



GNPS Symposium Q&A Transcript Saturday Session - February 27, 2021

Question	Answer(s)
<p>Hi! I live on a third acre lot backed up very close to Kennesaw Mountain National Park. The back half of the lot is wooded. We have seen coyotes, deer, raccoons, hawks, foxes — all kinds of creatures. I am adding a small water feature to our property and would really like to plant natives - both aquatic and terrestrial - to help nature thrive. I would love to hear suggestions for some of the best natives for pollinators, for bog filtration for the water feature, and plants that support birds and animals.</p>	<p>A quick answer: you might visit this blog for specific plant ideas, March 2019 has a 3-part entry on pollinator gardening and there are others for birds (there's a search box): http://usinggeorgianativeplants.blogspot.com/</p>
<p>OK...I'll bite!...What do you mean by saying "NW gardens are very sophisticated (compared to SE? gardens?) Thank you!</p>	<p>Not sophisticated in comparison to some of our gardens but the standard landscape here is very complex. Folks spend a huge amount of money on diverse plant material and the general plant knowledge is extremely high. I live in a small town in Kitsap County and the number of landscaping companies, nurseries and supporting businesses is overwhelming. If you get a chance check out the Puget Sound Gardens website - there are a lot of public gardens. So in general, the tradition here is to have crazy big landscaping versus a huge lawn and structural plantings in the South. I miss SC!</p>

<p>Can we visit the mountain prairie that Patrick showed? Is it open to the public?</p>	<p>Yes - Blue Ridge Parkway - Doughton Park (approximately mp 245, if my memory serves). This prairie remnant is found adjacent to the road leading to the Bluff Lodge (now closed) and the view I showed is on Alligator Back at the peak of the hill.</p>
<p>To add to that question: My back wooded acreage has been overtaken by English Ivy. Bamboo is on the way from two lots over. (Noooooooooo!) There is a lot of smilax as well. I want to try to get rid of the ivy so other plants can grow in the forest. Any tips for that?</p>	<p>English Ivy can effectively be removed manually by pulling it and its roots out of the ground. If you have ivy growing on your trees we always recommend starting there by cutting it at about chest height and removing it from the base, this prevents further damage to the trees and slows the spread. It takes time, but focusing on little areas over time can lead to eradication. It will take time and needs to be monitored as the plant and other non-native invasive plants will try to come back and fill in the space.</p>
<p>Hi Dottie, Joy Martin has texted me saying she registered but did not receive the emails with the links for the Zoom. Can you send it to her again? She said she received the registration email. Her email is mart9845@bellsouth.net. Thank you.</p>	<p>I will resend her the link but she is showing as having received the link. Please ask her to check her spam folder.</p>
<p>Can you suggest a strategy for controlling mosquitoes in your landscape? We have a wooded lot with a pond that hosts a great deal of dragonflies in the warmer months, and bats frequent our property - but the mosquitoes are still a bit overwhelming.</p>	<p>Consider other sources of lingering water like clogged gutters and English ivy (yes they can breed in the small amount of water below the visible leaves). Doug Tallamy recommends building a trap: a bucket with water and mosquito dunks.</p>
<p>we've spent years cleaning out ivy - we pull by hand to do the first clear, then go back and pull finer pieces that were left. Then walk around once a quarter and pull any you see. It took us about 5 years, but we managed to get it down to a few pieces that needed pulled each quarter</p>	<p>live answered</p>
<p>We've cleared the invasives, lots of shade. What did you do to hold the soil while the green mulch grew in? I can't afford 100s of plants at a time. I've put in native ground covers but very slow to spread.</p>	<p>Coarse hardwood mulch (you can get it from tree services) holds together and can help. Also participate in some of the GNPS rescues; most sites are wooded.</p>

