



TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Plant Profile: Oak-Leaf Hydrangea

Year round color in your native landscape

by Donna Bollenbach

When my husband and I decided to replace the non-native azaleas that bordered the front of our house, we considered several native plants and ultimately chose the Oakleaf Hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*. Here are some reasons why:

Native Plant: Oakleaf Hydrangea is native to

Tennessee and the southeastern United States.

Optimal Soil Conditions:

Oakleaf Hydrangeas thrive in soil that is slightly acidic, rich in organic matter, and well-drained, making it suitable for the same conditions that azaleas prefer.

Sunlight Needs: These hydrangeas prefer full sun to partial shade. However, too much sun can scorch their leaves. The front of our house offers partial shade in the morning and full sun in the afternoon, which is ideal.

Availability: Oakleaf Hydrangeas are readily available at native plant nurseries. We attended a native plant

sale and purchased plants that were already 2 to 3 feet tall. Two of our plants are called "Ruby Slippers," a more colorful nativar.

Growth Characteristics: Although Oakleaf Hydrangeas grow only 1 to 2 feet per year, they spread as wide as they grow tall, making them an excellent choice for a border shrub.



Oakleaf Hydrangea in summer

Low

Maintenance:

Once established, Oakleaf Hydrangeas require minimal maintenance and typically do not need pruning. There are techniques to selectively cut back parts of the plant to

encourage new growth or blooms if desired.

Year-Round Beauty: Oakleaf Hydrangeas offer visual appeal throughout the year. They feature large, fragrant, cone-shaped clusters of flowers, and their leaves, which resemble oak leaves, change color with the seasons and persist on the plant well into winter.

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TNPS Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally March, June, September, and December.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1977. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee's botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's wild plant communities.

Dues for each calendar year are:

Individual/Family: \$20

Student: Complimentary

Institution: \$50

Life: \$250

Dues may be sent to:

Tennessee Native Plant Society

P.O. Box 159274

Nashville, TN 37215

Officers

Karen Ripple Hill, President

Allan Trently, Vice-President

Bettina Ault, Secretary

Jennifer Trently, Asst. Sec.

Kim Sadler, Treasurer

Directors

Anne Ballentine

Sue Bible

Dennis Horn

Bart Jones

Larry Pounds

Mitchell Kent

Newsletter Editor

Donna Bollenbach

President's Musings

Thank you. Thank you for allowing me to lead this wonderful organization for the past four years. It has been a privilege to be entrusted with leading such a storied group that is so highly regarded throughout Tennessee and the region.

We weathered the Covid lockdowns by using zoom to continue meeting as a board, and quickly added our very successful monthly Native Plant Seminars to keep us together and moving forward in educating ourselves and the public about our native plants.

We digitized Dennis Horn's 3000 photos and stored them in a Dropbox library along with all our critical documents.

Education and Outreach Coordinators now attend multiple events across the entire state to recruit new members, sell our wildflower books, and help educate the public about our beautiful native plants. Our field trips and annual conference/meeting continue to be well attended allowing us to focus on the native plants in specific habitats. Our numbers have grown to the point that we contracted with NeonCRM this past year to manage our memberships and donations. And this year TNPS initiated Grants 4 Native Plants to provide schools with the funds needed to purchase native plants and mentors to help students plant them as part of a hands-on curriculum about biodiversity and native plants. I am so looking forward to seeing what these six schools accomplished when they report back in May. Watch for their student reports and photos in the May issue of our

newsletter produced quarterly by our talented Editor, Donna Bollenbach.

And thank you to the officers and directors who have supported my sometimes crazy ideas. Specifically: Allan Trently for being my back up whenever asked, Kim Sadler for so competently managing our finances, Bettina Ault for doing our meeting minutes even when her body was failing her, Dennis Horn for his institutional and plant knowledge that helped maintain the core continuity of TNPS, Bart Jones for stepping in wherever

needed, especially with field trips, conferences, and nominations; Mitchell Kent for so masterfully handling our most recent conference and being my partner in the issue fraught transition to NeonCRM. Thank you to Sue Bible, Larry Pounds, Anne

Ballentine, Suzy Askew, Ken Rea, Mary Priestley, Shelley King, Joanna Brichetto and Jennifer Trently for being my sounding board, advisor, and stepping up to help whenever asked. I could not have managed this job without the assistance, guidance, and knowledge of each and every one of you. I am grateful for your presence and participation in this grand (sometimes challenging) adventure. TNPS is a better organization for the active participation of all these marvelously talented people.

