Lady Bird Centennial Celebration Kicks Off NPC’s 15th Year

In honor of Lady Bird Johnson’s Centennial this year, The Native Plant Center will host a celebration of her life and legacy on Sunday, September 30, at Westchester Community College. The event launches a year-long observance of NPC’s 15th anniversary. Founded in 1998 as the first national affiliate of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, The Native Plant Center continues to be recognized as a leader and resource in educating people about the use of native plants.

The day’s festivities will start at 2 p.m. with a rededication of the Lady Bird Johnson Demonstration Garden, which has been expanded with the support of a grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust (see page 3). The First Lady and her daughters, Lynda Johnson Robb and Luci Baines Johnson, visited the garden when it was dedicated in 1999.

After the ribbon-cutting, the event will move into the Gateway Center for a visual tribute to Mrs. Johnson’s conservation efforts and the presentation of The Native Plant Center’s Lady Bird Johnson Environmental Award to Todd Forrest of The New York Botanical Garden (see below). A reception will follow the program.

Laura Blau and Lucille Werlinich are co-chairs of the event.

Join us for this special day. For more information and reservations, please call or send an e-mail to The Native Plant Center.

NYBG’s Todd Forrest to Receive Environmental Award

The Native Plant Center will honor Todd Forrest, Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections of The New York Botanical Garden, with its Lady Bird Johnson Environmental Award on Sunday, September 30. The award recognizes an individual or group for environmental advocacy and leadership, particularly involving native plants.

Mr. Forrest leads the programs and activities of the Garden’s Horticulture and Living Collections division, including the gardens, grounds, exhibitions, community horticulture initiatives, and a staff of 80 managers, curators, and horticulturists.

The Botanical Garden has been a leader in the study and display of native plants for more than a century and continues in that tradition today.

Garden horticulturists are using locally collected seed to restore native tree, shrub, and wildflower populations in the Thain Family Forest. The Azalea Garden features native azaleas, flowering trees, and shade-loving herbaceous plants. In 2013, the Garden will open its new Native Plant Garden, designed by Oehme, van Sweden to be a breathtakingly beautiful four-season garden that inspires as it educates. Together, these projects showcase the Garden’s leadership in the research, conservation, and celebration of native plants.

Mr. Forrest received a Master of Forest Science degree from Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. He began at the Garden in 1998 and became Vice President in 2005.
From the Director
Our Legacy Inspires a Dynamic Future

My first few months as director of The Native Plant Center have been filled with wonderful activities, events, and warm wishes from members. I came to the Center with an extensive appreciation for the ecological value of native plants, acquired through my previous positions with Audubon, Groundwork Hudson Valley, and The New York Botanical Garden. I understand the importance of natives in providing habitat for wildlife, in protecting water quality, in preventing soil erosion, and in so many other ways. Certainly they are the Swiss Army knife of the plant world.

Since starting at the Center and becoming more familiar with its history, I’ve recognized another benefit of native plants—the embodiment of local identity. Lady Bird Johnson, whose centennial is this year, had a vision: She felt that wherever she traveled in the United States the land should speak “its own language in its own regional accent.” The uniqueness of Texas, California, New York should be revealed through the flora. Native plants, Mrs. Johnson said, “give us a sense of where we are in this great land of ours.”

This thinking led to the founding of what was to become the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, the institution that inspired the creation of The Native Plant Center. On September 30 we pay tribute to this affiliation (see cover story), marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of the First Lady (December 22, 1912) as we prepare for our 15th anniversary (1998–2013).

The Native Plant Center is at work shaping its own vision for the coming years. With the guidance of leadership development consultant Dr. Gene Buccini, this past summer NPC staff and Steering Committee members created a plan for growth that includes further engaging the community through strong programming; expanding educational offerings; enhancing demonstration areas; increasing our visibility through robust communications; recruiting talented, action-oriented people to make it all happen; and developing new revenue streams, since none of the above can be done without funding.

You can already see the beginning results with the exciting, fresh look of the newsletter, designed by Karen Spencer Design. We are also updating and invigorating the Center’s website, which will now be compatible and streamlined with that of Westchester Community College. We have many great ideas and much work ahead. I invite you to join and support us as we grow.

