



The Native Plant Society of New Jersey

www.npsnj.org

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Native Plant Society Executive Board 2002

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President's Message

2002 was a year of ups and downs, not unlike many others. New Jersey elected a new governor, while the sitting governor was called to Washington to head the EPA. Taking into account James McGreevey's environmental platform, the Whitman/McGreevey combination could have meant good things for New Jersey.

Well, Ms. Whitman began her EPA career by seeking to ease restrictions on air pollution, and Mr. McGreevey made a series of fumbles in the early going. But clearly the Governor has made some landmark commitments to the environment of New Jersey. McGreevey signed an executive order on Sept. 22, 2002 that in effect places a one-year freeze on new development in three Atlantic County communities to protect their water resources during the state's prolonged drought.

McGreevey has promoted:

- a Smart Growth Policy Council to ensure that state agencies incorporate so-called smart growth principles and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan into their policies and rules. "If we don't do anything in 25 years, the reason why we love New Jersey is going to vanish before our eyes," McGreevey said. "We're going to lose that open space; we're going to spend longer on our roads, and people are not going to enjoy the quality of life that they have today."
- More aggressive enforcement of environmental laws, including an unprecedented, week-long enforcement action with more than 70 inspectors sent to more than 700 facilities to ensure compliance with environmental laws.
- Proposed rules that would reduce storm water pollution and help recharge the aquifer, and increase anti-pollution protections for 27 reservoirs and water bodies.
- The appointment of former Gov. James J. Florio as chairman of the state Pinelands Commission and other commission appointments praised as preservation-oriented.

Dena Mottola, acting director of the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group, said "significant progress has been made on the clean water front, but the clean air front has yet to be tackled." The group, and others, want NJ to adopt California's stringent clean air standards. McGreevey pledged to improve air quality by requiring new cars sold in New Jersey to be cleaner.

Smart Growth: A Cornerstone of McGreevey's Campaign

Currently, NJ's 566 municipalities have wide authority to zone within their borders. The state's heavy reliance on property taxes encourages towns to chase after industrial and commercial development and the tax revenues it brings. One town's development brings friction from the neighboring towns that share in the traffic but not the income. Smart growth techniques protect farms and forests by encouraging investment in urban and established suburban and rural communities. We need to get back to regional planning.

We at the Native Plant Society know the connections between sprawl and loss of habitat and loss of species. In the Philadelphia/southern New Jersey region alone, sprawling development that occurred between 1982-97 prevents between 25 and 59 billion gallons of rainwater from reaching vital underground water systems each year-enough to supply the household needs of up to 1.5 million people. "Paving Our Way to

The Eastern White Pine

The Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) has been one of the most valuable native plants in North America. The early English colonists from wood-starved Europe were amazed by majestic white pines up to 250' tall, with base diameters up to 8' and the first branches 100' above the ground. Pines grew in groves which the colonists named "Cathedrals" perhaps because of the sound deadening mat of needles on the forest floor or because of the tall columns reaching to the sky and the open expanses under the trees typical of virgin forests. Even the wind only softly whispers when it blows through a pine "Cathedral" (1, 2). There is good archeological evidence which suggests that white pine preferentially grew at the sites of abandoned Indian fields. This would explain the very scattered pattern of pine groves (1).

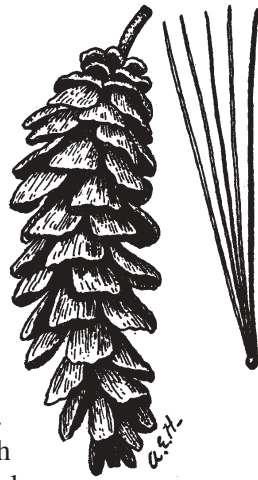
The British navy quickly recognized the value of the white pine and numerous trees were reserved for the King's use by being marked with the King's broad arrow. Any colonial brash enough to use a tree so marked was subject to severe punishment. The British soon built special barge-like vessels which could carry up to 50 pine trunks destined to be ship masts. A 100' mast was about 3'x3' at the butt and 2'x2' at the top, while a 120' mast was a giant 4'x4' at the bottom and 30" at the top. The original masts on the US Constitution (Old Ironsides) were single trees but later they were laminated to better withstand cannon balls. During the American Revolution it became a great sport for the patriots to see how many of the King's trees one could cut down and haul off (2, 3,).

