, though, a small insect gets its leg caught in the slits that contain these structures and it is not strong enough to pull itself out. The small insect then may struggle until it dies or falls prey to a predator, unable to escape. On many occasions I have found these small corpses hanging by a leg or proboscis from a flower."

When I queried a few members and friends of the Maryland Native Plant Society about swamp milkweed and milkweeds in general I discovered a wide-spread and deep fascination for this genus…

Fruit: Swamp milkweed follicles are slender and finely pubescent, 2-4 inches long and tapered at both ends. They split open to release many seeds, bearing fluffy hairs that suit them for blowing or flinging through the air (thus their popularity with children).

Leaves: Opposite, simple, 3-6 inches long, with entire margins. Lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, glabrous or sparsely pubescent (although locally the common variety *pulchra* is quite pubescent). Apex acuminate; base acute, rounded or subcordate.

Height: 2-6 feet.

Habitat and Range: Wet meadows, pond edges, stream banks, freshwater marshes, swamps; Nova Scotia to Florida, west to Saskatchewan, Utah and New Mexico.

Herbal Lore: According to Alonso, the genus *Asclepias* is named after the Greek god of healing, reflecting the traditional medical uses of milkweeds. Steven Foster and James A. Duke (*Peterson Field Guides: Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*) report: Swamp milkweed "root tea [is] diuretic, carminative, strongly laxative; induces vomiting. American colonists used it for asthma, rheumatism, syphilis, worms, and as a heart tonic. Warning: Potentially toxic." Maryland Native Plant Society board member, master gardener and weed warrior Marney Bruce (founder of Simplicity Matters Earth Institute) says that author Timothy Coffey "writes that Pueblo Indians cut it down when ripe, rub it so as to separate the fibers, and make of it beautiful and very strong fishing lines and fine sewing-thread. He notes that early botanists remarked at how tough and strong the stem is." When I queried a few members and friends of the Maryland Native Plant Society about swamp milkweed and milkweeds in general I discovered a wide-spread and deep fascination for this genus. Dr. Edward M. Barrows, biology professor at Georgetown University and director of the Georgetown University Center for the Environment, shared many wonderful milkweed stories and this is my favorite: "When I was on Oahu, Hawaii in 1976 during a lovely November day with an ocean breeze, I was amazed to see giant milkweed shoots which were about 10 feet tall growing in a garden." Dr. Barrows noted: "This plant might have been *Calotropis procera* =*Asclepias procera*, Giant Milkweed, native to West Africa through India." He went on to say: "I had to rub my eyes to make sure I wasn't dreaming in Rousseau Land…The plants looked like giant, mutant *Asclepias syriaca* to me, and it seemed like the Mean Giant might descend on them at any moment looking for children to eat. I saw normal-sized Monarchs nectaring on the flowers. Both species are aliens on Oahu—a poor, hapless island under water in aliens."

Similar Species: More than a dozen milkweeds are indigenous to Maryland. Deep rose-pink corollas and moist habitats are the best means of separating swamp milkweed plants from other locally indigenous species.

Blooming Time: June - August.

Fruiting Time: Fruits mature and split open during summer and autumn.

Locations: Common throughout Maryland. Montgomery County forest ecologist and MNPS board member Carole Bergmann writes: "I have seen *Asclepias incarnata* in Rachel Carson Conservation Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, Black Hill Regional Park, Dickerson Conservation Park, Rock Creek SVP, Serpentine Conservation Park to name a few. It can also be seen on County property along the Blue Mash Trail near the Laytonsville Landfill. Its color and flower shape really appeal to me, and so I am always happy to spot it." As for other *Asclepias* in the county park system that she has seen, Carole lists *"A. purpurascens* in Serpentine Conservation Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, and in the field across from Hoyles Mill park where gentians are: *A. verticillata* in Serpentine Conservation Park and Hoyles Mill Conservation Park; *A.viridiflora* also in Serpentine CP, Hoyles Mill CP, as well as Lois Green Conservation Park; *A. tuberosa* – a lot at Little Bennett CP; and of course, *A. syriaca* in many many many parks! "

Karyn Molines, supervisor of cultural resources for the Anne Arundel County Department of Parks and Recreation and MNPS board member, sees swamp milkweed at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, where she also finds *A. tuberosa, A. syriaca,* and *A. amplexicaulis*. Author, educator and MNPS board member Cris Fleming finds *A. incarnata* at Hughes Hollow in the McKee-Beshers WMA. Consult *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area* (Fleming, Lobstein and Tufty) for more swamp milkweed locations.

