

For updates and more
information, go to
www.scnps.org

UPSTATE happenings

MARCH 2010

Saturday, Feb 20, 10:00 am
Workday: Station Cove

Station Cove is perhaps the Upstate's premier wildflower site, and Spring is around the corner. Before it comes, we'd like to clear out some honeysuckle and do a little maintenance on that great trail that SCNPS members built!

Meet at the trailhead* at 10:00. We will work til "lunchtime." Bring your lunch & drink, gloves, and loppers if you have them.

Sign up (be sure to give your phone #) with John Garton, kjg59@hotmail.com

*Directions: Travel north on Hwy 11 above Walhalla, turn left at Picketts Post Community at the sign for Oconee Station. Drive past the park entrance on your right; the trailhead will be on your left.

Wednesday, March 3
Field Trip: Issaqueena Lake Trail in the Clemson Forest

This the 2nd of several seasonal hikes in the Clemson Forest to be offered during 2010.

Well-known naturalist, John Garton, assisted by Ette Ruppert, will lead this early spring outing on the scenic trail around Lake Issaqueena in the north Clemson Forest. About 4 miles of easy walking from the Willow Springs start point to the dam and return. We hope to see early spring wildflowers and trees starting to bud and flower. We'll look for birds on the lake and whatever else turns up. Bring lunch and a drink. Meet at 9:30 am at the Forest gate.

To register, call Janine McCreery at 864-238-3253 and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. Limited to 20 participants. Preference given to paid-up NPS members.

Directions: If coming from Clemson, turn left off Rt 133 at a water tower just past Maws Grocery Store, a few miles north of Clemson, past Daniel High School, on the way to Six Mile.

Folks arriving from Hwy 11 should take 133 south through Six Mile and a few miles beyond to the right turn just before Maws Grocery Store.

Carpooling is encouraged: Greenville folks can meet at the Walmart @ 6119 White Horse Rd, in the corner of the parking lot nearest Ryans, leaving there at 8:30 am. Travel on Hwy 123 to Clemson. Turn right onto Rt 133 at the railroad underpass.

... continued on page 3, Upcoming Events

More Natives in Home Landscapes — Lawn, Meadow, Prairie

You can attract more songbirds to your home landscape just by modifying some of the plantings in your yard. Native grasses and their associated wildflowers and legumes can be used in many types of landscapes, from a conventional suburban lawn to a colorful meadow, depending on your preferences and the size and configuration of your landscape.

At our March meeting, Dr. Bill Stringer of Clemson University and the SC Native Plant Society will illustrate and discuss native grasses that are attractive in home landscapes and attract a variety of colorful songbirds.

If you prefer a conventional lawn, there are one or two native species that will work well. Carpet grass (*Axonopus fissifolius*), for example, is tolerant of frequent mowing. If you choose to allow its short seed heads to develop, you can watch ground-feeding songbirds devour the seeds and then you can mow the grass and start the cycle all over again.

However, success with most native grasses requires altered management techniques: that is, higher and less frequent mowing. The resulting grassy area will have greater biodiversity, and the blooming forbs and legumes it contains will attract butterflies. Butterflies are colorful and graceful, of course, and they also lay eggs — eggs that hatch into caterpillars. The caterpillars provide the rich protein that birds need to raise their hatchlings, so this type of planting brings butterflies and nesting birds, as well as seed-eating birds.

A short meadow habitat is similar but contains an even greater variety of plants, attracts a greater variety of insects and birds, and needs mowing only once or twice a year. Mow it in the late winter to encourage spring growth and bloom, and mow again in midsummer if it has become too tall and messy. A second bloom should follow, unless the summer is unusually hot and dry.

... continued on page 3

Plant something
for us this year!



NATIVE PLANT
plant sale!
Saturday, April 10
9:00am-1:00pm
See page 4.

Bill Stringer
Clemson University

Tuesday, March 16, 7:00 pm

Founders Hall in Dining Commons, Southern Wesleyan University, Central

For a map and more information, visit http://www.scnps.org/activities_ups.html

Lowcountry Chapter to host the

2010 SCNPS Symposium, May 7-9th, in Charleston

In coastal South Carolina, life is nurtured by the ebb and flow of the tidal creeks and rivers, the rich dark earth, and the warm Carolina sun. This May, come enjoy a delightful and insightful weekend along the banks of the beautiful Ashley River observing this circle of Lowcountry life.

We are teaming up with historic Magnolia Plantation and Gardens to explore our theme: "Nurture Nature — It's Our Turn." Lectures, workshops and walks will be held in the beauty and bounty of a land that has felt the hand of man for centuries.