<p>Ditto, Lea Millet. I love to put on my coveralls and head out to the yard in the rain/ after a good rain, when pulling the ivy is easier.</p>	
<p>Thank you Ellen! Yes - unfortunately we do still have some English Ivy lingering at the endge of the wooded areas. Definitely planning to include some traps around the yard this year.</p>	
<p>Thanks! Is there anything I can do to help keep the bamboo out? It seems inevitable.</p>	<p>Talk to neighbors and address it immediately with manual removal once it gets to your place :(</p>
<p>Is the dwarf chinkapin oak a good choice for Atlanta landscapes to attract beetles? The speaker briefly mentioned it when talking about chestnut trees.</p>	<p>Oaks are fantastic host plants for a wide variety of insects and the dwarf chinkapin oak is one of many options that can work in many places in Georgia. I believe it is native to the piedmont and mountains and does not extend to far into the coastal plain.</p>
<p>What is the best resource for lists of Georgian native plants and where to get them? Our local extension office?</p>	<p>This is a good list for nurseries: https://gnps.org/georgias-native-plants/sources-native-plants/</p>
<p>Are there circulars or other publications that document native assemblages of plants at the watershed level in Georgia? I want to provide native ecosystem services on our very tiny lot (3000 sqft open space) in downtown ATL</p>	<p>Our page on Educational Materials have good downloadable lists: https://gnps.org/education/educational-materials-2/</p>
<p>A Question for Patrick when he's finished: With responsibility for nearly 300 acres at the Botanical Garden what strategy did he use concerning invasives?</p>	<p>I removed them mechanically from the woodland portion of the Natural Heritage Garden (a huge amount of Chinese Privet, Japanese Honeysuckle, Silverberry, Nandina, Mahonia bealei, etc). We did mostly mechanical removal of woody plants elsewhere but had started expanding using chipping and treating stems after cutting in some of the wild sections of the garden. We didn't have the staff to do a complete removal and one great example of a successful project that I would aspire to is at the Georgia Botanical Garden in their natural areas. I envy it. We did begin removing landscaping plants, even older, well-loved examples that had the potential to become invasive as well.</p>

<p>Carpenter bees - how can I discourage them from my garden and patio area?</p>	<p>They are important pollinators so you want them in your garden; protect your wooden structures by keeping them painted or stained. They don't like that. Leave some dead wood/snags to support them naturally (what they used before we arrived).</p>
<p>While we're trying to get rid of the majority of our lawn, we'd like to keep a little bit—are there any native grasses, or even hardier mosses that would work in the Piedmont?</p>	<p>Panicum (switchgrass), Andropogon (broomsedge), Schizachyrium scoparium (little bluestem) are 3 good ones</p>
<p>Can you recommend a resource(s) to learn HOW to best use seeds to create a successful meadow garden?{You said early on that prairie or meadow gardens are difficult to install and easy to go wrong).</p>	<p>I have not successfully ever installed a good meadow with seed. The South Carolina Native Plant Society has had some success with seed drilling. You may want to send them a message. Bill Stringer has done many such sites. I prefer to use plugs of grass and herb species, planted very densely after the area has been cleared of weeds. Even if you start with a very small area and slowly expand, I have found planting small potted (plugs) plants works way easier and better than seeds. It usually takes 2-3 years for the meadow to mature enough to be truly functioning. Mowing or burning every year or two is also important in success.</p>
<p>Patrick, your presentation sounds significantly influenced by Rainer/West...Planting in a Post-Wild World. Yes? Your approach resonates with theirs? Any important differences we need to know from your experience? Thank you, Melanie</p>	<p>Claudia West has been a close friend for many years. We have influenced each other over time and we have very similar ideals of landscaping. There are differences in natural community gardening and the landscaping that is being done by them. Most of the landscapes you will find in their book are much less complex (simpler diversity). Their model works and works well and provides a boost in diversity no doubt, just a different level of complexity. I strive to get folks to appreciate and include repeating patterns in the landscape but also introduce much more complexity/diversity in their planting. My focus has been native and near-native species and interestingly, one of the most successful exhibits supporting the largest native insect diversity at the SCBG was the Chihuahuan Garden. These plants came from TX, AZ, NM, Mexico and are the same families and genera that grow here and they are North American natives so we call them near-native. They have the added advantage of much more drought tolerance.</p>
<p>How much maintenance such as thinning do you provide annually so that certain</p>	<p>The maintenance is considerably less than in the formal landscape but any landscape requires a commitment. It isn't</p>