—Carol Capobianco

People Power Pays Off

The day before this year’s Native Plant Sale weather reports warned of an overnight frost, jeopardizing the thousands of potted plants in the open staging area. A plea went out to members, and within minutes a brigade showed up with sheets and blankets and began covering the delicate plants.

NPC is fortunate to have such committed volunteers: the scores of people who help with the annual plant sale, the staff and faculty (such as Paul DiRoma, pictured top right) who assist in our demo gardens and around the campus through the Green Thumbs program, and Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners who are heeding the call for help.

Bob DelTorto (pictured bottom right) co-chairs the Steering Committee and heads up its Volunteers sub-committee. He’s a natural in the role: He worked for years as Head of Volunteers for Westchester County. His specialty is removing invasive species with armies of helpers. “We must keep exotic invasives in check to give natives in the wild a fighting chance,” says Bob.

NPC needs volunteers for gardening, educational outreach, marketing, fundraising, and more. Help make a difference; please call or e-mail us.
Demo Garden Highlights Plants Beneficial to Birds

Berry-producing native shrubs and trees especially beneficial to birds are center stage in the recent expansion of the Lady Bird Johnson Demonstration Garden at Westchester Community College. The plantings complement the natives at the site’s existing wildflower meadow and garden beds and add to the collection of species visitors can view, get to know, and consider for use in their own gardens.

Some of the selections are edible for people, too.

The new garden showcases different species of the genus so that professionals and non-professionals alike can compare the plants and see their differences. For instance, featured are both red chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia) and black chokeberry (A. melanocarpa) and at least three types of viburnum—arrowwood (Viburnum dentatum), nannyberry (V. lentago), and blackhaw (V. prunifolium).

Some of the selections are edible for people, too, such as pawpaw (Asimina triloba), American hazelnut (Corylus americana), and both highbush blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) and lowbush blueberry (V. angustifolium).

A $10,000 grant from The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust provided funding for the project, while in-kind assistance from volunteers, Steering Committee members, The Care of Trees, and Manzer’s Landscape Design and Development helped remove invasive plants, prepare the site, and complete the work.

The NPC first established the Lady Bird Johnson Demonstration Garden in 1998. With the latest enhancement, the garden continues to serve as a teaching tool for native plant horticulture and sustainable landscaping, while adding plants of great use to wildlife. Already a female wild turkey and her poult were spotted foraging around the new plants. Plant it, and they will come. Please come, too.

Go Native U Awards First Certificate

Jeanne Waful loves wildlife, especially birds. As a gardener for 25 years, she has channeled this passion into landscaping her yard to offer breeding and feeding opportunities for them. Her interest led her to The Native Plant Center’s Go Native U certificate program in Sustainable Gardening with Northeast Flora when the program launched, in fall 2010. She worked steadily to complete her coursework, required volunteer hours, and final exam. Now she has the distinct honor of being the first recipient of the certificate, which she received in February.

“I thought I knew a lot about native plants and sustainable gardening,” Jeanne recalls. “After starting Go Native U, I learned that there was a lot more to learn than I thought there was.”

Most particularly, she found out how to reclaim her half-acre property in Katonah that had been overtaken by invasive plants. She was comforted by instructor Brad Roeller’s advice to restore the area in phases.

“The instructors were excellent and the classes were meaty—lots of information,” Jeanne says. “And it didn’t end there. The coursework was a springboard; we were given so many links and resources that allow me to keep learning.”

She’ll be using the knowledge she gained as she tests the waters of retiring in Burlington, Vermont. “There is an initiative by local government to establish rain gardens to prevent flooding and erosion to keep Lake Champlain clean. I will get involved with that; I learned about this topic in a class on gardening with stormwater.”

And that’s one of the best things about being the first to earn the certificate, Jeanne says: You can put sustainable gardening into practice immediately.

“The instructors were excellent and the classes were meaty—lots of information.”

“Now is the time to reinvent the way we landscape our homes to allow the birds that have migrated to and through here for ages to continue their miraculous life cycle,” Jeanne says. “I would tell potential students, you can be a leader in this renaissance. It’s fun, it’s challenging, and it matters.”

Go Native U classes. For more information, call 914-606-6830 and press 1, or visit www.sunywcc.edu/c.