And a special thanks to those who will be new members of our leadership this coming year: Tim Kaltenbach, Lesley & Jesse Gunn, and Juanita Wade. You are all welcome members of the leadership team.

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Bring Native Plants to Our Towns

by Karen Hill and Deborah Rosenthal

Have you wondered how we can protect the native plants in our yards, both volunteer and planted? Because many developers and HOAs treat native plants as weeds, not recognizing their value to the environment or how readily available natives have become at most plant nurseries, they may need some prodding to make good choices. So, let's push them!

Early this year I met up with Deborah Rosenthal, a retiree who had motivated the Town of White Bluff in Dickson County as well as Dickson County itself, where she resides, to pass an ordinance *requiring that developments meeting certain threshold requirements plant at least 50% native plants and prohibiting the planting of invasive species*. These were the first such ordinances in Tennessee! But not the last!

Checking with my township of Thompsons Station I learned that they were in the process of revising the town's Land Development Ordinance. My town manager, Micah Wood, was contacted to ask if it was too late to make a few more changes. His reply prompted me to quickly read the proposed revised ordinance, hone in on the areas dealing with landscaping and plants, and with guidance from Deborah, propose additional changes. Specifically:

"All required landscaping material shall be composed of at least 50% native plants. The calculation shall be based on the quantity of plants. The use of invasive plant species, as specified by the Land Development Manual, shall be prohibited."

[The Land Development Manual referred to was also updated, but did not require BOMA approval.]

Four definitions were also revised:

"Endangered/threatened Flora: Plant species that are in danger of extinction throughout all or part of their range, or are likely to become endangered in the near future. The Tennessee Natural Heritage Program,

Rare Plant List, is a comprehensive listing of endangered/threatened species in Tennessee and shall be used as a reference for purposes of this Ordinance."

"Invasive Plant Species: Introduced (exotic) plant species that are not native to Tennessee and may be invasive or possess the characteristics to become invasive and cause damage to native plant communities. This includes both established and emerging threats as indicated by the Tennessee Invasive Plant Council (TNIPC) and/or the Land Development Manual."

"Native Plant Species: Plants that occur naturally in an area where they evolved without human introduction or manipulation."

"Natural Vegetation: plants, grasses, shrubs or trees native to Middle Tennessee."

The revised Land Development Ordinance passed first and second readings by the Thompsons Station Board of Aldermen, then went into effect July 1, 2024. The entire process took place in just a few months.

You can do the same for your town/city/county. A first key step is identifying people you may know who are involved in your jurisdiction's decision making and determining who among them may

be native plant allies. You may be surprised by what you learn. We can provide guidance, assistance, and templates based on our experiences. To that end, we will offer a panel discussion including Amanda Harrington, the planner for Dickson County and White Bluff who was critical to getting the ordinances passed in those areas. The panel will be held via zoom on Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 pm Central (7:30 pm Eastern) on the steps we have taken to revise our local ordinances to include native plants in our landscaping and to prevent use of invasive species.



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The zoom link can be accessed via the Calendar at www.TNPS.com.

These ordinances are not retroactive. We cannot change the past, but we can affect what happens in the future! We continue to be busy in our local areas and coaching folks in other areas of the state. There is movement in the Town of Franklin, plus Williamson and Knox counties, to change their ordinances. Will your town and county be next? Join us on December 10th to learn more about the possibilities. This panel discussion will be recorded and posted on the TNPS website.

In Memoriam – Bettina Ault

Contributed by Bart Jones



Bettina will be remembered for her smile.

TNPS lost another shining star in the early morning hours of November 12 when Bettina Ault left us. She was a long-time member of the society and our Secretary for the past several years.

I met Bettina over 35 years ago when she did a fellowship in the lab next to mine. Of course at work, most of our conversations revolved around the science we were doing and I had no idea of her love of nature of all sorts. But I do remember her enthusiastic spirit for anything she endeavored to do and her fun and quirky personality. Little did I know that 15 years later our lives would circle back and our friendship would expand exponentially through TNPS.

Many people think I invited Bettina to join TNPS, but it was more a confluence of fate than anything else. As I recall, Bettina first heard of TNPS through her participation at the Wildflower Pilgrimage and immediately joined the society. After that, she was looking over the field trip schedule for the remainder of the year and saw a familiar name leading a field trip – me. What a surprise it was when I saw Bettina pull up! Bettina, always the inquisitive sponge for knowledge, became an instant regular on our trips. She also began to participate in the butterfly counts

I conducted and quickly gained the ability to ID most of the species we encountered.

