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NativeSCAPE

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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 newsletter.

NativeSCAPE January 2017



President's Message

By Lane Conville-Canney



Photo by Lane Conville-Canney

Dear Members,

As 2016 winds down, I enjoy taking the time to reflect on the year. I am pleased to celebrate so many wonderful accomplishments of our Georgia Native Plant Society with members. We are working to improve our email communications to reach more people and grow our membership around the state and have implemented a new system to target and improve our messages. Please let me know how you like it!

Another wonderful reason to celebrate is the reinvigorated [Native Plant Habitat Certificate](#) program that will help strengthen native plant education and awareness at a neighborhood and community level. How tremendous would it be if we could all try and get just two neighbors to work toward this certification?! It takes just a little effort by several individuals to make a huge overall change.

I am also really looking forward to our annual [Native Plant Symposium](#) on February 4, 2017, in Macon, Georgia. The symposium will be held outside of Atlanta this year in order to attract some new members from the central part of the state while still serving our Atlanta members with an easy trip to Macon. Join me in February for this grand event!

More than anything, I want to celebrate all our members. Thank you for your generous and loyal support in continuing work to conserve and educate the public on the importance of native plants and habitats.

Have a merry and bright holiday season and let's go native planting soon!

Happy New Year!

Lane Conville-Canney



2017 GNPS Plant of the Year: Sweet Betsy (*Trillium cuneatum*)

Text by Valerie Boss



Trillium cuneatum

Sweet Betsy

Photo by Stefan Bloodworth
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Trilliums are special to Georgia. The state is host to at least 22 species -- more than any other state in the United States. Thus, it seems particularly appropriate to name a member of this genus as the Georgia Native Plant Society's 2017 Plant of the Year. Congratulations, and welcome to our gardens, sweet Betsy (*Trillium cuneatum*)!

Trilliums can be divided into two broad categories: 1) pedicellate: single terminal flowers extend from a whorl of three bracts (modified leaves) via a short pedicel, and 2) sessile: flowers sit directly above the bracts. The latter are known as toadshade trilliums, and are sometimes classified into the sub-genus *Phyllantherum* (synonym *Esdra*). Toadshade trilliums include our 2017 Plant of the Year, *T. cuneatum* (sweet Betsy, aka little sweet Betsy, purple toadshade, or whip-poor-will flower), as well as *T. luteum* (yellow trillium), and *T. ludovicianum* (Louisiana trillium).

Sweet Betsy shines as one of our state's largest trillium species, with 12" to 20" stem-like peduncles and 3" to 8" cuneate (wedge-shaped) bracts. Like all toadshade trilliums, sweet Betsy's bracts are heavily mottled in shades of green and gray-green. Such visually arresting foliage makes this trillium a springtime standout in woodland beds. In Georgia, sweet Betsy usually blooms between March and mid-April. Flowers are 1½" to 2¾" tall, having three erect, ovoid petals that overlap at the base, three smaller

green or reddish-green sepals, six stamens, and a single three-lobed ovary. Flower color can vary quite a bit. Maroon is the most common hue, but reddish-green, bronze, or yellow shades also occur. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish a yellowish flowered *T. cuneatum* from *T. luteum*. Scent may be a helpful differentiating factor. Sweet Betsy's flower has been described as anything from banana-like to ill-scented to spicy-sweet. In contrast, the flower of *T. luteum* smells distinctly lemony. As with other toadshade trilliums, sweet Betsy's entire aboveground portion dies back in the heat of summer, to re-emerge the following spring from the dormant rhizome.

