

Perennial Pages-April 2019

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Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's Perennial Pages

A Seasonal Newsletter for Native Habitat Owners and Caretakers

April 2019



Connecting people, science, and nature for a healthy Delaware River and Bay



Spring is Coming!

No matter what the groundhog said in February, spring will always arrive! It has its ups and downs (temperature wise), and it is frequently referred to as "mud" season here in the Delaware Valley, but this wet season is necessary for many of our native plants to survive the coming hot/dry summer. In this Issue of Perennial Pages, we have tips for helping your plants get the best start during this new season, as well as a list of native plants sales for filling out your habitats, a new field guide to wetland plants, and our regular Space Invaders and "What's Up?" features! Enjoy!



Students weeding their garden at Talley Middle School, Wilmington, DE Photo: Sarah Bouboulis

Time for Action: Spring Awakenings!

Spring is when you can get the most bang for the maintenance buck! Unwanted plants are small and easy to pull, and the soil is often moist,

making weeding easier. There are also some other maintenance activities that are best to accomplish before the plants really get going.

- Weed, weed, weed...tiny plants are easier to pull than big ones, so getting an early start is really doing yourself a favor.
- Remove debris and leaves to make sure the plants you want are getting enough sunlight!
- Assess which areas of your gardens are weed hot spots and which are dead zones. Decide if more mulch, or different plants may be needed.
- Make a plan! Decide, when, where and how you are going to care for your habitat over the spring and summer. Do you need to purchase mulch and plants? Who will be caring for the habitat? Will it need watering?

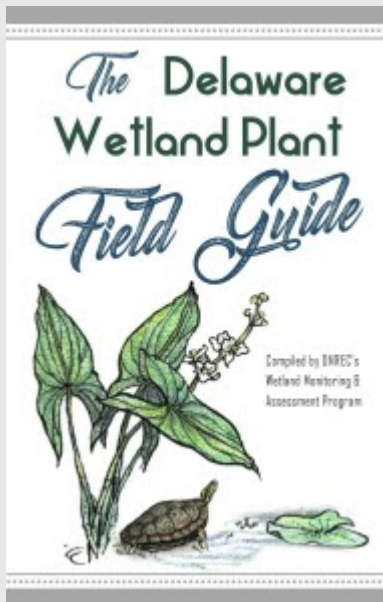


Photo: DNREC Wetland Monitoring & Assessment Field Guide

Delaware Wetland Plant Field Guide

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control's (DNREC) Wetland Monitoring & Assessment Program has recently released a great field guide to both freshwater and saltwater wetland plants. Although the guide is Delaware centric, most plants (especially the freshwater plants) can be found throughout the region (PA & NJ). The guide is a great resource for rain garden owners, but also useful for simply identifying wetland plants found along rivers, streams and other wet areas. [Check it out here!](#) Print copies are also available for sale.

Plant Sales

Spring is a great time for native plant sales! Many native plants are hard to find at your typical home & garden centers, but look for plants you may need at the sales linked below:

Delaware:

[Delaware Nature Society Native Plant Sale](#)

[University of Delaware Botanic Garden Plant Sale](#) (Not all Natives)

[Center for the Inland Bays Native Plant Sale and Green Living Expo](#)

Pennsylvania:

[Brandywine Conservancy Plant Sale](#)

[Schuylkill Center Greenhouse and Native Plant Sale](#)

[Tyler Arboretum Annual Plant Sale](#)

[Hawk Mountain Native Plant Sale](#)

New Jersey:

[Pinelands Preservation Alliance Plant Sale](#)

[Rutgers Spring Flower Fair](#) (Not all Natives)

Nurseries and Garden Centers:

Plant sales often have a greater selection of native plants, but you can also find a great guide to garden centers that specialize in native plants on the Mt. Cuba [website](#).

What's "Up"?

Seasonal Plant Identification



Golden Alexanders, Photo: North Creek Nurseries

As spring inches closer, you are probably anxiously awaiting the first

Space Invaders

Invasive Species Spotlight



Common Chickweed Photo: AJC1, Flickr

Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is a common early spring "weed," that should be tackled early in the season to avoid it taking over the garden later. Chickweed is also edible,

spring blooms. **Golden Alexanders**, *Zizia aurea*, can be the first to bloom in many perennial gardens. They can do well in moist habitats, like rain gardens, and they are great at attracting wildlife. Their yellow blooms bring a smile to your face after the dreary winter! Learn more about Golden Alexanders [here](#).

In early spring, MANY plants are just beginning to sprout, so even though there may not be much color, watch out for your little green friends!

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so while you're pulling, you can also make an addition to your evening salad. Chickweed has a round stem and "hairs" that run the length of the stem. The leaves are spread out and it can reach 1ft tall, but usually carpets garden beds. Learn more about chickweed [here](#).

[Read More](#)

PDE News

PDE is currently looking for community members/organizations in the underserved areas of Wilmington, DE to partner with us on water quality improvement projects (e.g. Rain Gardens). If you have any connections or know of anyone who may be interested, please get in touch! sbouboulis@delawareestuary.org

Partners



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The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, a National Estuary Program, leads science-based and collaborative efforts to improve the tidal Delaware River and Bay, which spans Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

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