**Family Day ~ At Play with Plants:**

A Day of Discovery for the Child in All of Us

by Nancy Inzinna, Editor

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

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

**David Mizejewski** of the National Wildlife Federation presents **A Wildlife Garden for Your Family.** Jeanné Chesanow, author of *Honeysuckle Sipping* and *Honeysuckle Sipping*, discusses her book and takes us on a trip down "memory lane." **Jay Archer** of John Jay Landscape will present *Through the Eyes of a Child,* and give a tour of the recently installed rain garden on the grounds of Westchester Community College. Representatives of the Bedford Audubon Society will lead a bird watching walk on campus, and bring along a kestrel for all to enjoy.

**GREGORY LONG TO RECEIVE THE ACORN AWARD**

by Darrin Duling, NPC Director

It is with great pleasure we announce that Gregory Long, President and CEO of The New York Botanical Garden, will be the recipient of The Native Plant Center’s Acorn Award for 2009. The Acorn Award was established in 2008 to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of NPC and recognizes individuals or groups in our region who inspire people to learn about native plants and habitat and encourages them to grow native plants in their gardens.

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

**INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES**

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

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

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

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ACORN AWARD

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

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

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

Join us on Thursday, October 29 at a reception in Bedford Hills. If you have not received your invitation, visit us at www.nativeplantcenter.org for information and prices.
Autumn Walk on the Wild Side at the Garden Education Center of Greenwich

Free to NPC Members - Non-NPC Members $20  Bring your own lunch

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

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

Native Notes

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

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

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

There is a tremendous amount of debate these days about exotic vs. native choices for our gardens. What I find extremely interesting is that the “lure of the exotic,” in my perception, is now becoming applicable to many native species that earlier generations grew up with as an integral part of their lives, but are now scarce due to habitat loss, encroachment by invasive species and predation from overabundant deer populations. A burgeoning contingent of “new” gardeners become enthralled when introduced to our once-common natives and their passion for these plants increases exponentially when it is learned that they are rare and endangered, adding a “need-for-rescue” element into the mix. I trust that this newfound awareness will serve to increase the livelihood of our native plants through conservation and horticulture.

Gardeners do play an important role in furthering the cause of our natives, and many die-hard native plant aficionados mercilessly exclude all other plants from their gardens while trumpeting their actions as an exclusive road to salvation. This behavior may seem a bit aggressive and intimidating to those newly-initiated - I recently visited a lady in her garden who apologized profusely for three crepe myrtles that she had planted the year previously ...“before she knew better.” As she said this, she furiously looked around her property as if expecting someone to spring out of the bushes and flog her for her lack of discretion. Smiling to myself, I assured her that she shouldn’t lose sleep over this non-native plant choice, as there are indeed exotic plants that are very useful for landscape purposes, pose no threat to the environment and play well as companions with our natives. I pointed out that if we all went entirely native we would exclude many non-invasive garden favorites, such as: boxwood, peony, lilac, Japanese maple, Chinese magnolia, English laurel, daffodils, tulips, tea roses, apple trees, etc., not to mention most of our agricultural food crops.

However, I was quick to remind her that it is important to remain ever-vigilant against introducing known or potentially invasive exotic species. No matter how pretty that exotic plant may be, if it looks like it is trying to naturalize itself outside of it’s designated spot, be ruthless and rip it out!
Help fulfill Lady Bird Johnson's vision of a more naturally beautiful America. Past contributions have enabled us to enter the new millennium with the assurance that our native plants will be a permanent part of our local landscape.

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