Many members and friends of the Maryland Native Plant Society contributed to this article, including: Alonso Abugattas, Carole Bergmann, Edward M. Barrows, Marney Bruce, Pat Durkin, Cris Fleming, Wesley M. Knapp, Karyn Molines, and Rod Simmons. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Maryland Native Plant Society
Ballot for Officers and Board of Directors for 2011

In the past, MNPS has mailed ballots for Board elections to all the members every year. This is expensive. Also, we found that few ballots were returned. Beginning last year, the Board decided to save postage by including the ballot in the newsletter. **To further save time and postage, members do not need to vote if they favor the proposed slate that the Nominating Committee recommends.** ***A non-response will be counted as a vote in favor of all nominees.*** If you do not favor one or more of the nominees, then please do cast your vote by mailing in a ballot.

Candidates are running for a one year term as noted below. Candidates' bios are printed on the facing page.

If you would like to mail in your ballot, it must be received at MNPS, P.O. Box 4877, Silver Spring, MD 20914 by December 5, 2010—or you may bring it to the December Monthly Meeting. The results will be announced at that evening meeting.

If you decide to mail in your ballot, please choose from one of the following:

____I vote for all of the Board nominees

____I vote for all of the Board nominees, with the following exceptions:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Nominees for 2011 Officers and Board of Directors

President
Kirsten Johnson

Vice-President
Marney Bruce
Marc Imlay
Linda Keenan

Treasurer
Matthew Cohen

Secretary
Ginny Yacovissi

Board of Directors
Ken Bawer
Matthew Bazar
Carole Bergmann
Melanie Choukas-Bradley
Cris Fleming
Carolyn Fulton
Jim Gallion
Albert Hartley
Beth Johnson
Brett A. McMillan
Karyn Molines
Glenn Rice
Mary Pat Rowan
Rod Simmons
Gary Steele

Maryland Native Plant Society Nominees for 2011 Officers and Board of Directors

President

Kirsten Johnson, Baltimore City. *Current President;* retired attorney; law practice included work with non-profits and charitable organizations. Master's Degree in biology, lifelong interest in natural history; Governance Committee Chair. Volunteer for Irvine Nature Center and Cylburn Arboretum. Liaison, MNPS Baltimore Chapter.

Vice Presidents

Marney Bruce, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member;* Founder, Simplicity Matters Earth Institute; weed warrior volunteer for Mont. Co., TNC, ANS; Montgomery County Master Gardener: Habitat Steward for NWF; Fall Conference and Conservation Committees.

Marc Imlay, Charles County. *Current Vice President;* Habitat Stewardship Committee Chair; Southern Maryland Chapter; consultant, Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council.

Linda Keenan, Prince George's County. *Current Vice President;* Certified Backyard Habitat Steward, NWF; Certificate in Natural History Field Studies, Grad School and ANS; professional background in nonprofit organization management; Conservation Advocacy Committee Chair.

Treasurer

Matthew Cohen, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member.* Owner of Matt's Habitats, which focuses on gardening with native plants and other environmentally-friendly strategies. An avid gardener and naturalist for over 10 years. He and his wife have transformed their ¼ acre yard in Silver Spring to entirely natives and edible plants.

Secretary

Ginny Yacovissi, Northern Virginia. *Current Board Member;* Weed Warrior for Nature Conservancy of MD/DC. Volunteer at native plant propagation beds for Potowmack Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society.

Board of Directors

Ken Bawer, Montgomery County. *New Board Member;* IT Specialist; weed warrior with Mo. Co. & Nature Conservancy; pursuing Cert. in Natural History Field Studies, Grad School and ANS; interest in conservation. BS Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, Graduate work in Developmental Biology.

Board of Directors *continued*

Matthew Bazar, Cecil County. *Current Board Member;* biologist; environmental scientist, U. S. Army; Cecil County Forestry Board; volunteer land steward for Lancaster Co. Conservancy (PA); interested in development issues, habitat preservation, open space preservation.