<p>more invasive /stronger plants do not overtake the more delicate plants particularly with the prairie and meadow gardens? Is is C'est la vie?</p>	<p>the kind of place you can plant and forget. I did a lot of looking after the less aggressive species and controlling more adventurous plants such as Wax Myrtle, Baccharis and Mayapples. The only other management was removing certain plants or trimming to maintain the look and aesthetic of the habitat as you would find it in the wild.</p>
<p>do you quantify how much co2 the burning releases? is there a way to mitigate that?</p>	
<p>Thank you so much. She previously said she had checked her spam.</p>	
<p>THANK YOU SO MUCH! Fabulous talk.</p>	
<p>In response to Jim's comment about tidy yards — we joke that we have Mullet Gardening: Business in the front and party in the back! Ha Ha!</p>	
<p>For Patrick- how were you able to incorporate different communities (thinking of the mountains to the sea with forests/wetlands/maritime forests) into one area?</p>	<p>Luckily, we were in a zone 8a, at the base of the Blue Ridge, so we had a uniquely ideal climate to grow Oconee Bells and Palmetto Trees. The secret was making sure that the soil chemistry and content was the same as you find in the natural community and that planting was done very densely initially and ecosystem processes like fire were used in a manner that they would be in the natural community. I have to admit that I wasn't sure we could grow a maritime habitat complete with Spanish Moss, but we did. If you haven't visited lately you should make a trip - it's worth it.</p>
<p>Oops hit send on accident- Was it difficult to get plants with so many different requirements to grow?</p>	<p>It wasn't because we tried to prepare the site to duplicate the conditions found in the natural community. The soil chemistry and composition, the hydrology (wetness) and ecosystem processes like fire. One secret to our success is that all of our installations were done with plants transplanted into the landscape, rather than starting from seeds. Taking a few months to grow seed to an age that they establish well pays off.</p>
<p>Are you the one (or your dept) for the great native plantings under the power lines that I've seen in the Vinings area? Fabulous use of space.</p>	<p>I'm not familiar with it</p>

<p>Question for Patrick, How do you start turning your yard into a natural habitat? How do you know what species to blend together?</p>	<p>A great place to start is by looking at natural habitats near you. I would also recommend doing reading on the composition and conditions of the soil, water, geology of the natural communities so that you can work to provide those in your own habitat. Many good resources, such as A Guide to the Wildflowers of South Carolina or Timothy Spira’s book on Appalachian habitats are good places to start.</p>
<p>Ellen, We live in a wooded area in a log cabin with lots of decking. All our wood is stained and actually newly restained. Still, carpenter bees adore our place in early spring. We placed glass bee traps around our house, which really helped this past year. Do you have a better suggestion?</p>	<p>I don’t Robin; I am in a similar place so I understand your frustration. It sounds like you are doing the best you can.</p>
<p>What is the main mode of spread for japanese honeysuckle? does it seed much?</p>	<p>Yes mature plants have fruit that birds eat; it also spreads by creeping vegetatively.</p>
<p>Patrick: So for larger invasives you used cut stump? Ever foliar spray? Whicjhherbicide?</p>	<p>Yes - cut and squirt. We did use 2-4D compounds occassionally. We did use Roundup on herbaceous plants when clearing for initial installation of prairie, etc.</p>
<p>Does one or more woodpecker cavities indicate a significant health concern for the tree?</p>	<p>Yes, it can be a health concern for the tree, but a necessity for the woodpeckers. If the cavities are well established and older they are less likely to create issues for the survival of the tree. If possible, allowing the woodpeckers to do their thing is going to be best for wildlife in the longrun as they will open up opportunities for other life to use the tree.</p>
<p>Not a question, but to help answer Robin’s frustration. We actually made ‘insect houses’ - you can buy them at most major hardware stores. The tubing actually encouraged carpenter bees to lay their eggs in their, vs. making their own holes on our deck. This is completely anecdotal, but it seemed to do the trick!</p>	
<p>there*</p>	<p>Thanks, Stephen!</p>
<p>If one has a very tall and wide dying water oak filled will lots of black fungi, I</p>	<p>Any part of the tree you can leave will be beneficial. If it is a safety hazard, it obviously needs to be addressed, but if you</p>