The white pine became a symbol of American patriots. A pine tree was prominently displayed on the Continental flag, on the Bunker Hill flag, on Washington's Cruisers flag, and on the state flags of Vermont and the Massachusetts Navy. The white pine also appeared on the first American coin, the Pine Tree Shilling of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (3).

White pines grow naturally from Newfoundland to the mountains of Georgia and west to central Iowa. In New Jersey the tree is rare in the southern counties but common in the middle and northern counties. White pines grow in a variety of habitats especially in fertile, well drained, or sandy soil (4).

White pine needles are long (3"-5") and give the tree a light bluish-green to green color. The needles come in groups of 5 (with a few clusters of 3 or 4 to confuse amateur botanists). The cylindrical cones are often curved and are from 5"-10" in length. Each cone scale houses 2 seeds; cones take 2 years to mature (4,5).

Pines grow rapidly; they are capable of adding a foot or more in height and a ½" in trunk diameter each year. Old growth pine trees provided huge, knot free, relatively strong boards. Since pine was common and easy to cut, many colonial homes used pine for paneling,



WHITE PINE
Cone, one-half natural size; needles,
natural size

floors and furniture. Pine was also a favorite tree of loggers since pine logs can still be processed in a lumber mill a year or more after being cut down. In contrast, most hardwood trees such as cherry, maple, oak, and ash must be cut into 1" thick boards immediately after felling or large cracks will develop in the trunk which can render the wood worthless.

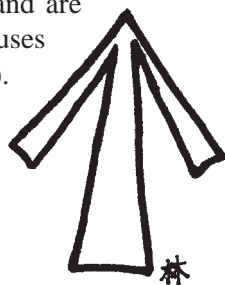
Freshly cut white pine is creamy white or a pale straw color but pine wood which has aged many years tends to darken to a deep rich tan. Occasionally one can find light brown pine boards with unusual yellowish-golden or reddish brown hues. This is the famous pumpkin pine. It is generally thought that slow growing pines in virgin forests accumulate colored products in the heartwood but genetic factors and soil conditions may also play a role in rich color development (2).

Although white pine was frequently used for flooring in buildings constructed before the Civil War, the wood is soft and consequently you will find cup shaped depressions from normal wear and tear on almost every old white pine floor. George Washington realized this would happen and wisely made his Mount Vernon floors out of yellow pine which is much harder.

An unexpected characteristic of the white pine is that you can eat it. The name "Adirondack" is an Iroquois word which means tree-eater and referred to their neighbors (more commonly known as the Algonquians) who collected the inner bark during times of winter starvation. The white soft inner bark (cambial layer) was carefully separated from the hard, dark brown bark and dried. When pounded this product can be used as flour or added to stretch other starchy products. Linnaeus noted in the 1700's that cattle and pigs fed pine bark bread grew well but he personally did not like the taste. The young staminate cones were stewed by the Ojibwe Indians with meat and were said to be sweet and not pitchy. In addition, the seeds are sweet and nutritious but not as good as those of some of the western nut pines (6).

Pine resin has been used to waterproof baskets, pails and boats and the sap can be processed to make turpentine. In addition, the sap apparently has a number of quite efficient antimicrobials. The Chippewa even used it successfully to treat gangrenous wounds. Generally a wet pulp from the inner bark is applied to the wounds or pine tar can be mixed with beeswax or butter and used as a salve to prevent infection. Pine tar mixed with beer can be used to remove tapeworms (flat worms) or nematodes (round worms) and pine tar mixed with sulfur is useful to treat dandruff. Pine tar is produced by slowly burning pine roots, branches, or small trunks in a partially smothered flame (1).

In the early 20th century a very serious fungal disease, White Pine Blister Rust first appeared in North America. Mortality in mature pine groves was often 50-80%. The fungus must have



The King's Broad Arrow



SEARCHIN' THE WWW with bunnyj19@aol.com

Hi Everyone!