Carole Bergmann, Montgomery County *Current Board Member; past President;* Forest Ecologist for M-NCPPC, instructor for the Grad School and ANS; 2003-2008 Fall Conference Committee; Education, Botany and Habitat Stewardship Committees; field trip leader for MNPS and ANS.

Melanie Choukas-Bradley, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member; past Vice President;* author of *City of Trees* and Sugarloaf books; field trip leader for many orgs.; Grad School and ANS Natural History Field Studies instructor. "Wildflower in Focus" column for MNPS.

Cris Fleming, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member; past President;* Botany, Conference, Governance and Publications Committees; instructor, plant identification courses, Grad School and ANS; field trip leader for MNPS, VNPS, ANS; author, *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area*. Former field botanist/ecologist for the Maryland Natural Heritage Program.

Carolyn Fulton, Baltimore City. *Current Board Member; past Secretary;* Marilandica Editorial Committee; Nursery and Finance Committees.

Jim Gallion, Frederick County. *Current Board Member;* landscape and garden designer; Principal, Wildlife Gardening Adventures, Walkersville, MD; educator, advocate for use of native plants; Wildlife Habitat Steward, NWF.

Albert Hartley, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member;* computer programmer; accomplished nature photographer who frequently exhibits; avid birder; Cert. in Natural History Field Studies, Grad School and ANS.

Beth Johnson, Montgomery County. *Current Board Member;* past Treasurer; tax preparer and Enrolled Agent with IRS; pursuing Cert. in Natural History Field Studies, Grad School and ANS; interest in Lepidoptera and Odonata.

Board of Directors *continued*

Brett A. McMillan, PhD Carroll County. *New Board Member;* Asst. Professor of Biology, McDaniel College. Field Botany and Ecology Instructor; research and teaching interests include graminoids and moss ecology. Masters Degree, University of Fla. Research on invasive plant impact on central Florida understory plants. PhD, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. PhD research on environmental variables/plant distribution, dunes of barrier islands, eastern shore of VA.

Karyn Molines, Calvert County. *Current Board Member; past President, Vice President, Secretary; 1998, 2004, 2007-2010* Fall Conference Chair; Southern Maryland Chapter. Supervisor of Cultural Resources for Anne Arundel County Dept. of Recreation and Parks.

Glenn Rice, Frederick County. *Current Board Member.* Park naturalist at Meadowside Nature Center. Designs, develops and maintains interpretive exhibits and publications. Developing a natural and cultural history tour of the Muncaster Mill Trail; acting activities chair, Northern Region's annual Harvest Festival. Former science educator, Baltimore Living Classrooms Foundation. Sailed over 500 miles in Chesapeake Bay and watershed with children studying natural and cultural history.

Mary Pat Rowan, Washington, DC. *Current Board Member;* landscape architect; Conservation Committee; MNPS field trip leader; Washington, DC Chapter liaison.

Roderick Simmons, Northern Virginia. *Current Board Member; past Vice President, past President;* Marilandica editor; Monthly Meeting Coordinator; Fall Conference Committee, Conservation, Education Committees.

Gary Steele, Montgomery County. *Current Treasurer;* computer configurations analyst; experienced hiker, trail volunteer, AT corridor monitor; has completed several Natural History Field Studies Classes, Grad School and ANS.

