



Spring Update 2022

March 21

"The message that my old aunt left for me was as unintended as the fireflies she harbored: with good taste, in a small space, and even in Elizabeth, New Jersey, back yards are big enough to share." -- Sara Stein



Tiger Swallowtail on Florida Flame Azalea - Photo by Matthew Brown

If we somehow lost track of our yard's status as a wildlife habitat, the Spring Peepers would surely remind us. The Herps of NC [website](#) says Spring Peepers are most active on overcast days and warm, wet nights between November and April.

Last week's rainy days fit the bill. We were serenaded by their whistling calls from St. Patrick's Eve till the weekend. At dawn, the bird chorus takes over. The Cardinal leads, followed by Towhees, Bluebirds, and so many more. We're astonished by the number and variety of birds with whom we share Swiftbrook Gardens.

We saw our first Tiger Swallowtail on Saturday, and soon the Flame Azaleas they love will be in flower. Everyday it seems we're welcoming old friends, both Flora and Fauna, back to the garden. As we begin a new gardening year, I'm excited to continue consulting and working with clients who want to create their own sustainable habitats.

John is excited about his retirement — more time to nurture Swiftbrook and more time for jazz clarinet. However, we are both extremely pleased that the final

Upcoming Events

April 2 1:00 - 3:00 pm Raleigh, NC	Inviting Native Plants Workshop at Swiftbrook Gardens
April 9 9:00 am - noon Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Workday NC Native Plant Society
April 9 - 10 Raleigh, NC	Oakwood Garden Club Tour Historic Oakwood
April 17 2:00 - 5:00 pm Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Easter Open Day NC Native Plant Society
May 7 10:30 am - 4:00 pm Chapel Hill, NC	Spring Native Plant Sale North Carolina Botanical Garden
May 14 9:00 am - noon Raleigh, NC	Reid Garden Workday NC Native Plant Society



Trillium cuneatum is among the "invited natives" we'll discuss with participants in our April 2 workshop. Registration details are at our [website](#).

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garden John designed before his retirement will be featured on this year's Oakwood Garden Tour. The garden, at the home of Carol Devita and Chris McClure, is situated on one of Oakwood's largest lots. John designed the garden in 2018 and construction of the hardscape was done in 2019. Plant installations continued through the spring of 2021.

Structural features include a custom gate, a rose arbor, and a Jasmine pergola. A patterned brick and gravel walkway connects the garden's destinations, and a low serpentine brick wall delineates the garden layers. Other elements include a gas fire table and a disappearing fountain with standing stones.



Devita - McClure Garden, Oakwood

Many of the property's existing plants were incorporated in the new design, giving the relatively new garden a feeling of maturity.

Since John is stepping away from gardens, we're pleased that Cheryl Traylor of [Six Seasons](#) garden consulting will be helping the owners nurture the plantings until they reach maturity.

*Happy Spring,
Dale*

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Spring Ideas

tips to create your best garden!

Plant Focus: 3 Must Haves for Spring
Annuals: Deer Resistant Varieties
Edibles: Yes, Eat Your Weeds

I strayed a bit from native plants for my article in the current issue of [Triangle Gardener](#) to describe the importance of getting to know plants before adding them to your landscape. Several other articles include tips and resources for learning about new plants.

Of course, it can take many years for some plants to fully reveal themselves. We thought our two tiny Poet's Laurels (*Danae racemosa*) would never grow, but after 20 years they became massive shrubs overwhelming their locations. In their second decade they also became vigorous re-seeders.

Although Poet's Laurel isn't considered invasive, and small seedlings are easily removed, we decided the time required could be better spent. We bade them farewell this spring.