Sweet Betsy is a great selection for a shade garden. Native to deciduous woodland coves, plants are hardy, drought-resistant (although they prefer moist soil), somewhat deer proof, and extremely long-lived. Members of the genus *Trillium* can reach a hundred years old, with older parts of the rhizome dying back to be replaced continuously by new growth at the tip ⁽¹⁾. Sweet Betsy specimens transplant readily from the wild, often multiplying to form dense clumps, which are easy to divide and propagate. Recent research ⁽²⁾ suggests that clump formation may depend on the source of the plant. When it comes to reproduction, not all sweet Betsy plants are the same. In Georgia, individuals of the species harvested from the Ridge and Valley region (mountains) reproduce almost exclusively by seed. In contrast, about 25% of plants originating from the Piedmont region of the state reproduce via rhizome division to form clonal clumps. These differences hold true even when the plants are transferred to greenhouses, suggesting that at least one of the populations has undergone lasting genetic or epigenetic modification. Thus, for those who want their garden trilliums to form clumps, it's probably best to source them from the state's Piedmont region. After flowering, a sweet Betsy plant will produce a pulpy, purplish-green seed capsule that looks like a small, 6-angled rose hip. Each seed is attached to a white elaiosome, a key element in trillium reproduction. Trilliums have a symbiotic partnership with ants, and to a lesser extent, yellow jackets. These insects collect and feed on the elaiosomes, dispersing the discarded seeds as far as they can crawl or fly.

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GNPS Plant of the Year 2017: Sweet Betsy (*Trillium cuneatum*)

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Gardeners can propagate sweet Betsy by seed or rhizome division. To harvest trillium seeds, collect the fruits in June or July, squeeze out the seeds, and soak them for 15 minutes in 3% peroxide to render the elaiosomes unpalatable to insects. Do not let the seeds dry out, but instead sow them into soil immediately. Trilliums grown from seed can take up to two years to sprout a single bract and up to seven years to fruit ⁽³⁾. In contrast, rhizome division can produce plants in one season, although the resulting offspring will be genetically identical. For this method, simply break the rhizome apart and replant, making sure that each rhizome segment has a growing point and some fibrous roots attached. New plants should appear the following spring, decked out in camouflage motley and ready to be admired.



A less common green form.

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt



Sweet Betsy (*Trillium cuneatum*) in bloom.

Picture by Ellen Honeycutt

References

- 1) Chafin, L.G. (2016) Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Georgia and Surrounding States, p. 425.
- 2) Gonzales, E., Hamrick, J.L., and Smouse, P.E. (2008) [Comparison of Clonal Diversity in Mountain and Piedmont Populations of *Trillium cuneatum* \(Melanthiaceae-Trilliaceae\)](#), a Forest Understory Species. *Am J. Botany* 95(10): 1254-1261.
- 3) <http://gnps.org/plants/toadshade-trillium-trillium-cuneatum/>



New Year's Resolutions: Sometimes More is Better

Text and Pictures by Ellen Honeycutt

I'm hoping that some of you reading this made a New Year's resolution such as:

- ◆ Support the birds more in your landscape.
- ◆ Support pollinators and attract butterflies.
- ◆ Use less fertilizers and pesticides in the garden.
- ◆ Enjoy natural areas like state and national parks.

All these things (and more!) can be yours when you incorporate more regionally appropriate native plants into your landscape. Here's why:

Native birds are heavily reliant on insects which feed on native plants. They are also more attracted to and get more nutrition from native seeds and berries. Try as we might, bird feeders alone don't come close to supporting a diverse bird population in your area. You might get more birds in number, but they will be the same species of birds over and over.

Include more native plants with an emphasis on being as regionally diverse as possible (having more plant species increases the insect population), and you will not only have more birds, you will actually be supporting different birds than if you didn't.

Supporting pollinators is an important task that is gaining more attention these days – especially after the collapse of honey bee hives. Fortunately most native bees don't live in hives, but they can still be affected by our behavior and they certainly need our help in providing more habitat space and nectar rich native flowers to which they are most adapted. Previous blog posts of mine have covered an [overview of native pollinators](#) and some [ideas on supporting them](#) more.

How about using less fertilizer and pesticide in the garden? That is certainly a goal of mine – I frequently describe myself as both a cheap and lazy gardener! But there's a more important point: overuse of fertilizers can lead to groundwater and stream contamination at the very least, and use of pesticides often kills beneficial bugs and can throw the predator/prey insect relationship out of balance resulting in overpopulation of some insects. The best thing you can do is to educate yourself about how chemicals affect the soil and then learn more about gardening organically.