Bettina was a pediatric nephrologist and practiced at LeBonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis for many years before accepting a position at Erlanger Baroness Hospital in Chattanooga. Even after moving to Chattanooga, Bettina made it a point to attend as many of my field trips and butterfly counts as she could. She met her soulmate Harland Alpaugh and brought him along for both. Bettina and Harland even participated on one of my butterfly counts this past June.

Bettina loved TNPS and all the members that she met, she loved chasing eclipses, attending the Kidney Camp to help children find some happiness during their battles with kidney disease, and spending time trekking through her beloved Smoky Mountains. She was a warrior who fought her disease with a smile on her face and with laughter among friends. Our thoughts and sympathy pour out to Harland, a magnificent caregiver and support for Bettina. Our field trips will be just a little less brilliant without Bettina.



Harland and Bettina

TNPS Outreach to Nashville Youth at LIV Golf Tournament

by Karen Hill

Over fifty youth from Nashville, TN, attended a “Show and Tell” on native plants given by TNPS member Lesley Gunn as part of LIV Golf’s outreach to the community. The LIV Golf Tournament was held on June 21-23 at The Grove Golf Course located in College Grove, TN. Three local organizations that work with disadvantaged youth, Black Lemonade, Backfield in Motion, and Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee were invited to meet Stinger GC team golf pros and practice their golf shots. Afterwards the children and teens headed to a pavilion to learn about our Tennessee native plants. Since it was a “Show and Tell” format, flowers, leaves and seeds were passed around so everyone could get a look at our native purple coneflowers, gray headed coneflowers, and Black-eyed Susans. Several of the children asked questions or made comments about the content. The presentation also stressed the importance of native plants and how they are interconnected with birds and insects.

“Golf is deeply intertwined with nature, creating a unique bond that we must nurture for future generations. By educating young people about their natural surroundings and the crucial role of a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem, we empower them to become ambassadors of the planet. At LIV Golf, we're dedicated to fostering this connection, ensuring that golf not only thrives in harmony with nature but also champions environmental sustainability,” said Jake Jones, SVP Impact and Sustainability at LIV Golf.

After the presentation on native plants, the youth enjoyed snacks and then headed to the shuttle buses. One little boy was carrying a Black-eyed Susan in each hand as he boarded the bus to travel back to Nashville. A short video is available at <https://youtu.be/-8lTmJas400>.

Note: Many thanks to LIV Golf for their generous donation to TNPS.

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The best times to plant oakleaf hydrangeas are spring or fall. New growth appears at the tips of the branches and displays a vibrant green color. The flowers bloom in cone-shaped clusters from the bottom up and consist of both fertile and non-fertile flowers on the same panicle.



In mid to late summer the flowers began to turn pink

By summer, the large clusters of flowers turn creamy white, while the foliage becomes bright green. If you want to use some flowers for indoor arrangements, it's best to cut them right after they bloom in the summer.

As early as late June, the flowers on our Oakleaf Hydrangeas began changing from white to pink. The color transition starts at the bottom of the cone and progresses upward. The tips of the leaves were starting to take on a reddish hue. By early July, many flowers of the

Ruby Slippers variety had turned a reddish pink,

In October and November, most of the leaves were rich shades of red and burgundy, and the cones of flowers ranged in color from dusky white to brown.

Bob and I agree that the Oakleaf Hydrangea is an excellent choice for our landscape.



The ruby slippers turned a reddish pink in July



In October and November the leaves were rich shades of red and burgundy and the flowers began to brown.

2024 TNPS Field Trip Report

SEPTEMBER 21, Crab Orchard Mountain Powerline

fieldtrip report by Margaret Cumberland

On September 21, a dozen people led by Margaret Cumberland hiked up a TVA powerline near Crab Orchard to see what was flowering this fall. The yellow goldenrods and purple blazing stars made a nice contrast, with some white thoroughwort thrown in. The highlight was finding a few areas flagged by a TVA native plant study that led us to seeding wood lilies. A small brave group after the powerline ventured into a wetland to find a few blooming gentians.



Soapwort Gentian,
Gentian Saponaria
Photo by Dennis Horn



Thoroughwort, *Eupatorium* spp.
Photo by Donna Bollenbach



Goldenrod, *Solidago*
spp. Photo by Donna
Bollenbach



Wood Lily, *Lilium*
philadelphicum
Photo by Dennis Horn

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New officers, board members, and committee members will step into their new positions on January 1, 2025, although many are already busy learning their new roles. I will remain an active part of TNPS, but I'm transitioning to the role of Past President. I hope to remain on some committees but transition off over the next several months as others take over new roles.