Looking to find information along the scientific line with lots of access to lots of lines of scientific research. Then you absolutely must visit the newest site produced by the .gov entities. It has sites galore if you start at their index that literally cover ever avenue of scientific research and understanding from A to Z. All you need to be is a bit creative and resourceful in identifying the path which you want to follow. So check out www.science.gov

If you are strictly a purist and only want to look at web sites that feature native plants and nothing else but native plants and you want to focus strictly on North America then the place for you to visit is The North American Native Plant Society. The NANPS is dedicated to the study, conservation, cultivation and restoration of native plants. Join us in our celebration of the unique botanical heritage of North America. <http://www.nanps.org/index.shtml>

Are you interested in having access to a forest biology book and read it chapter by chapter on line. Then you must visit this site. <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/forestbiology/htmltext/contents.htm>

And then of course there is always biodiversity in the classroom with great links to many utilitarian sites. The site is called MUSEUM in the Classroom. It consists of A Consortium from The Illinois State Museum and Brookfield Zoo. Their goal is "Exploring Biodiversity and Human Interactions with the Environment" Click on Resources and then click on biodiversity and then click, click, click till you are satiated with information. http://www.museum.state.il.us/mic_home/index.html

If you would like to be on the receiving end of columns similar to the one above but covering the spectrum of education from K-12 and with sample web sites from all the disciplines go to Classroom Connect and scroll down to the NJ Educators site and sign up for a twice a week newsletter that addresses just those issues. nj-educators@listserv.classroom.com

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spent part of its life cycle on alternate hosts: gooseberry or wild currant. Foresters reasoned correctly that if all the alternate host plants were removed that White Pine Blister Rust might be eliminated. A very determined campaign was mounted and all land owners in commercial pine growing regions were encouraged to uproot and kill all wild gooseberry and wild currant plants. Today wild currants are relatively rare plants in New England and planting wild currants or wild gooseberries is strongly discouraged or may even be illegal. As an alternative new strains of commercial currants have been developed which are highly resistant to White Pine Blister Rust. Planting these new strains is a good compromise and will keep you in good standing with your neighbors and the local authorities. Possibly due to hard work of the foresters mortality in white pines from rust is only about 3% today. But alas wild currant and gooseberry pies are items found only in memories (7).

Today white pine finds limited use as commercial boards and large, clear (knot free) 2" thick and 2' wide, old growth planks demand very premium prices. Generally one will find that Ponderosa Pine from pine plantations has replaced the old standby of white pine. White pine however is still considered a premiere landscaping tree and young pines are often seen spaced 15' apart in 2 or 3 rows to provide a privacy screen. One can only imagine what these screens will look like if they are allowed to mature.

In addition, white pines make a reasonable Christmas tree, especially if they have been pruned 2 or 3 times to increase the bushiness. Live white pine trees can be purchased for about the same price as good quality cut trees and live trees can be planted outside after the holiday season is concluded. However, watch out for your back; a 2' or 3' root ball is not easily handled by amateurs. If you are not afraid to be different I challenge you to have an unpruned, forest grown, scrawny, "Charlie Brown" white pine Christmas tree. It makes a great conversation piece and you can always say that you felt sorry for the tree. In addition you can tie extra branches on the tree in strategic positions where convention dictates a good Christmas tree must have branches.

Bibliography:

1. Charlotte Erichsen-Brown. 1979. Medicinal and Other Uses of North American Plants. Dover Publications, NY.
2. Ed Nizalowski. 1997. The mystery of the Pumpkin Pine. Newark Valley Historical Society, Newark, NY.
3. Eric Sloane. 1965. A Reverence for Wood. Balantine Books, NY.
4. H. Gleason and A. Cronquist. 1963. Manual of Vascular Plants. Van Nostrand, NJ.
5. Roger Phillips. 1978. Trees of North America. Random House, NY.
6. M. Fernald, A. Kinsey, R. Rollins. 1943. Edible Wild Plants. Harper & Row, NY.
7. K. Lombard and J. Bofinger. 1999. White Pine Blister Rust. NH Div. of Forests and Lands. ■