do, Do you just cut all it's limbs off, wait for death and cavities for animals?	can even leave even a 5-10 foot stump, it will provide some benefits.
Yes, I can see that now and thanks so much for the clear comparison, Patrick. Also I feel you may not wholly congrue with Rainer's foundational statement that "we cannot go back"...My feeling is from your presentation on work at the SC Botanical that indeed you did go back and re-establish versions of the "wild." Herculean and awesome work you did!	
In addition to "host" trees/conditions, do you recommend or not recommend bat houses?	live answered
How do you deal with fireants.	live answered
I have a flock of pine siskins in my yard. We live in an oak-hickory-pine forest that backs up to the Yellow River. Lately I've been finding dead pine siskins around the yard. They show no outward damage. I have feeders with sunflower kernels they eat, but no dead birds from other species. (We also have brown headed nut hatchers, pine warblers, bluebirds,etc. This is the first year they are in the yard, is this normal?	Best recommendation is to take down your feeders and disinfect them. The siskins deal with increased disease spread at feeders. They may be getting sick at other feeders, but they can spread the disease at any feeder. Clean feeders regularly and if you are finding dead birds, it is best to take them down for a bit.
I got a bush of Beautiberry but it's Chinese variety. Is that a problem?	It's not as good but perhaps you can replace it in time. :)
Are inkberries an important shrub in the landscape?	Very much so in the Coastal Plain ecosystems where it is native; it does get used in the Piedmont now as well because it is evergreen.
I would love to hear everyone weigh in on this. If you had to pick 3 favorite natives to plant in GA - for the benefit of wildlife - what would those be?	Favorite tree is oak but get a hawthorn if you have enough oaks; favorite perennial is goldenrod (clumping); favorite shrub is blueberry
Here's my cherry laurel feedback: it has taken over my yard! I usually cut them (or have them cut when they get to 2+	

<p>inches diam so they don't fall over in ice storms. On the up side, they are providing shade for several really nice little sugarberries that are growing up, and they've kept the eleagnus and privet from getting too much of a foothold.</p>	
<p>Cherry laurel is very aggressive in south GA. Thickets provide dense shade, eliminate other plants and inhibit prescribed fire. I try to control it from spreading.</p>	
<p>Related question: I've been doing privet removal at Phinizy Swamp and worrying about what will move in in those areas I get clear. In some places it looks like cherry laurel is the prime candidate. Good or bad? Thoughts, anybody?</p>	<p>It appears the consensus is that you might have to manage that some as well but seedlings are easy to pull</p>
<p>@Margaret M, This IS an unusual year for pine siskins — an irruption year.</p>	
<p>I have a dead/ dying white oak next to my driveway. Trying to decide if it is too dangerous to leave uncut. It sits on the edge of a wood, on a hill above my pond, so it seems like a perfect habitat tree. If it falls, I think it will hit driveway/ cars/ possible a corner of the house. Any advice?</p>	<p>Sounds like a judgement call you need to make. You are correct, it sounds like it would be a great tree for habitat. If you can even keep 5/10 foot stump, it will have benefits. Another idea is to cut it and leave the wood on the property.</p>
<p>it's sure better than privet. Let nature decide.</p>	
<p>I'd love to hear about Jim's work at Georgia Power and the native plant work he's doing in power line right-of-ways</p>	<p>live answered</p>
<p>Excellent presentations. Lots of resources and food for thought. Thank you very much.</p>	
<p>I live in Atlanta and have space where I can plant a large tree (oak size), but I'd like a tree that has a strong tap root. It</p>	<p>live answered</p>

will be in a windy, very sunny area and be the only large tree there with some smaller mid-level trees around it. What are some good choices?	
Is it okay to let poison ivy vines grow up trees?	absolutely! birds adore the fruit and there is a special moth that uses it as a host plant
Are pines good habitats for lightning bugs?	Not specifically pines but forest/wooded areas in general
Suggestions for naturalizing septic drain fields	live answered
Thanks!	
Do any of you have suggestions for good information on Georgia water gardening? Specifically choosing native aquatics and marginals that are attractive to Georgia wildlife?	Cardinal flower, buttonbush are both good
Boiling water at dusk kills fire ants	
for fire ants I've had the best luck with diatomaceous earth.	
Herds of deer in NW Atlanta!! Help!!	live answered
Dr. McMillan: At the South Carolina Botanical Garden, what methods did you all employ when it comes to eliminating invasive plants? Did you encounter Kudzu or other bad ones?? Did you overseed or plant everything very tightly to ensure that invasive plants could not take over again?	live answered
Will there be a GNPS native plant sale this year?	One is not planned but we hope to have smaller sales at the chapter locations or through our propagation location in Stone Mountain throughout the year; we'll be sharing any sale info that we hear about.
Squirrels in edible gardens!	We are in the process of enclosing ours in chicken wire....we're calling it the anti-squirrel dome. Be careful with

	bird netting as it can actually entangle the birds and create more problems. (also the squirrels can chew through it.)
Many thanks to EVERYONE!	