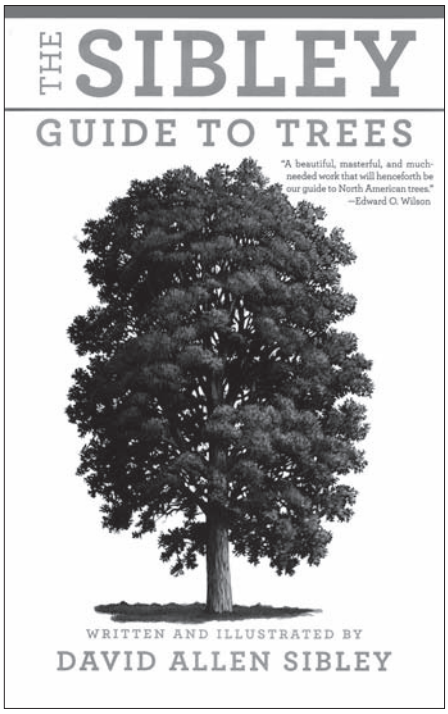
Book Review

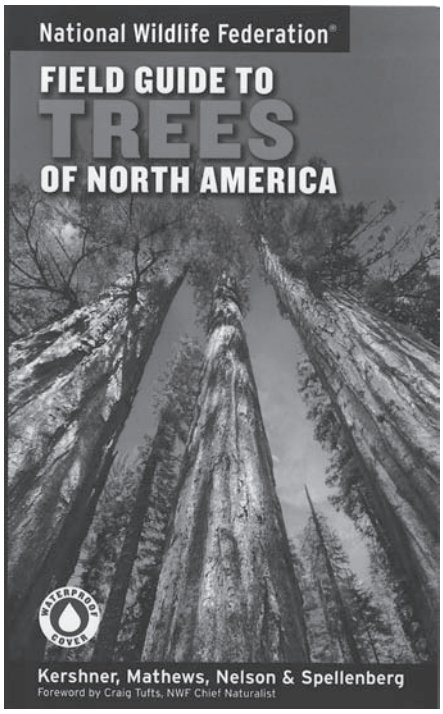
By Jane Hill

David Allen Sibley, *The Sibley Guide to Trees*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. $39.95.

Bruce Kershner, et al. *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Trees.* New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2008. $19.95

Two beautiful new field guides to North American trees have been published in the past two years. The more recent one, which appeared in September 2009, is by David Allen Sibley, who is well known as the author of numerous bird guides. This tree book, his fledgling venture into plant guides, follows the same format as his bird guides. It is comprehensive and attractively illustrated with his own paintings. It covers "668 native and commonly cultivated trees found in the temperate areas of North America north of Mexico," including all native tree species except those limited to southern Florida. *The National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Trees of North America*, published in 2008, is illustrated solely with photographs. This multi-authored book covers native and non-native trees of North America north of Mexico, including (unlike Sibley) the trees of southern Florida, for a total of 700 species and varieties.





Although Sibley has produced a good tree guide, he is not authoritative on the subject of trees. He makes errors, as, when, in defining a tree in his introduction, he states that box-elder is "usually multi-trunked (like a shrub)." He also calls Callery (Bradford) pear "naturalized," although it is far better described as invasive, as the NWF guide labels it.

Nevertheless, Sibley's treatment of escaped exotic trees is an advance over that of other field guides, including the NWF: Sibley provides range maps for these species. In contrast, the NWF guide, like most previous field guides to trees, includes maps for most of the native trees but none for the non-natives. In the NWF guide, the species accounts include some verbal information on the spread of exotics, but Sibley's approach enables a reader to comprehend at a glance where non-native trees are dispersing from cultivation. Unfortunately, the only way he distinguishes visually between natives and escaped exotics is by depicting native trees' ranges in a dull green, and exotic trees' ranges in a pale tan. The difference does not exactly jump off the page. In both guides, non-native trees could have been flagged by, say, marking their names with an asterisk in the species-account headings, or using a different typeface, as is common practice in technical manuals and floras. Older field guides to trees do no better in this regard, however.

The two guides also contrast in their interpretations of species' ranges. Sibley's range maps show where each species, native or not, "is known to be reproducing in the wild with no assistance from humans." The NWF guide shows what its authors call "natural geographic distribution" – presumably meaning historic, pre-European-settlement range. Thus, for such species as northern and southern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa* and *C. bignonioides*), black locust, (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and osage-orange (*Maclura pomifera*), Sibley's guide shows much more extensive ranges than does the NWF book, because these species have spread widely from their pre-settlement distributions. Knowledge of both kinds of ranges is useful. For one thing, it provides fodder for discussions of what constitutes a "native" plant. Another difference is that the mapped ranges in the NWF guide present more detail. The NWF book shows two different ranges: where the species is "commonly or regularly found," and where distribution is "rare, scattered, or local." In Sibley, in contrast, there is only one mapped range, encompassing both kinds of distributions.

