



LNPS NEWSLETTER

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Briarwood Field Trip

Sunday, May 26, 2024 by Jackie Duncan

The Briarwood Field Trip started at 9am on a bright, sunny, warm day, a great day for an adventure in the woods. Attendees included Jackie Duncan, Gail Evans, Bob Dillemath, Helen Peebles, John Michael Kelley and family, Gwenn and Roger Coley from Shreveport, and Bayli Brossette and her family. Also out for the adventure were 2 herpetologists. We started at the Education Building where we saw Leatherflower (*Clematis reticulata*)

climbing a lighter pine trellis, home-made by Jessie Johnson and Dwarf Pawpaw (*Asimina parviflora*).



Also on display was the beautiful Pinewoods Lily (*Alophia drummondii*).



- To preserve and study native plants and their habitats
- To educate people on the value of native plants and the need to preserve and protect rare and endangered species
- To promote the propagation and use of native plants in the landscape
- To educate people on the relationship between our native flora and wildlife

Briarwood Field Trip

May 26, 2024 *cont.*

Bayli Brossette, Briarwood Curator, led us on a walking tour where we first traversed through the Wildflower Meadow. The *Physostegia* and *Monarda* were in bud and the coneflowers were blooming. We saw the Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), and we discussed how to tell the difference between *Echinacea*



pallida and *Echinacea sanguinea*, which is by the color of the pollen. *Echinacea pallida* has white pollen and *Echinacea sanguinea* has yellow pollen.

We then passed by the Dormon

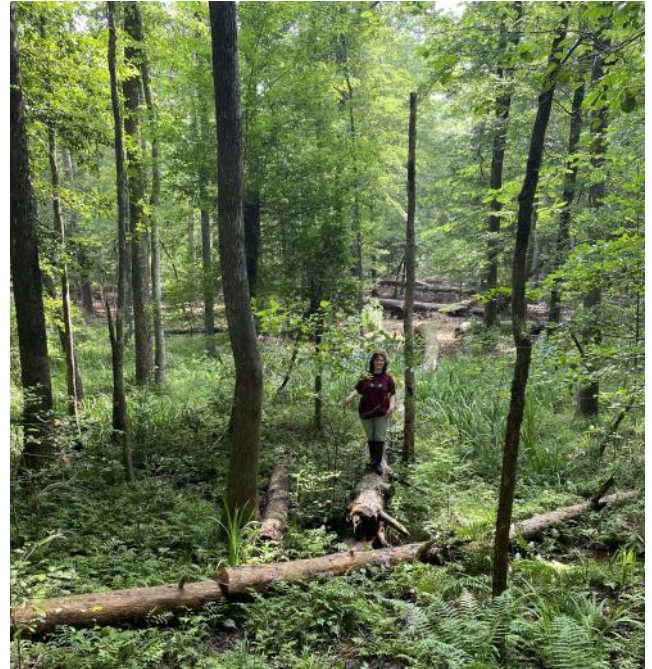
homestead where Caroline lived in her early years. Two post oaks remain from that period. Then we stopped at the rare Florida Torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*) that Caroline planted and that only grows naturally in Florida. The interesting thing about this tree is that it was a male tree but now bears a few viable cones and some regeneration has occurred.

Of course, we had to stop and look at “Old Grandpappy” that resides beside the Wings Rest pond. In bloom around Wings Rest was a Swamp Azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*) and an exotic pink blooming tree called Fevertree (*Pinckneya bracteata*).



While walking through these beautiful woods some folks decided to have a little fun and walk on the

downed trees, of which there are many from the 2019 tornado.



We walked along the old Sparta Road where wagons and buffalo traveled long ago. And we wound up at the Bay Garden. Bayli is working on weeding and rejuvenating the Bay Garden so it is a work in progress at the moment. But we did see some beautiful Pickerel Weed (*Pontederia cordata*). We were all pretty hungry by then and had a nice summer lunch of sandwiches and salad.



Briarwood Field Trip

May 26, 2024 *cont.*

After lunch, some of us traveled to Goldonna to look for the Red Penstemon (*Penstemon murrayanus*) that grows naturally only in Caddo, Natchitoches, and Winn Parishes. We did not find it but we did see the



rare Longleaf Buckwheat (*Eriogonum longifolium*) that grows only in Caddo, Winn, and Vernon Parishes.