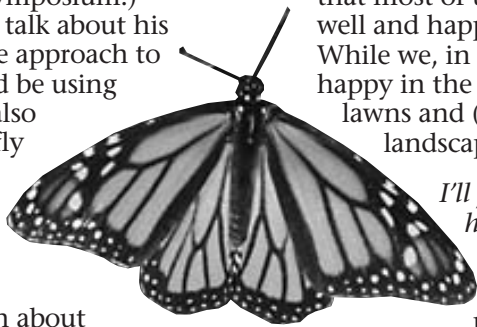
We'll kick things off Friday, May 7th, with something different for the early birds — a little group work project on the plantation. We'll help plant some natives, maybe attack some pesky invasives, so bring your gloves!

This will be followed by our opening reception at the host hotel - Quality Suites Convention Center in North Charleston. We will have a silent auction and a collection of displays in various media interpreting the "Nurture Nature" idea. (Displays will be gathered from members and the public.) Plenty to look at as you re-acquaint with old friends and meet some new.

On Saturday we head to Magnolia. Our guest lecturer, co-sponsored by the Charleston Parks Conservancy, will be Doug Tallamy, author of the book Bringing Nature Home. (Buy his book early at one of our meetings and read ahead! He'll be available to sign books at the symposium.)

Doug will talk about his common-sense approach to why we should be using natives. He'll also guide a butterfly walk during our broad array of afternoon programs.

We'll learn about Magnolia's current activities, including their new native azalea collection, and visit the very active wading-bird rookery (up close!) along the recently improved boardwalk through the Audubon Swamp Garden. Then we'll wrap up the day with an "Evening on the Ashley," featuring a local Lowcountry boil and inspirational Gullah singers.



Sunday, we will end the weekend with several field trip options, both structured and not: Francis Beidler Forest, tranquil Mepkin Abbey, historic Hampton Park, a few heritage preserves, Magnolia Plantation (in case you didn't see enough) and more.

So, mark your calendars for May 7-9, 2010, and plan to spend a weekend

Symposium's guest lecturer: Doug Tallamy

At our upcoming Symposium we will have the opportunity to hear Doug Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home. Here follows an account of the keynote address he presented at the Virginia Native Plant Society's 2009 annual meeting.

... The weather was dreadful, but in perfect VNPS/ Master Naturalist style, we didn't let it keep us indoors. A highlight, however, was the (indoors) keynote speaker on Saturday night, Doug Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home (and U. of Delaware professor in his spare time).

If you don't have this book, get it now. It's out in paperback. I have bought four copies so far and only kept two; one went to an environmental sciences high school teacher... who said it was mind-blowing.

In an hour-long presentation, he gave us more information (and ammunition, frankly) than we could really take in.

Doug spoke eloquently about the problems in modern society and their impacts on the environment. At one point, he summed it up by saying that most of us feel that "Nature is well and happy someplace else." While we, in contrast, are well and happy in the center of our "sterilized" lawns and (mostly nonnative) landscapes.

I'll just summarize a few of his best (IMHO) points:

1. In healthy ecosystems, there is a lot of redundancy; niches and positions in the food web are covered by more than one species or organism. However, with the lower biodiversity of most of our suburbs and developed areas, the redundancy is lost; when one species or niche disappears, the whole food web crashes.

2. Where there is more plant diversity there is more animal diversity.

in the South Carolina Lowcountry. You will find yourself surrounded by a great group of folks, talking and learning about our flora, discovering our history, and seeing how we can all help to "Nurture Nature."

Visit www.scnps.org for upcoming agenda and registration information. — Colette DeGarady & Jeff Jackson



Biodiversity is an essential, non-renewable resource.

3. There is such a thing as "functional extinction" when population numbers of a particular plant/animal in an area get so low that they are not able to perform their function in the food web/ecosystem. If one were to claim that because there are no documented examples of extinctions due to nonnative invasives, that

claim would be not only largely irrelevant, but also wrong (Tallamy says that there are, indeed such examples on islands). So there.

4. Only native plants are part of the food web. He defines "native" as being an organism that shares an evolutionary history with the species in a given area. For example, many caterpillars can only survive and reproduce in the presence of three or fewer plant types! That's because those caterpillars have co-evolved in the presence of a specific plant to be able to digest its leaves despite the defensive toxins that the plant has developed to protect itself!

5. When we buy and plant nonnatives, we are depriving wildlife of food; a "pest-resistant" plant is a food-free plant. For example, the "butterfly bush" only supports ONE species of butterfly. Sure, more species feed on the nectar, but when it comes time to

... continued on page 3

... guest lecturer Doug Tallamy, cont from p 2
reproduce and make more butterflies, the butterfly bush is virtually useless. Oaks, on the other hand, support over 500 species of butterflies.

