



Spring Update 2025

"In the end a garden is a personal refuge. But . . . the garden, even as a sanctuary of an individual, owes a duty to the environment in which it is set."
— Penelope Hobhouse



Swiftbrook Woodland in Early Spring

I marvel that we are approaching the fifth anniversary of the pandemic lockdown. When the world slowed to a stop, folks were at home, and many took comfort by studying nature in their own backyards. We were both thrilled, and a bit overwhelmed, by the sudden increase in demand for native plants and habitat gardens.

When we began gardening at Swiftbrook in the early 1990s, we had no idea it would lead to creating gardens for others. I feel fortunate to begin my 22nd year of helping clients discover the joy we've found living in a landscape that is in tune with, and beneficial to, the surrounding environment.

The goal stated most often by clients when requesting a consultation or assessment visit is "reducing maintenance." All managed landscapes require some degree of care, but a thoughtfully created habitat garden makes few demands on its owners.

My upcoming article for the March/April issue of [Triangle Gardener Magazine](#) is a step-by-step guide to completing a site analysis. Thoroughly understanding your site conditions: sun, soil, drainage, etc. is absolutely essential to establishing low-maintenance plantings.

Traditional gardeners may perform site analyses, then work to change those conditions using irrigation or extensive soil amendments to suit particular plants they wish to grow. Habitat gardening calls for selecting plants that are adapted to the site's existing conditions.

Upcoming Events

- February 24-28 [Invasive Species Awareness Week](https://www.nisaw.org)
<https://www.nisaw.org>
- March 8
9:00 am-noon
Raleigh, NC
[Reid Garden Workday](#)
[NC Native Plant Society](#)
- March 15
2:00-4:00 pm
Raleigh, NC
[Inviting Native Plants](#)
[Workshop at Swiftbrook Gardens](#)
- March 19
2:00-4:00 pm
Raleigh, NC
[Inviting Native Plants](#)
[Workshop at Swiftbrook Gardens](#)
- April 11-13
Raleigh, NC
[Southern Ideal Home Show](#)
Come see Dale at Triangle Gardener Magazine's "Ask the Experts Booth" on Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.
- April 12-13
Raleigh, NC
[Oakwood Garden Club Tour](#)
[Historic Oakwood](#)
- April 19
9:00 am-noon
Raleigh, NC
[Reid Garden Workday](#)
[NC Native Plant Society](#)
- April 20
2:00-5:00 pm
Raleigh, NC
[Reid Garden Easter Open Day](#)
[NC Native Plant Society](#)
- May 3
Chapel Hill, NC
[Spring Plant Sale](#)
North Carolina Botanical Garden
- May 10
9:00 am-noon
Raleigh, NC
[Reid Garden Workday](#)
[NC Native Plant Society](#)

Visit my [website](#) or [facebook page](#) for updates.



Plants native to the [Southeastern Piedmont Eco-region](#) are well-adapted to the growing conditions in our area because they evolved here over millennia. Their long history means they have co-evolved with insects, birds, and other animals who rely on native plants throughout their life cycle.

Research done at the [University of Delaware](#) indicated that Chickadees require backyards containing 70% or more native plant biomass to successfully raise their offspring. Much more research needs to be done, but my first-hand experience is that increasing the number and types of native plants in a landscape enhances the diversity of insects and other animals.

This year we are offering both a weekday and Saturday option for those who would like to explore a woodland garden and become familiar with some woodland plants native to the Southeastern Piedmont. Our September workshop will focus on the components, including site analysis, necessary for creating a habitat garden. More details are on the [website](#).

I'd like to offer additional classes in our garden

and would appreciate feedback about topics you would like to see covered. I would also be grateful for suggestions regarding best days and times for classes to meet. Please email me your thoughts.

This winter I enjoyed conducting a workshop for new Wake County Master Gardener trainees and delivering Habitat Gardening presentations for garden clubs and other groups. Topics for those presentations are on my website where you will also find my blog, [Homegrown Habitat](#).

I offer on-site consultations and advice for those who want to create their own habitat garden. Like Penelope Hobhouse, I believe "gardens should require just the amount of maintenance to encourage relaxation, because, above all, they are places to enjoy."

Please share this newsletter and my website with others who are interested in native plants. Enjoy this season of rebirth.

*Happy Spring,
Dale*



Inviting Native Plants

Explore a woodland garden while learning to identify a number of plants that are native to the Piedmont. We'll share resources for identifying and growing natives and for recognizing and controlling invasive exotic plants.

Identifying and encouraging native plants in your garden or natural areas not only benefits wildlife, it also connects your garden to the surrounding natural community.

Saturday, March 15, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration Deadline: March 13

Wednesday, March 19, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration Deadline: March 17

Cost \$35

Workshop fees are payable by check. Make checks payable to: *Gardener by Nature LLC* Fees are non-refundable after the **Registration Deadline**.

**Mail the completed form with check to: Gardener by Nature LLC
5508 Swiftbrook Circle
Raleigh, NC 27606**

Spring 2025

About Our Classes

Our workshops are designed for novice gardeners and those new to the Triangle; however, interested gardeners of all experience levels are welcome.

This workshop and other topics can be presented as special sessions for garden clubs or other interested groups of six or more.

Classes are conducted in Swiftbrook Gardens near Lake Wheeler and include hands-on activities. Participants should dress in comfortable attire that is appropriate for outdoor activities.

To learn more about us, please visit our website:

<http://gardenerbynature.com>

Email: dale@gardenerbynature.com

Telephone: (919) 828-2015



**Helping humans
create habitats to
share**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Street _____

City _____

State/ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name of Class _____

Date/Time _____

Would you like to receive emails about future events?

Please circle your preference; YES NO

How to Register

Complete and submit the above registration form with payment. Registered students will be provided directions to Swiftbrook Gardens.

Fine Print (Please Read!)

Refunds are not available after the Registration Deadline. Students who are unable to attend due to last-minute emergencies may request a voucher for future classes.

Classes are held outdoors, so students should dress accordingly. In extreme weather, classes may be cancelled. Every effort will be made to contact students beforehand.

If a class is cancelled by Gardener by Nature, students may choose a refund or a make-up class.