Finding Flavor with a Walk in the Wild

by Nancy Adamson

Knowing where to find fresh berries, fragrant leaves and flavorful twigs can make a walk in the wild not only a feast for the eyes, but also a delight for all the senses. Such a sensational walk could also be a source of healing. Around here, touching plants poses few dangers (other than poison ivy, poison sumac and nettles, one need only be aware of thorns), while eating wild plants or making herbal remedies from them requires *great care*. Below is a brief list of note-worthy books for folks interested in exploring with their fingers, noses and tongues, or adding a native plant remedy to a pantry stash.

Annual Meeting

The 2003 Annual Meeting of the Native Plant Society will be held March 8, 2003 at 10:00 AM. All Society members as well as the general public are welcome to attend. As usual it will be held at Holly House on the Hort Farm #1 of Cook College. Hort Farm #1 is on located on Ryders Lane just off of the North bound lane of Route 1.

We will conduct a short business meeting, election of officers and have a guest speaker.

Coffee, tea and nibbles will be served so please mark your calendars and join us. ■

A wintertime walk in New Jersey can include more than the smells of decaying leaves or the sight of graceful trunks. Evergreen teaberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), with its red wintergreen-flavored fruit, is found growing close to the ground among the huckleberry and blueberry heaths. Its leaves are single and nearly quarter-sized, rather than paired and dime-sized like the partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*), whose fruit is also red, but not tasty. Look in some wetter spots to find cranberries on their fine foliage, evergreen, but turned ruby for the winter. Look in the driest spots to find prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*), though foxes may find the red fruits if you don't. You may also find sassafras roots and branches (*Sassafras albidum*), or twigs of black birch (*Betula lenta*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*)—all have fragrant volatile oils which can refresh a winter walker. In summer, their oils are readily released when you crush their leaves. Most winter berries are best left for the birds (and other critters): winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) and American holly (*Ilex americana*), red and black chokeberry (*Photinia arbutifolia* and

P. melanocarpa, previously *Aronia* spp.), or the waxy berries of bayberry or juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*), spicebush, bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), green brier (*Smilax rotundifolia* or *S. glauca*), or coralberry (*Smilax walterii*). Sumacs (*Rhus typhina*, *R. copallina*), too, still carry their fruit in winter, but the bright red vitamin C-laden coat has usually been washed off by early winter, so if you have a fancy for sumac tea, best to harvest fruit in fall, along with persimmons (*Diospyros americana*), pawpaws (*Asimina triloba*), elderberries (*Sambucus canadensis*), rosehips (*Rosa* species) and grapes (*Vitis* species). If smell is all you're after, skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) blooms in late winter, radiating heat and the smell of carrion from its green and burgundy folds to attract fly pollinators.

Come spring and summer, you can find some sweeter smells and a lot more to eat or to harvest for tea. Since we're all familiar with the summer berries, I'll just mention a few plants that make good teas. Best to drink these in moderation unless you thoroughly understand their chemistry (see references at end of

(cont'd on page 5)



President Bill Young introducing Mark Demitroff, our speaker.



Members networking after meeting.

(cont'd from page 4)

article). Teas can be made from the shrubs mentioned above using twigs and leaves: sassafras (though this has been linked with a cancer), spicebush, bayberry, and birch. Oswego tea and beebalms (*Monarda* species) and mountain mints (*Pycnanthemum* species) make delicious teas that combine well with the imported mints and lemon balms in many herb gardens or the chamomiles that now grow as naturalized weeds. The shiny leaves of sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) have a slight scent of licorice, delicious fresh or as tea. New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) is purported to be medicinal and not particularly tasty, according to Cecil Still (his book is listed below). Violet leaves and flowers, other than the yellow ones, can be eaten fresh or sugared to decorate cakes. The list is endless. Whether you want to explore on your own or share a more sensational view of the world with a loved one, may you find time to see, touch, smell and taste the native abundance around you this year and beyond.