We also saw a bunch of the beautiful Carolina Larkspur (*Delphinium caroliniana*). This concluded our Briarwood field trip.



Gail Evans and I had a special treat Saturday evening, as we stayed the night in the Education Building getting ready for the tour on Sunday. I called Jessie Johnson (co-curator at Briarwood with her husband Richard for 40 years) and asked if she was up for a visit and she said yes come on over. Jessie lives adjacent to the Briarwood Nature Preserve. So Gail and I set up our bedrolls and headed over. Jessie turned 90 this year. She looked great, though moved with a walker, and she was as spunky as ever. It was fun looking at all her old pictures and listening to her talk about things that happened a long time ago. Great memories. Hang in there, Jessie.

A Discussion with Brian Early

By Arlene Edwards and Duke Williams



Recently we had a wonderful and amazing opportunity to travel to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) headquarters and meet with and interview Brian Early, State Community Ecologist, Wildlife Diversity Program with LWDF. Brian grew up in New Orleans and after graduation he worked as a botanist for Colorado State University's Center of Environmental Management and Military Lands as a Department of Defense contractor and was stationed at Fort Polk (now Fort Johnson). He later went into private consulting for 10 years before joining LDWF. After sitting down in his office and beginning our discussion, you could immediately tell how enthusiastically passionate Brian is about his work. Although he has many projects going on at the same time, the two that seem especially important to him currently are the Native Plant Garden that sits at the entrance to the LDWF building, and the restoration, reforestation, preservation and conservation of the Longleaf Pine and the native flora on the pine prairies in and around the Kisatchie National Forest and other public and private lands.

The story of the Longleaf Pine and the efforts underway to save and expand these valuable historical forests is an extremely important multi-faceted one. It is a story that needs to be told, but due to time and page constraints, we will focus on the Native Plant Garden. However, we strongly encourage everyone to dig into the story of the Longleaf Pine forests. Once

you do you will get hooked! Check out the following links to get a start:

https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Wildlife_Insider/2022-FallWinter---Wildlife-Insider-low-res.pdf

[https://dogwoodalliance.org/2021/07/the-legacy-of-longleaf-pine/?](https://dogwoodalliance.org/2021/07/the-legacy-of-longleaf-pine/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwgJyyBhCGARIsAK8LVLOp0A9FYGokY8ISWqspOI1eo3HdzK14zd5teL-Bn-wJrcGBGLk8LlaAokHEALw_wcB)

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<https://orionmagazine.org/article/longleaf-pine-conservation-colonial-history/>



The LDWF Garden was the vision of Dr. Christopher Reid, who worked at the LDWF until 2018 when he left to begin his teaching career at LSU. Subsequently, Brian got involved and has worked diligently to realize his vision to have the garden vividly display the beauty, variety, resilience, and importance of native plants and to demonstrate how people can create native gardens in their own yards and garden spaces.



A Discussion with Brian Early *cont.*

The idea of purposeful native planting, particularly in yards, is a concept that was new to us, but it has been around for some time and is gaining increasing momentum. Thousands of people visit the LDWF office every year, and when they arrive at the building they are greeted with a garden that holds nothing but native plants. Some are everyday plants we may see around town, but some are unique and found in only a few places in Louisiana. Since people come from all over the state to visit the LDWF building, Brian wanted the garden to be truly representative of the various plant ecosystems present in Louisiana: coastal marshes and barrier islands; coastal prairies; bottomland hardwood forests and swamps; bluff forests; Longleaf Pine savannas and sandhill woodlands; and the northern shortleaf pine/oak/hickory woodlands. The garden is arranged to represent various ecological themes from the different regions of the state, and the varying native plants occupying those regions.

The benefits of native planting are amazing. Brian

The native garden at LDWF lost only one plant during the drought and ice storms, and that one plant was an adolescent Longleaf Pine. Fertilizing is not necessary, in fact, discouraged, because it takes away the competitive edge for natives.



told us that LDWF turned off their sprinkler system 5 years ago because the natives no longer needed additional watering. Fertilizer went by the wayside too as the plants get whatever nutrients they need from the soil and from each other. Imagine the money you could save if you did not have to water or fertilize your plants! Just the water conservation alone is a big plus.