The illustrations of tree parts present another contrast between the two guides. Sibley's paintings portray much more of the within-species variation, especially in leaf and fruit forms, that can cloud identification. For example, for the tree he calls "common post oak" (*Quercus stellata*), Sibley shows seven examples of leaf shape, two of acorns, and two of twigs. For southern live oak (*Q. virginiana*), he depicts ten leaf shapes, four acorns, and a flowering and a nonflowering twig. In contrast, the NWF guide shows, for *Q. stellata*, only a single leaf, a single acorn, and no twig; and, for *Q. virginiana*, two photos of twigs, each bearing several leaves that do not represent well the wide variety in leaf form, and a photo of a pair of very similar acorns and no twig. (Both guides also show bark and overall tree form for these species.) Still, the NWF photos are plentiful and generally high quality, and often show plant parts more effectively than do Sibley's paintings. This is particularly true for bark, which in general Sibley renders much less successfully than he does leaves and fruits.

A welcome feature of both guides is the inclusion of all the information for each species on the same page. This is more convenient than the organization of some older tree guides, such as *Eastern Trees* in the Peterson Field Guide series, or the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Trees*, in which some of the illustrations are relegated to separate sections of the book.

(*continued on page 8)*

Witchhazel (Hamamelis) flowers.

Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis) in winter. The sycamore has only one fruit ball on each stalk, whereas London Planetree (Platanus x acerifolia) normally has two.

Hackberry (Celtus occidentalis) bark.

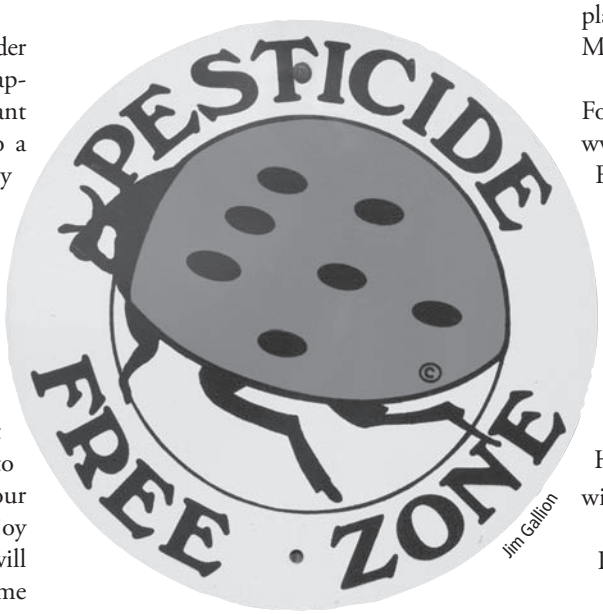
(Book Review continued) An advantage of the NWF guide is that, unlike the Sibley, it contains identification keys and a visual glossary. Further, the organization of the species accounts in the NWF guide, under four-part page headings describing leaf and fruit features, tree or group of trees, and geographic location, aids in the identification of an unknown tree. Sibley arranges his species accounts by family, an advantageous organization for learning taxonomic relationships but less helpful for those who have no idea which family a tree in question belongs to and must leaf through looking for a pattern match.

Both guides will be useful additions to our libraries. Of the two, the Sibley is the more aesthetically appealing, with its beautiful and abundant paintings. Both, however, are packed with information and illustrations, which probably explains why neither fits readily in a pocket. The NWF, at 7-3/4" x 4-3/4" x 1-1/2", is thicker but more compact overall than the Sibley, which is approximately 9-3/4" x 6" x 1". Both have soft, semi-flexible covers.

Fall in the Catoctin Mountains

(*Winterizing cont. from page 3)*
our gardens. It's the perfect time to consider what our gardens really do. Our own landscaping practices have gone from constant mowing, weeding, and yard-decorating to a more sustainable, environmentally friendly approach to gardening. Take a look around your own property and see where you might be able to incorporate some of these wildlife gardening techniques.

The rewards are many and your wildlife friends will appreciate the help. As you plan your new garden take time to get familiar with the species you are trying to help and attract. Do some research on your local species of animals and plants. Enjoy watching the wildlife that come, and they will come, with your help. Spend some time outdoors scouting the neighborhood for signs of wildlife. Take a walk in the woods to see natural areas and take those ideas back to your gardens. Other ideas for your new gardening plans may include a rain garden or a summer Monarch Butterfly Waystation!