Photo by Nancy Adamson

A few books on edible and medicinal plants, or uses of plants (there are many, many more):

Still, Cecil C. 1998. *Botany and Healing: Medicinal Plants of New Jersey and the Region*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey. This is a terrific text, organized by plant families, providing detailed information on the chemical properties of native species and their cousins from elsewhere.

Foster, Steven and James A. Duke. 1990. *A Field Guide to Medicinal Plants: Eastern and Central North America* (Peterson Field Guides). Houghton Mifflin, Boston. A compact, encyclopedic field guide packed with brief descriptions, including uses and habitat.

Medve, Richard J. and Mary Lee Medve. 1996. *Edible Wild Plants of Pennsylvania and Neighboring States*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania. This has a lot of recipes.



Photo by Richard Pillar

Brown, Deni. 2001. *New Encyclopedia of Herbs and Their Uses*. DK Publishing, New York. This text, sponsored by the Herb Society of America, is my favorite reference for plant uses, native and otherwise.

Cox, Beverly and Martin Jacobs. 1991. *Spirit of the Harvest: North American Indian Cooking*. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, New York. This lovely cookbook has recipes from all over the United States, including the northeast.

Tucker, Arthur O. and Thomas DeBaggio. 2000. *The Big Book of Herbs: A Comprehensive Illustrated Reference to Herbs of Flavor and Fragrance*. Interweave Press, Loveland, Colorado. This is a good reference for cultivating and harvesting herbs (for tea).

Nancy Adamson is a field ecologist with the NJ Natural Heritage Program. ■

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THE PRESERVATION
OF THE NATIVE FLORA OF NEW JERSEY

Native Schoolyard Oasis

Additions to buildings can have pros and cons. In the case of an addition to a school building, it can present an opportunity. Such is the case at Eisenhower Middle School in Freehold Township where 7th grade science teacher, Erin Lichtman, seized just such an opportunity. She saw it as a chance to create a native plant garden in the courtyard formed by the new building extension.

With the support of district administration, school staff, students, and the PTO, she and her students turned many hours of toil into a beautiful display of the possibilities of a native theme garden. Due to the configuration of the building, Erin and her students had to haul a full load of mulch (and everything else) from the huge pile at the front of the school across a hall into the courtyard by the bucketful! Tarps were placed on the floor to aid in clean-up.

A lesson in the beauty and carefree nature of native plants, this garden stands as a testimonial to the benefits reaped by such planning and forethought. Along the way, she had to politely turn down many offer of extra plants people offered from their property. Only a purely native garden could demonstrate what wonders one could perform on their own property.

Understanding the virtues of native plants, but lacking specific knowledge,



Erin turned to Wild Earth Native Plant Nursery. Owner Rich Pillar, New Jersey Native Plant Society Board Member, was of immense help in choosing the right plants for particular portions of the courtyard following Erin's careful record of sunlight vs. shade hours each day.

As a plus, the vines are kept trimmed by another NJNPS Board Member Pat Eisemann's gifted environmental science class. They use them to weave baskets as they learn about each one. Currently, they are weaving bird "cozies" a birdhouse-like shaped basket with a hole where birds find a haven from winter weather.

Now four years old and complete with a pond and a picnic table with umbrella,

the native courtyard provides a quiet place to eat or just relax, and a reminder of what can be. ■

Announcements:

Peggie is looking for Turkey beard, *Xerophyllum asphodeloides*, seeds or plants. She observed it 5-6 miles west of Asbury Park in Scrub Oak habitat.

We are looking for volunteers to help develop a native plant database that is well underway. The goal is to list the species of the state, full taxonomy, characteristics, landscape uses etc. Ultimately, we would like to post this on our web page to help people use native plants in their gardens, projects and lives.