6. Moving up the food chain, this matters because birds need insects (incl. caterpillars) to feed their young. They cannot raise their nestlings on seeds and nectar. The protein in insects is very high quality and absolutely essential for baby birds.

So, says Tallamy, without (native) insect host plants, “we feed the birds all winter and then starve them in the summer.”

7. In general, woody plants support far more biodiversity than herbaceous plants. But both are necessary for habitat.

8. Regarding nonnative invasives: Japanese honeysuckle, for example, was used in landscaping for 80 years before it started to become invasive. It’s not known how/why that happened, but it means that we can’t know in advance if something will eventually cause problems.

9. Finally, in answering my last-minute question, Tallamy confirmed that the notion of “keystone” species is of only limited usefulness in protecting habitat/food webs. “Anything can be a keystone species in the right circumstances.”

In an hour-long presentation, he gave us more information (and ammunition, frankly) than we could really take in. The room was so quiet you could’ve heard a pin drop.

He ended with several slides about how we need to take these messages to our suburban environments and turn them back into places that we share with nature and wildlife.

A suggestion was to take 50% of the lawn acreage of every yard and plant it with natives (and do a good job if possible; leaf litter, variety of plants, habitat elements, etc). Connect the yards with hedgerows and contiguous planted areas.

It won’t obviate the habitat fragmentation/edge impacts, but it could be a huge improvement over what we have now. And conserve a heck of a lot of water in the bargain. And provide living outdoor spaces for us and our children.

Amen. — Kathi Mestayer, reprinted with permission from *Claytonia*, the newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society



On Jan 23, Upstate Master Naturalists joined NPS members to brave the cold and the mud, rescuing a boatload of plants from Twin Chimneys landfill, and planting them in Conestee Nature Park’s prairie restoration.

Upcoming Events

... continued from page 1.

March 5-6-7 Home & Garden Show

Thanks to the generosity of the Home Builders Association of Greenville, we again have a booth. Almost 20,000 people at Greenville’s Carolina First Center will have an opportunity to learn about native plants and about SCNPS — *if you’ll help staff our booth!*

Volunteers receive an exhibitor’s badge and a pass to the exhibitor’s parking lot, both good for the duration of the show.

Sign up at a meeting, or email Bill Sharpton: gsharpton@aol.com

Show hours/Volunteer shifts:

March 5, Friday, 12 noon to 8 pm

Shift: 12-3 or 3-6 or 6-8

March 6, Saturday, 10 am to 8 pm

Shift: 10-1 or 1-3 or 3-6 or 6-8

March 7, Sunday, 1 pm to 6 pm

Shift: 1-3 or 3-6

We especially need help Saturday-Sunday.

Sunday, March 14, 2:00 pm Field trip: Upper Chinquapin Greenway, in Spartanburg

Several ecosystems are found in this urban preserve (which is owned by SPACE, Spartanburg County’s only local land trust), from creekside to meadow to pine uplands, where we may see Swamp Tupelo (*Nyssa biflora*), Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), and 13 different fern species, as well as *Pinellia* and a few other invasives. Easy walking, and less than two miles.

Meet at Chinquapin Trail parking area on Graham Rd in Spartanburg, near California

Ave (Graham is a frontage road along I-585, across from Milliken Research Center).

Register by emailing Eva Pratt, evaoncompton@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 16, 7:00 pm More Natives in Home Landscapes — Lawn, Meadow, Prairie See story on page 1.

Saturday, March 27 Field Trip: 40-acre Rock, Lancaster County

The Piedmont Chapter, along with the Museum of York County and the NC Native Plant Society, invites us to join them at 40-acre Rock. The rock is actually 14 acres; the entire Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve 2,267 acres. This varied landscape includes granitic flatrocks, waterslides, waterfalls, beaver pond, caves, hardwood and pine forests, and a variety of wildflowers and wildlife. Hike is approx 5 miles; difficulty is moderate with areas where footing may be uncertain. Trip leaders are Dr. Larry Mellichamp (UNCC) and Dr. George Sawyer (Coker College & Kalmia Gardens).

SC & NC Native Plant Society Members are free; Culture & Heritage Museum Members are free. Non-members: \$5

To reserve your spot call 803-329-2121 or email ncrane@chmuseums.org. More details will be sent upon registration, or you can call Mary Morrison at 803-329-6990 if you have questions.

Saturday, April 10, 9:00-1:00 NATIVE PLANT plant sale!



... continued on page 4.