Next you can realize that regional native plants are supremely adapted to native soils – including that “horrible” clay soil in the Piedmont area or the frightfully well drained sandy soils in the Coastal Plain. I jest, of course, clay soil is not horrible and there are hundreds of plants that evolved to live with it. [Amendments are not as recommended](#) as they used to be, but using organic mulches (leaves, pine straw, pine bark, hardwood mulch, no dyed mulches, please!) will help the plants initially and over time by attracting soil organisms to the area. Even above ground insects and fungi play a role in helping your soil be the best it can be.

Also learn more about the pH content of your native soil and what native plants thrive in that pH; there is no sense in



A brown-headed nuthatch on a snag.



Buttonbush

(Cephalanthus occidentalis)



News Year's Resolution: Sometimes More is Better

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fighting against the natural processes. Acid-loving native plants are adapted to and thrive in soils with a pH level below 7. These same plants will struggle in alkaline soils with a pH level above 7. When in doubt, [have your soil tested](#) before launching into costly and potentially futile efforts to apply fertilizer as a fix.

Ok, how about that last resolution? Natural areas like [state parks](#) and [national parks](#) are beautiful and serene. Part of what makes them so is the natural look of the woodlands: tall trees form a canopy over smaller trees, shrubs, ferns, rocks, moss and leaf-lined paths. If you'd like to enjoy areas like that, plan to implement them on a smaller scale in your own landscape.

Take pictures of your favorite parks and pick out the elements that you can recreate, even if it is just a single vista. [Here is an interesting post on doing just that](#) (if you will kindly ignore the gardener's use of invasive plants like mahonia and nandina!); her pictures are very inspirational. You can also look to books for inspiration and tips. Good luck with your resolutions whatever they may be! And please do visit more local, state, and national parks ... they are our parks after all. Your visit will show that you value their existence, and money that you spend there will help support them.



Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) loves acidic conditions .



Replicate concepts like *Sedum ternatum* in rock .

This article originally appeared at: <http://usinggeorgianativeplants.blogspot.com/> .



Native Plant Restoration News

Text and Photos by Susan Hanson and Angela Burrow

Restoration is an integral part of our mission of conservation and stewardship of native plants. All GNPS members are invited and encouraged to work at any of the restoration sites.

This time of the year is a great time to work—no mosquitoes and no snakes.

You will have an opportunity to learn more about plants from the site leaders and co-workers. You will be making our city and state a more lovely place using native plants that benefit our birds, butterflies, and bees.

GNPS has 13 restoration sites. We want to thank the leaders who co-ordinate the work and the many volunteers who give their time and energy.

- ◆ The Berkeley Lake site is led by Susan Hanson with dedicated workers Joan Frierson, Linda Lowery, and Betty Songer.
- ◆ Kevin McCauley is the leader for the Blue Heron Nature Preserve site, which is on property shared by the Atlanta Audubon Society.
- ◆ The Buffalo Creek site, in Carrollton, was led by Flo Hayes and now by Carol Hight. They are a hard working group removing a lot of privet and planting many natives beside their beltway.
- ◆ The Cherokee Gardens is led by Cara and Tony Harris. They fondly remember all the GNPS members who were so supportive of the project: Lisa Betz, Ken Gohring, Marcia Winchester, Ellen Honeycutt, Connie Ghosh and especially the late Murrel Creekmore.
- ◆ The Fulwood Garden Bog is a new site in Tifton.
- ◆ Heritage Park was the first restoration site. Marcia Winchester, Price Craft, Connie Ghosh and others have made amazing results in this Cobb County Park.
- ◆ James E. McGuffey is a new park created by leaders in Newnan. Dale Senko and Pat Farmer are leading workers in removing invasives and planting natives.
- ◆ Lullwater is led by Paula Henderson. It is in an older section of Atlanta and has many, many invasives. They need more workers.
- ◆ The Mary Scott Nature Preserve site has been led by Beth Nathan for several years. She has been joined by Joan Frierson, Jane Trentin, Viva and Neil Araki, and Susan Hanson.
- ◆ McFarlane Park was once covered in invasives. In 1992, it was established as The Cobb County Land Trust. Many people have worked on the site and it became a GNPS site in 2012. Sheri George and Mary McGaughy are leading the group of committed workers.
- ◆ Towhee Trail is a Cobb County Park that has a section maintained as a GNPS restoration site. Sheri George and Diane Wooldridge are the leaders. They have recruited some business groups to help remove the invasives.
- ◆ Tanyard Community Garden and Zonolite Park are also listed as restoration sites. They need GNPS members to lead these sites.