Pesticide Free Zone sign

For more on Monarch Butterflies go to: www.monarchwatch.org

For more help identifying your local native plant species check with your native plant society or use your region's field guides. A website that offers these guides on line is at: www.enature.com.

Also visit the National Wildlife Federation website for backyard wildlife habitats at: www.nwf.org.

Happy New Year to you and your new wildlife friends!

~Jim Gallion
President of Wildlife Gardening Adventures

Jim is a longtime member of the Sierra Club Maryland Chapter, Maryland Native Plant Society Board of Directors, Master Gardener, and National Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward.

Volunteer Needed

We have an urgent need for someone to assist with bookkeeping. We're a small organization so it's not an onerous task. Prior accounting experience not necessary, but if you're comfortable with numbers, and have 5-10 hours a month to help, please contact Kirsten at khjohnson@ymail.com or 410.366.7239.

Conservation Watch

New Roads Threaten Maryland's Natural Habitats

CHARLES COUNTY. MNPS has joined the Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County in opposing the construction of a "Charles County Connector" that would severely damage the Mattowoman Watershed, considered the most productive of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries. We submitted comments to MD Department of the Environment pointing out deficiencies in their assessment of risks to rare, threatened and endangered plant species. Preventing damage to the Mattawoman watershed is a minimum requirement if the State is at all serious about protecting, let alone restoring, the Chesapeake Bay. If you're interested in joining the Smarter Growth Alliance, please contact Jim Long, jp.long @ earthlink.net.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY. The county has for many years been considering a new county road (M-83) east of I-270 in the Germantown area. With thousands of new residents expected in Clarksburg, pressure is building to speed the journey of those cars as they travel south county. Under some options being considered, the road would traverse park land and would have a devastating effect on Dayspring Creek and lands adjoining the creek. A group of MNPS members recently toured the property of the Dayspring Earth Ministry, and admired their stewardship of this precious stream valley. One highlight was seeing several patches of white turtleheads. Montgomery County residents – please watch for news about this proposed road and let your county officials know your views.

Coming Events

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings take place on the last Tuesday of each month *with the exception of the December meeting*. Location: White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room. The Library will be closed; enter from the lower level. Doors open at 6:30; come early and get to know fellow members. *Directions: Exit the Washington Beltway at New Hampshire Avenue (exit 28). Go north about 2 miles. The library is the first building on the right, once you have passed under Route 29, just after the Sears store.*

November 30, 2010 ~Tuesday, 7:30 PM, doors open at 6:30
Wild Uses of Plants
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room
Speaker: Karyn Molines, *Supervisor of Cultural Resources, Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks and past MNPS President*
Throughout human history plants have provided us with food, shelter, fiber for clothing and vessels, medicines, cosmetics, dyes and colors, decorations and furniture. Comparisons of different cultures will be highlighted by examples of Native American uses of wild plants. Handouts provided that supplement the lecture. Refreshments and door prizes. Pot luck refreshments are always welcome.

December 14, 2010 ~ Tuesday, 6:30 PM
Annual Holiday Social and Members Share Night, plus Annual MNPS Business Meeting
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room
If you have images or stories of your local or distant adventures experienced in the past year, do bring them to share! Please bring a PowerPoint presentation (on a disk or portable drive) or slides to share with the group. A slide projector (Vivitar) and carousels will be available. Please bring holiday cookies or other treats to share. Beverages provided.

January 25, 2010 ~ Tuesday, 7:30 PM, doors open at 6:30
Unexplored Pine Barrens of the Washington, DC Area,
Rod Simmons, *Former MNPS President and Current Board Member*
The term "pine barrens" typically evokes images of the pine barrens of New Jersey. But this habitat once extended for miles up and down the eastern coastal plain and remnants still exist in our area. In this presentation, Rod Simmons will describe his and others' discovery of local pine barrens, and the plant communities they contain.