Mike Hogan has volunteered to lead tours of the Pine Barrens. Nancy Adamson is happy to give tours of Lake Topanemus, Freehold. Pat Eisemann and Bunny Jaskot have teaching tools (like puzzles and problem-solving) using native plants as the theme. Arrowwood Nursery donated several hundred plants to the NPS, which are housed at the Young Environmental nursery in Jackson. We donated many plants over the year to garden clubs and school garden projects, but many more are still available. All are pleased to share their expertise. ■



(Continued from page 1)

Water Shortages,” published by American Rivers, the National Resource Defense Council and Smart Growth America, August 2002. To view the report on-line, visit: <http://www.americanrivers.org/doc/PavingOurWay1.pdf>

Sources: Asbury Park Press Dec. 21, 2002 (Lilo H. Stainton and Deborah Yaffe), Dec 28, 2002 (Todd B. Bates), Jan. 1, 2003 (Arthur Kamin), NJ Future Facts, September 25, 2002 Edition (njfuture@njfuture.org).

In 2002, the Native Plant Society made some gains and had some setbacks, with the former in the lead. We gained some terrific new members, people who attend meetings, lead workshops and generally are interested in helping the society without any payback to them. Three persons that come to mind are: Pat Eisemann, Tony Federici, and Nancy Adamson. The rest of the Board, Bob Swain, Bunny Jaskot, Hubert Ling, Catherine Ambos and Peggie Leifeste, were their usual stalwart selves. One or two people dropped out, but there was definitely an increase in “Board power”.

In 2002, The NPS had some lively meetings, and interesting debate about where the society is and should be going. My administration is characterized by complete openness. In more than one meeting, we opened with the question of whether the society should continue, and if so, what it should be about. Fundamental principles were debated on a regular basis, like “Why are we here, and should we continue, and what is the best way to fulfill our Mission Statement”. We strive to be very transparent. Anyone can attend Board meetings, held on the second Friday of every month at 6 pm at the Dawson Corp. in Jackson. Come,



Photo by Nancy Adamson

voice your concerns or ideas; be heard.

One of the primary subjects that we talked about was obtaining funding to hire staff, if only part-time. As you know, the Society has no paid staff, and most other (successful) organizations have paid staff. We looked into grants, and even pursued trying to find an endowment to give us a nursery of our own. We talked to Rich Pillar, proprietor of Wild Earth Nursery, and he expressed interest in running our nursery/office. At this writing, we are still pursuing this, and looking for grants statewide. Rich has applied for a grant on our behalf, and we do not know the results yet. Most of the



Photo by Nancy Adamson

grants have an education focus, and that is fine because our board is nicely represented by Science teachers: Bunny, Pat Eisemann and Catherine Ambos. Making the connection with native plants to people’s lives is easy—what remains is how we can translate that concept to a full-blown program.

Not a month goes by where I do not get emails asking for assistance from teachers to develop a native plant garden at their school. They want to use the gardens as learning experiences to teach about use and conservation of resources, healing powers of plants, principles of ecology, or just to provoke awareness of natural systems. The combination of native gardens and schools is a good one for the native plant society. We discussed over several meetings the best way to be responsive without taking away from our regular jobs and family obligations. That is an ongoing dilemma of how to provide “free” services (or should we charge a fee) while trying to maintain our private businesses. If we had a full-time paid staffer, we could send that person to any



Photo by Nancy Adamson

school asking for help, and provide advice on designing and building native plant gardens, where to find plants, and how to best maintain these gardens.

We will continue looking for sources of funding in this regard. Several members offered to donate plots of land to set up a nursery, and we are looking into that. How about setting up a small nursery, and then charging fair market value to sell plants, the whole of which goes back into operations and maintenance of the nursery? We have an attorney looking into the legality of such an endeavor for a non-profit organization like the NPS.

Let’s hope that 2003 is a year of strong promotion of native plants and the wildlife that depends on them. Let the year see to their protection, their use in restoration and development projects, and the conservation and protection of natural resources and habitat that they represent. Let’s have a rain garden in every school yard, and the NPS in a strong advocacy position!

Wishing you and your family a joyous and happy year, Bill Young



Photo by Nancy Adamson

P.S. I am currently working, at least part time, at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I am working for a contractor on a 13-month contract to build tank training range on 1,600 acres of the most beautiful Ozarks habitat you have ever seen.

Native Plant Society

Executive Board

2002

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