Native plants that are edible by people will be featured among the hundreds of perennials, shrubs, and trees available at The Native Plant Center’s 16th annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The sale’s theme is timely and fun particularly in light of today’s emphasis on farm-to-table cuisine. Edible plants also bring beauty to the garden and feed wildlife and pollinators, too.

Native food plants available at the sale include well-known fruits such as blueberries (Vaccinium spp.), strawberries (Fragaria virginiana), and cranberries (Vaccinium macrocarpon) as well as lesser-known treats such as pawpaw (Asimina triloba), Jerusalem artichoke (Helianthus tuberosus), prickly pear (Opuntia humifusa), and ostrich fern (Matteuccia struthiopteris).

In addition, the sale will offer during favorites like phlox (Phlox spp.) and coralbells (Heuchera spp.) as well as species beloved by songbirds, hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees.

Native plant specialists will be on hand to answer questions and assist gardeners in choosing great options for their sites. Admission is free. Members can enter at 9:30 a.m.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact The Native Plant Center.

COMING TO THE SALE
Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Westchester Community College
Across from Parking Lot No. 1

Plants that produce food for the dinner table, clockwise from top left: pawpaw, ostrich fern, Jerusalem artichoke, and cranberry.

PRIVATE GARDEN TOURS
Visit Martha Stewart’s Farm and Phillis Warden’s Garden

Join us for a special day of visual splendor on Monday, May 18, as we tour Martha Stewart’s 153-acre farm and Phillis Warden’s extensive 7-acre garden.

Delight in the beautiful landscape and historic architecture—some dating to 1770—of Cantitoe Corners, Martha Stewart’s home in Katonah, NY. Elegant barns, handsome greenhouses, a cutting garden, and an organic vegetable garden are among the highlights.

Phillis Warden’s enchanting property in Bedford Hills, NY, features water gardens, a fern garden, and a woodland walk to a tree platform overlooking marshlands. Adorned throughout are intriguing fountains, sculpture, and sitting areas.

Between tours, enjoy a catered lunch in Caramoor’s Garden Courtyard. Guided tours of this performing arts center’s magnificent gardens will be available.

The rain date is Tuesday, May 19. Transportation is by charter bus from Westchester Community College. Space is limited; reservations are required.

To register, contact The Native Plant Center.
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Grow Native Plants and Eat Them, Too

I’ll always remember my first WOW experience in nature. I was about 9, and it was the first planting season after we moved from the city to the suburbs, where we had a huge yard. Dad had started a vegetable garden. Each day I would stare at the plants, watching them grow. One day a miracle happened. One of the yellow flowers on the tomato plant fell off, leaving behind a teeny green baby tomato! What a wonder! I ran to the neighbor’s house to find Mom and tell her about it.

Food was my entry into gardening as it is for many people. In fact, more than one-third of all U.S. households garden for food. But among the most popular foods grown, none are native species. Let’s change that. Let’s incorporate edible native plants into our landscapes. At our landscape conference in March we heard about the many native species that you can eat. Several of these will be available at our plant sale.

Many edible natives are so beautiful that they can be planted beyond the borders of the typical vegetable garden. I food garden all around my yard. I’m especially fond of pawpaw (Asimina triloba) and encourage you to plant a few (call me the Johnny Appleseed of pawpaw growing!). The pawpaw’s intriguing maroon flowers bloom before tropical-looking leaves appear; the unique fruit tastes like banana custard.

At The Native Plant Center we have incorporated food plants such as blueberries (Vaccinium spp.), elderberries (Sambucus nigra ssp. canadensis), hazelnuts (Corylus americana), and mountain mint (Pycnanthemum muticum) into our demonstration gardens. This year we will plant native edibles in the campus’ community garden among the beds of tomatoes, peppers, and squash grown by other gardeners. Thanks to Assistant Dean Talbert Spence, who oversees the garden and invited our participation, we will be showcasing native food plants to encourage others to expand their planting palette—and palate!

Join us in doing the same. Come to the sale and pick up a few edible plants for your own gardens. Bon appétit.

—Carol Capobianco

Native Plant Center Wins Conservation Award

The Native Plant Center recently received Westchester County’s Soil and Water Conservation Achievement Award. The Center earned this recognition for its educational outreach over the past three years, including its outstanding conferences, Go Native U classes, and enhanced communications vehicles.

Volunteer Spotlight: Brooke Beebe

The Native Plant Sale owes its beginning to The Native Plant Center’s first director, Brooke Beebe. In 2000, just two years after the Center was established, Brooke and a few volunteers offered for sale dozens of native plants that were hard to find in local nurseries.

“The idea for the sale came from Phillip Warden, probably as we were casting about for a fundraiser,” recalls Brooke. “Who knew it would be so successful!”