The slate of new officers and board members are listed on page 7. Please welcome Mitchell Kent and his team as your new leaders and assist them in whatever way you can. I'm confident they will be wonderful in their new leadership roles.

Now I'm going to enjoy a walk where I can crunch fallen leaves and smell the coming of winter!

Karen

Late note: TNPS Secretary and my friend Dr. Bettina Ault passed away quietly on November 12th after fighting cancer for several years. A natural burial service will be held on December 3rd at 1 PM Central at Larkspur Conservation, 155 Bear Carr Road, Westmoreland, TN 37186. Please arrive by 12:15 PM. Friends and family are welcome to bring fresh flowers (no vases, please). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Camp Okawehna (a special camp for children with end-stage renal disease that Dr. Ault cherished for over 20 years), the National Kidney Foundation, or the Tennessee Native Plant Society.

TNPS Elections

The following members were nominated, ran unopposed, and therefore elected with no further election procedures required. (Per Article VII, Section 3 (c) of our Bylaws) All terms are for two years (1/1/2025 – 12/31/2026). We appreciate that these members are willing to offer their time and talents for the benefit of TNPS.

Officers

President – Mitchell Kent, Chattanooga
Vice President – Tim Kaltenbach, Nashville
Treasurer – Kim Sadler, Murfreesboro
Assistant Treasurers – Lesley & Jesse Gunn, College Grove
Secretary – Sue Bible, Hendersonville
Assistant Secretary – Juanita Wade, Chattanooga

Board of Directors

Ken Rea, Johnson City
Mary Priestley, Sewanee
Larry Pounds, Oak Ridge
Allan Trently (Jackson) will finish out the term of Sue Bible. Bart Jones (Memphis) and Anne Ballentine (Memphis) have another year left on their terms.

If you are interested and willing to offer your time and talents, please check out the various committees listed on the [Directors page](#). If you find something you would like to do, then send an email to info@tnps.org. Many hands make for light work for all.

2025 Fieldtrip

JANUARY 16 (Thursday, 6 PM EST) UTC Herbarium at University of TN, Chattanooga

Join us for a guided tour of the UTC Herbarium on the University of Tennessee (UTC) campus in Chattanooga hosted by curator, Joey Shaw, PhD. In addition to his work in herbarium curation, Dr. Shaw is UC Foundation Professor at UTC and conducts research in floristics of the Southeast, plant species of conservation concern and others. The UTC Herbarium is the oldest herbarium in Tennessee, established in 1886 and is the third largest in the state. It contains approximately 45,000 specimens of macroalgae, seedless and seed-bearing plant specimens primarily from southeastern Tennessee, northwest Georgia, and northeast Alabama. It is associated with Southeastern Regional Network of Expertise and Collections, or [SERNEC](#) through which it provides online access to digitized specimens for research by other universities and the public.

Meeting Place/Time: The UTC Herbarium is located at 215 Holt Hall inside the UTC Department of Biology, Geology and Environmental Science on the UTC at 702 Mocs Alumni Drive. We will meet in front of the UTC Holt Hall at 5:50 PM Eastern. Visitor parking is available nearby off Vine St in Lot 10. There is no charge for visitor parking after 5 pm and no requirement for a visitor pass according to the University Parking Services after hours.

Leaders: Mitchell Kent (mkent423@gmail.com) and Dr. Joey Shaw
Please email Mitchell to let us know if you plan to attend.

2025 Native Plant Seminars

1/21/2025 - Connie Deegan on *Coexisting with Snakes*
2/18/2025 - [to be announced]

A complete schedule of 2025 Fieldtrips and Online Seminars will be published in the March newsletter.

When Are Dues Due?

Membership dues are due one year from the date of last payment. You will receive a reminder email 5 days before expiration asking you to renew. There is currently a grace period of 65 days in which you retain your membership status.

If you go into your membership portal (Login) you will see when your membership is due to expire. You may also renew your membership, if it is near expiration, and sign up for auto renewal if you wish. Payment is either by credit card or delayed payment if you mail a check. If there have been changes to your email or physical address, please update your membership.

If you have any questions or problems, contact support@tnps.org.

TNPS Newsletter
P.O. Box 159274
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