



Fall Update 2026



“...preserve our native wildflowers, learn more about them, and just simply enjoy their beauty.”

In the spring of 1951 Mary Tate Graham of Ramseur, NC and Conner Smith organized a gathering at Smith's farm in Randolph County. Invitees included botanists, garden club members, and others who shared the women's concern about the loss of North Carolina's wildflowers to development and to wild-collecting which was still common at the time.

The North Carolina Wildflower Preservation Society was born that day, and the 63 charter members set about exploring ways to achieve the goal stated in the organization's name. Their early efforts included discouraging taking Christmas greens from the wild. Members also collected wildflower seeds to share with the Department of Transportation for roadside planting.

The group's meetings, typically spring and fall, centered on excursions to see plants growing in their natural environments, not only to admire their beauty, but also to learn the plants' growing habits and needs. Members freely shared the knowledge they gained from propagating and growing native plants in their gardens.

A propagation manual published in 1976 remains available as a PDF on the [NCNPS website](#) along with a host of more recent printable handouts and publications to help those who want to garden with native plants. Society members advocated for and supported the development of public gardens featuring native plants, including the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, the Daniel Boone Native Gardens in Boone, and the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo.

In 2000 the Society began to encourage the development of local chapters to better support preservation efforts statewide. Today eleven chapters, located from the mountains to the coast, organize activities and outings for NCNPS's 2,400 members.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 3, 10 & 17 Apex, NC	Triangle Environmental Symposium Annual series of discussions and lectures on environmental issues.
September 12 9:00 am-noon Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Workday NC Native Plant Society
September 19 2:00-4:00 pm Raleigh, NC	Creating a Habitat Garden Gardener by Nature Workshops
September 20 Raleigh, NC	Southern Ideal Home Show Come see Dale at Triangle Gardener Magazine's "Ask the Experts Booth" on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.
September 24 2:00-4:00 pm Raleigh, NC	Creating a Habitat Garden Gardener by Nature Workshops
September 25-27 Pittsboro, NC	75th Anniversary Celebration N. C. Native Plant Society Details & Registration
September 26 9:00 am-1:00 pm Chapel Hill, NC	Fall Native Plant Sale North Carolina Botanical Garden
October 4 3:00-6:00 pm	Swiftbrook Gardens Open Day Gardener by Nature Events
October 10 9:00 am-noon Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Workday NC Native Plant Society
November 14 9:00 am-noon Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Workday NC Native Plant Society



75th Anniversary Celebration Keynote Speaker, Patrick McMillan, with a bog container at the Downtown Cary Park

In 2004 the original name was changed to Native Plant Society to reflect the group's concern for all native plants and their habitats — not just wildflowers. Each chapter determines its own projects and initiatives, but all remain true to the original conservation mission.

Our local chapter is named for Margaret Reid who began rescuing native plants in the 1940s as shopping centers and other development gobbled woods and fields, erasing natural habitats in Wake County. Reid planted the rescues in the garden at her home off Dixie Trail in Raleigh using the natural gardens described by Botanist B. W. Wells as a guide.

Like many, my first Reid Chapter activity was a plant rescue in an area that was going to be quarried. The Trout Lily I brought home that day and its descendants still thrive in my woods.

Shortly after enrolling in Native Plant Studies at the NC Botanical Garden, I began to volunteer on Reid Wildflower Garden monthly workdays. As an English major with little science background, I had a lot to learn.

Robert and Julia Mackintosh, who purchased and restored the garden after Reid's death, were the most wonderful mentors I could have found. A landscape architect and a biologist they kindly and generously shared their knowledge on workdays and the chapter's monthly outings to natural areas. They were also a great deal of fun.

Reid Chapter activities today are much like those of the founding members. We go on walks,

Look for my story about creating fall bouquets with native plants in September's [Triangle Gardener](#) magazine.



2025 Open Day - Photo by Pam Beck

work on invasive plant removal, share our knowledge with the public, and swap plants at chapter socials.

In late September, NCNPS members from across the state will gather in Pittsboro to celebrate 75 years with presentations by experts and hikes to study plants in their habitats and “simply enjoy their beauty.” Registration for the workshops and hikes continues through September 8. Non-NCNPS members may join when they register.

My fall workshops here at Swiftbrook are scheduled for Sept. 19 & 24. Participants can choose either Saturday or Thursday. Pre-registration is required. I am also scheduling consultations for October and November.

I hope to see you at our [Fall Open Garden](#) or one of the other events on our calendar.

-Dale



Spring Beauty



Ground-nesting bee



NCNPS Walk at Shaken Creek



Shaken Creek Lobelia



Reid Chapter Members Exploring Flower Hill



White Pines Fothergill