LDWF is in the process of redoing a section in the very front of the native garden to represent a more traditional garden that will provide another native plant landscape exemplar to visitors. They are also developing a plan for native plants that will be acceptable for HOA and City Planners, considering height restrictions, overall size, and aesthetics.



A Discussion with Brian Early *cont.*



Natives require minimal maintenance. They have developed their own defenses against pests and diseases, reducing or hopefully eliminating the need for pesticides, fertilizers and/ or other chemicals in gardens. Try using mechanical or less harmful means of control in your garden. For example, Brian explained that you should not use weed and feed type products on your lawn. For a lawn, the weed seed bank is already saturated. When you weed and feed you will only top kill what is there but there is so much in the weed seed bed that all of the weeds are going to come back the next growing season with a vengeance. Most common grasses endemic to this area are low nutrient so they will eventually out-compete the weeds. If you leave it, it will fix itself over time. Patience is key, and the rewards are great!



Since planting the native garden at LDWF, many more pollinators and other wildlife are now ubiquitous at the site such as birds, bees, wasps, moths, rabbits, butterflies, five different species of snakes (nothing venomous to report), and an occasional nesting turtle. The many insects which depend upon native plants make up more than 90% of the diets of some birds. LDWF is in the process of doing a pollinator study to compile additional information on a vitally important ancillary benefit of planting natives.

Brian emphasized that a native garden can be anything you want it to be. It is a created landscape, so it does not have to be “wild.” Brian explained that there are two types of gardens, social and anti-social. An anti-social garden is one that is more traditional with plants set apart, each in its own space. These gardens look neat and organized, but they do not socialize.

The social garden is one where..... crazy as it sounds, it is more of a party—a 24 hour a day, seven days a week party—with the plants interacting between themselves and the environment, carrying on many simultaneous “conversations” with the occupants of their world. In social native gardens

A Discussion with Brian Early *cont.*



there is more root connectivity between the plants, allowing chemical survival signals and other messages to be sent, and nutrients shared. They aren't bashful as to who they communicate with, and this communication takes place above and below ground. There is plant to plant, plant to other organisms, plant to environment and environment to plant activity all going on at the same time. An above ground example is pheromones that plants emit to communicate.

For example, if a plant is attacked by an herbivore, it can release chemicals to signal other plants so that they can prepare for an attack. Pheromones are also used to attract the plant's preferred, most efficient pollinators thereby ensuring successful and economical reproduction and survival of the species.



Below ground pheromone activity includes the attraction or repelling of bacteria or fungi. Native plant communication allows them to depend on and protect each other by partitioning resources and sharing information that can affect bloom times, leaf shape, and plant life.

Plant communication is a fascinating topic that is the subject of increasing attention. Through use of the modern scientific research toolbox and as study efforts progress, the unwinding of these mysteries will be the continuation of an amazing and important story that will impart not only important scientific data, but important social lessons to humankind. If native plants can communicate, nurture, and protect themselves and fellow plants so freely and beneficially, shouldn't we return the favor? Does the evolving understanding of the sociability of native plants offer humankind some valuable lessons about communicating, caring, and nurturing in today's world? Something to ponder as you admire your native plant garden. (If you are interested in plant communication, start by reading *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben.)



A Discussion with Brian Early *cont.*

On a related and current topical note, we asked him about the coming cicada "blooms." He told us that in the more northern reaches of the state there could be one or two cicada blooms, but they should not have much if any significant impact on our native plants and trees for the reasons discussed previously in this article. Trees will start their chemical communication with other trees so they can start ramping up their defenses through the production of pheromones and hormones which prompts the trees to emit chemical compositions which will increase resistance. There is no real danger to healthy, mature trees and native garden plants. A mass cicada emergence is a feeding bonanza for wildlife of every sort including reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and birds, many of which will alter their foraging habits to gorge on them.