Save the Date: Take Off to Texas With Us

As part of The Native Plant Center’s 15th anniversary next year (1998–2013), we will pilgrimage to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. Plans are just beginning to take shape for early April so that we can see the magnificent wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country in bloom—perhaps even the fabled bluebonnets. Among the sites we hope to visit is the Wildflower Center’s new arboretum, and the LBJ Ranch and Library. Periodically check our website for details as they develop.
Friends of The Native Plant Center

The Native Plant Center is grateful to all its donors and members whose generous contributions have supported our work to educate people about the value of native plants, August 1, 2011–July 31, 2012.

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Continued…
GO NATIVE U at Westchester Community College
Certificate Program in Sustainable Gardening with Northeast Flora

This educational program teaches the sustainable use and conservation of native plants through classes designed for home gardeners as well as for professionals. Students can enroll in single courses or pursue a certificate. Some classes offer LA-CES-approved credit hours. All classes are taught by qualified, experienced professionals.

Fall 2012 Course Schedule

**CORE CLASSES**

**Plant Identification in the Field**
Move outside the classroom to learn how to identify plants using a taxonomic identification key.
Sat., Sept. 29, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., $45
J. Schuler

**Native Herbaceous Plants: Summer/Fall**
Learn about the many herbaceous plants that will enhance your garden and also provide food and shelter for native bees, butterflies, birds, and more.
Sat., Oct. 6, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., $45
B. Fischer

**Native Woody Plants**
Explore the best woody native plants for this region along with the latest techniques for establishing them in the landscape.
2 Wed., Oct. 10 & 17, 6–8 p.m., $90
J. Schuler

**Northeastern Native Plants in Our Landscapes**
This course is a prerequisite for the other courses and provides a comprehensive foundation for garden design using regionally native plants.
3 Thu., Oct. 11–25, 6:30–8:30 p.m., $120
C. Summers

**Native Plant Communities**
Gain an introduction to the various plant communities found in the Northeast and metropolitan region.
Wed., Oct. 24, 9–11 a.m., $45
E. Katoni

**ELECTIVE CLASSES**

**New! Goldenrod Field Study**
Learn the basics of taxonomy in identifying the goldenrod (Solidago) family, a ubiquitous fall favorite. Then try your skills in the field by exploring the grounds of The Native Plant Center and Westchester Community College campus.
2 Wed., Sept. 12 & 19, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., $90
M. Fabel

**Native Plant Alternatives to Turf**
Learn how to vastly improve the ecology of residential or commercial landscapes by replacing the “green deserts” of lawns and turf with native alternatives.
2 Wed., Sept. 12 & 19, 1–3 p.m., $90
K. Eierman

**Exotic Invasive Plants**
Exotic invasives are the bullies of the plant world. Learn the most common ones and techniques and strategies to manage them.
Sat., Oct. 20, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., $45
R. DelTorto

**New! Insect and Invertebrate Fauna of a Northeastern Garden**
Discover how to create habitat niches for all kinds of insects, and learn about “bug houses” that provide insect diversity in your garden.
Thu., Nov. 1, 6:30–8:30 p.m., $45
L. Forcella

**Ecological Design**
Re-imagine a new landscape design for small or large sites or a restoration of an existing site using the concept of native plant communities.
Wed., Nov. 7, 9–11 a.m., $45
E. Katoni

**Weeping Pixies and Shaggy Dogs: The Wild World of Native Ornamental Conifers**
Explore the beauty and diversity of northeastern native conifers. Topics will include identification, the ways conifers support wildlife, and the use of conifers in designed landscapes.
Wed., Nov. 7, 6:30–8:30 p.m., $45
C. Summers

**New! Native Plants that Deer Don’t Browse**
Discuss how to mitigate the ongoing problems with deer. Find out tips and tricks that will discourage deer from invading your property.
Sat., Dec. 1, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., $45
R. Clausen

To register, call 914-606-6830 and press 1, or register online at www.sunywcc.edu/ce.
A percentage of the tuition to Go Native U supports the work of The Native Plant Center.


**Support The Native Plant Center—Please Join Today!**

I'd like to become a Member of The Native Plant Center
(For details about membership benefits, please visit our website.)

$45 Friend • $80 Household and Garden Clubs/Organizations • $125 Supporting
$250 Advocate • $500–$999 Sustaining • $1,000–$2,999 Conservator • $3,000+ Heritage Circle

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(Membership to the LBJ Wildflower Center is included in Supporting level and above.)
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