A very BIG THANK YOU to all these leaders and workers!

Will you consider helping them??? For a list of site locations, more information, and to view a schedule of upcoming restoration activities, go to the [GNPS Restoration](#) page.

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Native Plant Restoration News

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Blue Heron Workday

For the 4th year the Blue Heron Nature Preserve celebrated the joy of giving back to the community as part of the 26th annual Hands On Atlanta Day. This year we hosted a dedicated group from Norfolk Southern Corporation who like a freight train rolled through the long list of work we had to do. This year we focused on the newest part of the Preserve at the Land O Lakes location. With help from our volunteers we painted the Field Education Center, continued work on our woodland native plant restoration, built a significant portion of our new Confluence Trail and helped clear our meadow along Mill Creek as part of our meadow restoration. The Norfolk Southern Corporation wasn't alone. We also had help from our friends at Oglethorpe University's Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity. We love all our volunteers and appreciate them giving up their Saturday morning to help make a difference in the community. Also, thanks to our Hands On Atlanta partners Catherine Williams and Jennifer Schmitz. Come on out and see what they've done!



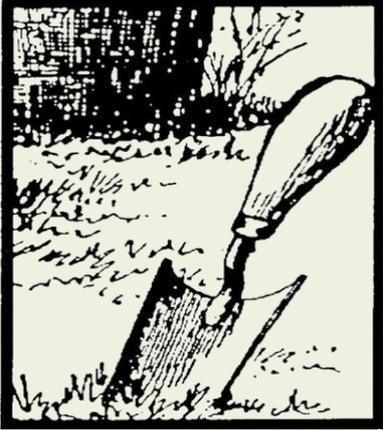
Happy Restoration!

Susan Hanson and Angela Burrow



Native Plant Rescue News

Text and Pictures By Marcia Winchester



The plant rescue program is taking the month of January off. Please take this time to enjoy the natives in your landscape and wooded area. Use January to decide what plants you want to add to your landscape. This year I decided to replace my lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) with cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*). I'll pot up my lady ferns for the plant sale and someone else will be able to enjoy them. As I make a list of what needs to be divided and moved, I plan on replacing more non-natives with natives.

When rescuing plants, it's important to emulate the growing conditions of the plants. Before you dig, check out the soil, the amount of moisture required, and even the amount of sunlight needed for your plant. Will you be able to duplicate the conditions? If you aren't sure ask your facilitator. Some plants are very adaptable like partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*). It prefers even moisture in shade. However in drier conditions it adapts with the leaves getting larger and more spaced out on the

stem. Other plants like wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) need special conditions and rarely survive transplanting.

Caring for rescued plants can mean dealing with dry conditions like this summer and fall. I have several tricks I use to keep my rescued plants in good condition during the summer. First I don't plant rescued plants in the summer. I usually leave them in the plastic grocery bags (only if I get a good root ball, otherwise, I plant them in a pot). I roll down the sides of the bag making sure there are a couple of holes in the bottom for drainage. Normally walking out of the rescue thru briars will snag plenty of holes in the bag. I place my bags in shade, grouped together where I can keep an eye on them during the summer. Of course water them thoroughly. I also don't like to dig deciduous trees and shrubs in the summer but if I do I cut off a lot of the leaves or even with big leaves like *Magnolia* I cut the leaves in half. This aids in a quicker recovery for the plant. I use a large plastic pot that I fill half-way with leaves from the woods. I mash them down and add some potting soil on top. I gently place the plant in the pot and top with some more potting soil and then some hardwood mulch. Again water thoroughly, placing containers together for easy watering. I wait until fall or when we start receiving consistent rain before I plant. I even fill planters using natives that I put on my deck where I can bring the woods to my back door. I can sit on the deck reading the paper and enjoy the fragrance of several native azaleas at the same time.