February 22, 2010 ~ Tuesday, 7:30 PM, doors open at 6:30
Tree ID Workshop
Continuing our series of identification workshops, Cris Fleming will bring specimens of twigs, bark, and fruits to help participants learn different techniques of identifying woody plants in winter. Please bring a hand lens if you have one and any book that gives information about trees and shrubs without the leaves.

Mark you Calendars ~ Monthly Meeting Dates 2011
Visit mdflora.org for additional information.

March 29, 2011	June 28, 2011	September 2, 2011
April 26, 2011	July 26, 2011	October 25, 2011
May 31, 2011	August 30, 2011	November 29, 2011
		December 13, 2011

LATE AUTUMN & WINTER FIELD TRIPS

These are the field trips scheduled at press time. For up to date news of MNPS field trips and activities please visit our website, www.mdflora.org and find us at meetup.com. *Unless otherwise indicated, MNPS field trips are generally geared to adults. Please see the information provided for individual field trips, some of which may welcome children. If you have questions, feel free to contact the field trip leader*.

December 5, 2010 Sunday, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Civil War Fort Sites in the Washington, DC Region (94th in Series): Fort Totten
Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica
Bring: Water and lunch.
We will return to Fort Totten to observe this ideal terrace gravel forest in winter form. Note: Easy to moderate walk. Cancelled if raining. Call Sunday morning of the walk before 9:00 if you have questions about weather.
Contact: Mary Pat Rowan, blair-rowan@starpower.net or 202.526.8821.
Directions: Fort Totten Drive, from which you enter Fort Totten Park, is parallel to North Capitol Street between Riggs Road and Hawaii Avenue in NE Washington, DC. Street parking is available on the west side of Fort Totten Drive between Hamilton Street and Allison Street. We will meet on the Park site near the National Park Service sign.

December 11, 2010 Saturday, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Tree Anatomy Walk, Wheaton Regional Park, Silver Spring
Leader: Richard Murray, arborist, author of the *Tree Biology Notebook*
The walk will look at tree architecture, branching patterns, and contrast how trees adapt to environmental influences (woods, edge, and open settings). Aging stages, defect patterns, and how trees compensate for wounding will be explored.
Note: Moderate walk, no registration required. Walk will be canceled in case of moderate to heavy precipitation.
Directions: Arcola Avenue to Orebaugh Avenue into Wheaton Regional Park, go to parking lot near the dog park.
Contact: Richard Murray, treebiologynotebook@shannontree.com

December 19, 2010 Sunday, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Winter Solstice Celebration at Travilah Serpentine Barrens
Leader: Rod Simmons
Continuing the tradition, but at a new location, Rod Simmons' winter solstice walk will take place at the Travilah Serpentine Barrens, the mid-Atlantic region's stellar example of a globally-rare forested serpentinite community. This vegetation type once comprised many thousands of acres in the area of Montgomery Co. west of Potomac and Rockville, with about 1,000 acres of this rare local landscape preserved today. Serpentinite is an ultramafic rock derived from magnesium-rich silicate materials that typically weathers to a soil that is high in magnesium and iron. The Travilah serpentinite is dark grayish green and closely underlies the surface, frequently outcropping throughout. Soils of this type are fairly nutrient deficient and produce a somewhat stunted vegetation characterized mainly by oaks, hickories, pines, and heaths, though plants of the Rosaceae, Cyperaceae, Poaceae, and Lamiaceae, among others, are also prominent.
Bring: Wear sturdy shoes, bring lunch, snacks, and water.
Directions: See the MNPS website for directions and meeting location.

Marilandica

A Publication of the Maryland Native Plant Society

In this Issue

Look for MNPS Events & News

- on our website mdflora.org
- on Facebook
- on Meet up

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Maryland Native Plant Society
PO Box 4877
Silver Spring, MD 20914

Maryland Native Plant Society

You can also join on-line on our website www.mdflora.org

Member 1 _____

Member 2 _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Co _____ Zip _____

Phone (S) Day _____ Eve _____ Cell _____

Email _____ ❑ I do not wish to receive emails

Annual Membership Dues

❑ Individual $25	❑ Organization $50
❑ Double $35	❑ Lifetime $350
❑ Student/Limited Income $15	
❑ Optional Donation $	
Total Enclosed $	

Make checks payable to: Maryland Native Plant Society or MNPS

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