Today the sale has blossomed more than tenfold, and has become among the largest and best plant sales in the region. Though Brooke retired in 2008 after 10 years leading and nurturing The Native Plant Center, she still helps out at the plant sale—and in other ways as well. Brooke brings her experiences from the Center’s past to help guide decisions of today as a member of the Steering Committee.

“To see The Native Plant Center grow and extend its reach is truly rewarding and meaningful to me; I am always glad to help out,” says Brooke.

She continues to cultivate her passion for learning about the environment, taking classes, attending lectures, and going on field walks. Brooke also serves on the Board of Trustees of Teatown Lake Reservation in Ossining, NY.

To volunteer, please contact us.
New York Regulates Invasive Species, Aims to Reduce Spread

Say goodbye to golden bamboo, border privet, barberry, and other invasive species that are now banned from commerce in New York. State regulations that went into effect March 10 prohibit and regulate the sale, purchase, and transport of 75 plant species as well as dozens of other organisms identified as invasive—non-native to the area and the cause of economic or environmental harm.

The aim of the new regulations is to slow the spread of invasives. The rules do not require property owners to remove existing plants but forbid their introduction into public lands or natural areas.

A list of the targeted species can be found on the website of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets will be responsible for enforcement.

Invasive species threaten biodiversity, contributing to the decline of native wildlife and plant species. The Native Plant Center co-sponsored a workshop with Westchester County on April 2 that focused on the need for the regulations; the impact on the industry, municipalities, and home gardeners; and native plant alternatives to invasives.

The Native Plant Center, as a member of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, is working to educate the public about invasive plants and to promote ecological restoration at invasive removal sites.

2015 Winners: Incredible and Edible

The Native Plant Center annually selects a woody and perennial plant of the year to promote the use of native plants by the community. This year’s choices were selected by our members from among other native edible species. Both winners will be available for purchase at the Plant Sale on April 25.

NATIVE WOODY PLANT OF THE YEAR
Sambucus nigra ssp. canadensis

COMMON NAME: Common elderberry
HARDINESS: Zones 3–8
LIGHT: Sun to part shade
SOIL: Average to wet
SIZE: 8–10’ tall
FOLIAGE: Deciduous pinnate, elliptical
FLOWERS: Clusters of tiny white flowers form broad, flat heads
FRUIT: Dark purple when ripe
BLOOM TIME: Late spring to mid-summer
WILDLIFE VALUE: Birds and mammals eat the berries
ABOUT: Large flat-topped clusters of small white flowers are followed by masses of small purple-black fruit, which are edible when cooked. Good for erosion control in moist sites. Its large flower clusters can be battered and fried to make fritters or dried to make tea. The ripe berries are used to make jams, jellies, and wine.

NATIVE PERENNIAL OF THE YEAR
Viola canadensis

COMMON NAME: Canada violet
HARDINESS: Zones 3–8
LIGHT: Shade to part shade
SOIL: Moist to average
SIZE: 6–8” tall
FOLIAGE: Heart-shaped
FLOWERS: White with light-yellow centers, purple stripes, and purple tint on back of upper petals
BLOOM TIME: Spring and sporadically through summer
WILDLIFE VALUE: Host plant for fritillary butterflies and giant leopard moth; also valued by bees
ABOUT: This stemmed violet produces white flowers with yellow centers and purple stripes. The young leaves can be added to a salad or cooked as a vegetable. The flowers make a fresh edible garnish or can be candied as a cake decoration. Wild populations are endangered in New Jersey and threatened in Connecticut.
Save These Dates

**May 9, 2015**
Celebrate Bird Migration at the Bronx Zoo
Stop by our table to learn about native plants and birds.

**July 26, 2015**
Open Days Guided Tours at The Native Plant Center
Visit our gardens in their summer glory.

**September 12–13, 2015**
Native Plant Weekend at Rosedale Nurseries
Our personal shoppers will help you find great species at this event that benefits 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.)

$50 Friend • $100 Household and Garden Clubs/Organizations • $150 Supporting
$250 Advocate • $500 Sustaining • $1,000 Conservator • $3,000 Heritage Circle

Membership Level $ __________
Additional LBJ Wildflower Center Membership $ 30 Yes/No
(Membership to the LBJ Wildflower Center is included in Supporting level and above.)
I am enclosing an additional donation of $ __________
I’d like to purchase a gift membership in the amount of $ __________
**Total due $ __________**

Matching contributions are appreciated; contact your employer for details.

Member’s Name ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________
Address ___________________________ Phone ___________________________

Gift-giver Name (if applicable) ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________
Address ___________________________ Phone ___________________________

Make checks payable to: The Native Plant Center, 75 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595
MC, Visa, or Discover # ___________________________ Exp. Date ___________________________ CVV code __________
Total amount to charge account $ ___________ Name of Cardholder ___________________________
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