More Natives in Home Landscapes — Lawn, Meadow, Prairie ... continued from page 1

Bill plans to discuss appropriate species of grasses and forbs for each type of planting, as well as to provide cultural information for the grasses. He will also talk about the availability of seeds for various grasses and suggest ways to get started. — Amy Fendley

Bill Stringer received his doctorate from Virginia Tech. He is an agronomist at Clemson University, where he teaches crops courses and conducts research in native plants and native habitat restoration. He is president emeritus of the SC Native Plant Society.



**South Carolina
Native Plant Society
PO Box 491
Norris, SC 29667**

Upstate Chapter

Address Service Requested.

Non-profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID CLEMSON, SC 29631 PERMIT NO. 7
--

Upcoming Events ... continued from page 3.

Saturday, April 10, 9:00-1:00 **NATIVE PLANT plant sale!**

Local fauna and flora exist in an intertwined web — some animals feed exclusively on a narrow range of native plants, while many insects are important pollinators that also serve as food sources for birds and other animals.

And when native plants are sited correctly they have the advantage of having adapted over 1000s of years to local soil types, pests, and climate conditions. Experts will help you choose the right plant for the right place, increasing your chances of success while reducing your consumption of water, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Dr. Jan Haldeman of Erskine College will display and provide information about commonly sold non-native species that are invasive in our region.

We need volunteers to put on labels, move plants to the site, set up the day before the sale, guide buyers, remove labels, and load plants. Please help make the sale a success! Sign up at meetings, or call Susan Lochridge at 288-5590, needlespirits@charter.net

New location!!! Greenville Tec's McAlister Square Campus parking lot at the Antrim Drive entrance, in Greenville (225 South Pleasantburg Drive, then look for the signs).

Saturday, April 17 **Field Trip: Ninety Six National Historic Site, Greenwood County**

Join Rusty Wilson, Master Naturalist and NPS member, on an outing to one of his favorite places, "a Piedmont jewel." Some plants we'll see include *Cardamine bulbosa* (bulbous bittercress), *Fraseri caroliniensis* (columbo), and possibly a *Matelea* species (anglepod or milkvine). We will probably walk a minimum of 4 miles and will be off-trail on uneven terrain for much of the

walk: into the floodplain, across a creek, and onto a north-facing bluff overlooking the creek. Bring good walking shoes and *be prepared to get your feet wet!*

The site is located 2 miles south of downtown Ninety Six on Hwy 248. *Details to come.*

To register, call Janine McCreery at 864-238-3253 and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. Limited to 20 participants. Preference given to paid-up NPS members.

Saturday, April 17, 10:00 am **Field Trip: Leigh Fibers Nature Trail, Spartanburg County**

Check out the possible state champion holly! with Lamar Nelson, who has established this pleasant area near Wellford. *Details to come.*

Tuesday, April 20, 10:00-2:00 **Earth Fest**

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day! NPS will host a booth at Greenville Tech's Earth Fest on the Barton Campus, 1620 S. Pleasantburg Dr, Greenville.



On Jan 9, a self-selecting group opted to check out the Clemson Forest's Turkey Creek Trail: Almost all had either grown up in the North or had lived there long enough to become accustomed to temperatures much colder than the 12° we faced. It warmed up nicely soon after we began, and the hike was very scenic through diverse open and forest habitats, including an old homesite.

Tuesday, April 20, 7:00 pm **Discovering American Azaleas**

Over the past twenty-five years, Nick Anastos has enjoyed searching the woods for natural hybrids and "creating" his own special American azaleas. In his talk, Nick will discuss his hybridization process from harvesting and sowing seeds to the pollination of mature plants. The presentation will include images displaying the many different colors of his hybrid azaleas. Greenville Tec @ McAlister Square, 225 S. Pleasantburg Dr, Greenville.

Wednesday, April 21 **Field Trip with local naturalist Dennis Chastain in northern Pickens County**

Several lovely rich spring sites are under consideration at this point, including a cove near Wild Hog Branch in Jocassee Gorges, the headwaters section of Cane Creek, and Side-of-the-Mountain Creek on the old RR bed of the Appalachian Lumber Co. *Stay tuned for details.*

To register, call Janine McCreery at 864-238-3253 and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. Limited to 20 participants. Preference given to paid-up NPS members.

Tuesday, May 18, 7:00 pm **Cast in Stone — Ancient Plants**

Christian Cicimurri, Curator of Education at Clemson's Bob Campbell Geology Museum, will bring a collection of plant fossils and discuss ancient plants. Founders Hall, Southern Wesleyan University, Central.

Saturday, May 22, 10:00 am **Woodruff School District Cross-Country Trail, in Spartanburg County**

See the northern-most population of the sweet-smelling May White Azalea (*Rhododendron eastmanii*) in bloom, and more, guided by Newberry College's Dr Charles Horn. *Details to come.*