*** The Plant Rescue Committee ***



Grouping of potted rescued plants.



Partridge berry in a bag .



Habitat Certification Program

Text by Angela Burrow; Pictures by Melanie Pollard



Have you heard about the redesigned Native Plant Habitat Certification program? Over the last year, the GNPS Habitat Certification Committee has been hard at work updating this program to better reflect the goals of GNPS and to meet the needs of our members. The new program emphasizes both education and recognition through three levels of certification: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The Bronze level is intended to be an easy introduction into native plants, their conservation, and their use in the landscape or garden. Members only need to plant six different species of native plants from two or more categories, practice good conservation measures, and not intentionally grow Category 1 invasive plants. Native plant categories are simply groupings of plants by traits such as habitat or growth type. Categories are listed on the application and include sun plants, shade plants, trees, and other familiar groupings. Invasive plant categories are groupings of non-native plants based on the level of threat to our ecosystem here in Georgia. You can find more information about invasive plants and their categories at the [Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council](#). The Silver and Gold levels are designed to reward members who make a significant contribution to the conservation of native plants by planting one-third or two-thirds, respectively, of their property in native plants from 4 or more categories. In addition, these members agree to practice conservation measures and battle additional categories of invasive plants to better protect their property and native habitats.

As part of the certification process, a volunteer will visit your property with you to document your native plant habitat and suggest how you can add even more native plants to your landscape. This visit is enjoyable for both the certifier and the property owner; who among us doesn't enjoy showing our plants or visiting gardens? We also love receiving photos of your garden! Now is the perfect time to begin planning your native plant habitat and certification application. If you're just getting started, consider the Bronze level. For a \$10 application fee, you will receive a friendly visit and a beautiful certificate. This is the best way to get some great advice and encouragement on your native plant habitat. If you've been adding native plants to your property or protecting native plants that already exist, consider the Silver or Gold levels. The \$30 application fee includes a friendly visit to show plants, get advice, or both! Additionally, these levels receive a beautiful certificate and a beautiful sign to place on your property to signify to your neighbors and passersby your dedication to native plants.

You can find more information about the program and the application on the GNPS website under the Conservation tab. Look for the [Native Plant Habitat Certification](#) link.

I hope that you will consider certifying your property as a Native Plant Habitat and look forward to receiving your application.





Upcoming Events and Announcements

Bring in the NEW Year with Walter Bland! on January 10, 2017, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens in Mershon Hall (directly across from Day Hall). Join us as we learn from Walter Bland and work to beat all of our unwanted plants. **Weeds and How to Beat them!** We will take a look at some of the most common non-native (and native) weeds in the south and discuss the best strategies to deal with them. We will review safe and effective use of herbicides and integrated pest management techniques. We will discuss the risks and benefits of using chemicals for vegetation management. Walter Bland is the managing partner of Rock Spring Restorations, a leading habitat restoration service provider in the southeast. He provides invasive species control, vegetation management, native seed collection, and plant propagation services to government and private green-space managers in the region.

Georgia Native Plant Society Annual Symposium | Working With Nature – Rather than Against February 4, 2017, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Middle Georgia State University Conference Center in Macon, Georgia. The Symposium has an exciting line-up of five distinguished speakers who will demonstrate the importance of landscaping with native plantings rooted in the geology and ecology of Georgia's diverse native plant communities. To register for this informative lecture series that will teach you how to best incorporate Georgia's native plants in your garden or landscape project go to the [GNPS Event Registration](#) page.



Granite Dish garden, Arabia Mountain

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!



Georgia Native Plant Society Membership & Renewal

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

Choose membership level: (Select one)

Individual (\$30)

Senior, 55 and older (\$25)

Family (\$50)

Full-Time Student (\$25)

Business /Commercial/Educational (\$250)

Lifetime Individual/Family (\$1,000)

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