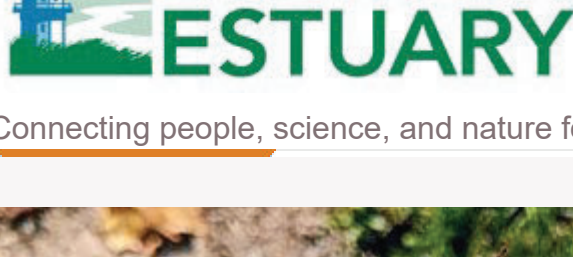


Perennial Pages

Gardens for Clean Water: A Seasonal Newsletter for Habitat Owners & Caretakers



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



American sycamore leaf (*Platanus occidentalis*) in the fall. (Photo: Sarah Bouboulis)

Time to Cool Down

Autumn is many people's favorite season, a time to "cool down" in all senses of the word. This is also a time to plan for the future and look ahead. And 2020 definitely has us all looking to the future.

Whether you are still stuck at home or safely venturing out, don't forget about your garden. It might still need a little support before heading into winter. Fall is also a great time to think about planting for next year. Sometimes the planning/dreaming can be the best part!

Our feature this season is on what/when/how to plant in the fall. It's not as scary as it sounds!

For more garden fun and information, don't forget to check out Digging Deeper, our Q&A section in the November issue of [Estuary News](#) (send your questions to sbouboulis@delawareestuary.org), and our weekly Facebook live, [Wonderful Plant Wednesday](#), at 3:30pm on Wednesdays, there will be a few more weeks of plants until our winter hiatus.



Fall flowering trio, three-lobed coneflower (*Rudbeckia triloba*), obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), and New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*). (Photo: Sarah Bouboulis)

Time for Action: Fall 2020

Fall may be the time of year when your garden needs the least amount of maintenance. The insects we hope our gardens attract will use the dying plant material to insulate and sustain themselves through the winter months ahead. Birds and mammals also rely on the seeds the plants are still producing to bulk up for scarcer times ahead, or perhaps even miles long migrations.

So fight the urge to clean-up if you don't have to. The wildlife will thank you!

However, there may be one exception to this rule. Hopefully during the spring and summer you noticed what plants may or may not be working in certain parts of your garden (too big, too small, not thriving, etc.). This may mean a need for redesigning some areas and moving plants around. For most perennials, fall is the best time to transplant. In order to make this easier, it might be best to trim back any stalks. But afterwards, you can bundle them up and leave them elsewhere in the garden for wildlife to use.

Check out past fall issues of [Perennial Pages](#) for more autumnal garden tips and tricks.



Fall planting essentials (Photo: Sarah Bouboulis)

Planting in the Fall

It might be counterintuitive, but fall can be a great time to plant. Trees and shrubs tend to do best, but some perennials do just fine as well. Here are some tips and tricks to make sure your new plants get a great head start for next year.

- Reflect on what worked and didn't work over the previous garden season, make a plan for what you'd like to adjust and plant.
- Try to plant before freezing temps become the norm. Our first frost is generally the middle of October, but planting can sometimes be done into November.
- Spring ephemerals (short lived spring bloomers) can be great for fall planting and will put on a show the next year. Some favorites include Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and wake-robins (*Trillium* spp.).
- You may want to wait a minute on mulching new plantings, as the more sun that hits the soil, the better your plants will survive the winter...but you do want to add mulch before things get too cold. A balancing act, for sure.
- You still need to water your new fall plantings, but not nearly as much as you would water spring plantings. You should be able to gradually taper to no watering as the season progresses.
- As long as you plant correctly and water adequately (not too much!) fall can be a great time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Fall is also the best time to spread seed. Most native plant seeds require a winter dormancy to germinate the next year.

What's "up"?

Seasonal Plant Identification



Obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)

(Photo: Sarah Bouboulis)

Obedient plant is a beautiful and fun fall bloomer. They come in white, pink or purple (more often on the white side in nature) and can do well in a variety of locations. They tolerate shade or sun, as well as wet or moist soils. They can do well in rain gardens and clay soil, but do not do well in drought conditions. This is also a fun plant because the name *obedient* comes from the fact that the flowers *obediently* stay put when you move them around the stem...a fun party trick! This lovely plant also provides nectar for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. It can be aggressive, but if you have a trouble spot where other things have failed, *Physostegia virginiana* might be a winner!

[Read More](#)

Space Invaders

Invasive Species Spotlight



Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

(Photo: Jeffrey Schultz)

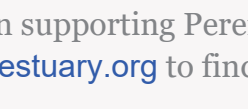
Asian bittersweet is a fall "show stopper" with beautiful red berries and yellow seed capsules. It is easy to understand why early Europeans would want to have this beauty in their gardens. However, since its first introduction, it has caused an untold amount of damage in our native ecosystems. It is considered a noxious weed and can cause economic damage for farmers. It is a fast growing vine that can shade-out and out-compete native vegetation. Birds do eat the berries, but this leads to additional spread. There is also evidence that it hybridizes with the native American bittersweet, which could lead to loss of genetic diversity of the native variety. You can tell the difference between the American and Asian by the location of the berries along the stems. The Asian berries are at the middle of branches (at the axils) and the American has berries at the ends of branches. Try to do what you can to control this plant on your property. Hand pulling is effective over time.

[Read More](#)

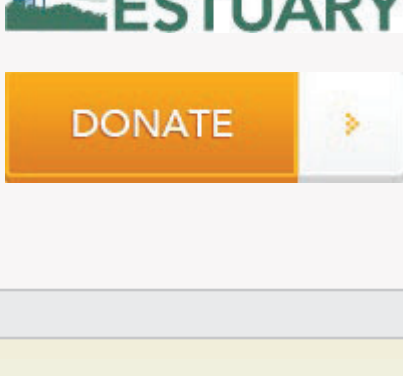
PDE News

The PDE Science and Environmental Summit is going virtual March 1-3, 2021. Visit the summit [website](#) for more information and how to submit an abstract!

Partner



Are you interested in supporting Perennial Pages? Contact sbouboulis@delawareestuary.org to find out how you can help!



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

Copyright © 2020 [Partnership for the Delaware Estuary](#) all rights reserved. [Become a supporter.](#)



[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link:

[Unsubscribe](#)

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
110 S. Poplar Street
Suite 202
Wilmington, Delaware 19801
US

[Read the VerticalResponse marketing policy.](#)