In closing, at the top of the list of important things learned since embarking on our journey through the Master Naturalist Program curriculum is that the professional women and men we met during this journey who are engaged in the research, study, and stewardship of the natural world are, without nearly enough fanfare, doing work of vital importance. That work is of course important from a scientific standpoint, but it is also important from a societal

standpoint. Through their hard work they are unpacking for us the many immutable truths of the natural world. These truths are ancient guideposts ironed out by nature long before humans arrived on the scene, so they ought to be treasured and taken very seriously and are particularly relevant in today's world. Over 2,000 years ago the Roman philosopher and orator Cicero said:

For all the questions on which our philosophers argue, there is none which is more important than to thoroughly understand than this: That man is born for justice, and that law and inquiry are not a mere establishment of opinion, but an institution of nature. Both justice and law derive their origin from what nature has given to man.

So, many thanks to Brian Early for generously spending some one on one time with us to talk about native plants and pine trees and gardens and the many other aspects of his job,. Take advantage of the many native plant resources online. An excellent starting point is the Louisiana Native Plant Resource Guide for Gardeners and Landscapers which is published by LDWF. Brian is the Managing Editor. This publication also cites numerous references to other works and studies on native plants and can be accessed at: [Native-Plant-Guide-8x9-pages.pdf \(louisiana.gov\)](https://www.louisiana.gov/Portals/0/Files/06/20190624_Louisiana_Native_Plant_Resource_Guide_for_Gardeners_and_Landscapers.pdf)



Arlene Edwards and Duke Williams are both attorneys in their "day jobs". They interviewed Brian in April and wrote this article as members of the Spring 2024 Certification Class of Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton Rouge.

The garden at LDWF is currently under the design and maintenance of Swamp Fly Landscape.

How to Recognize Giant Salvinia and Its Biological Control Agent

By Dane Shackelford and Victoria Ayala—LSU

Editors Note: I met Dane and Victoria when they provided a tour of Dr. Rodrigo Diaz's aquatic lab. Part of their work is to map locations where giant salvinia is found. I had suggested this newsletter as a means to inform a state-wide audience. You can help with their research by entering any Giant Salvinia found into iNaturalist.



Photos taken by Dane Shackelford

Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is an aquatic fern native to Brazil known for being highly invasive with devastating ecological and economic impacts. Salvinia was introduced to Louisiana in the Toledo Bend Reservoir in 1998, and since then has invaded almost every parish in the state. It has caused issues with impeding navigation, irrigation, and has led to the degradation of coastal marshes.

A key difference between Giant and Common Salvinia (*Salvinia minima*), is that Giant Salvinia forms a dense mat up to several layers thick. However, in its early growth stages, Giant Salvinia can look like Common Salvinia. To identify Giant Salvinia, the first step is to inspect the tiny, silvery-white hairs of the leaves, called trichomes. Giant Salvinia trichomes are fused and have an eggbeater-like shape, while in Common Salvinia the hairs are open.

Biological control using the salvinia weevil (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) is the most efficient and cost-effective

method to control salvinia. The weevil is a tiny black insect about the size of a kiwi seed. Native to Brazil, it was introduced to the United States in 2001. Adult weevils feed on the surface and submerged fronds of Giant Salvinia, leaving a “shotgun” hole pattern in the apical buds, while larvae feed internally within the rhizomes. After sustaining heavy weevil feeding damage, salvinia mats will turn yellow, then brown, then black, where it will eventually sink to the bottom of the waterbody.

The Biological Control Lab at LSU AgCenter mass rears salvinia weevils for the coastal parishes of Loui-



siana. Weevils are reared in outdoor tanks during warmer months and overwintered inside a greenhouse. Once a year, weevil-infested salvinia is distributed to landowners who need it, being a powerful source of control for Giant Salvinia. You can help us understand the presence of Salvinia by making iNaturalist reports.



Giant Salvinia ponds at LSU Aquatic Lab

How to Recognize Giant Salvinia and Its Biological Control Agent

Cont.



Photo taken by Dane Shackelford

If you want to know more about the giant salvinia biological control program, visit our website: www.lsuagcenter.com/giantsalvinia

If you would like more information about the weevil rearing program, please contact Dane Shackelford: dshackelford@agcenter.lsu.edu



Dane and Victoria (center and right) show LMNGBR students the salvinia weevil.

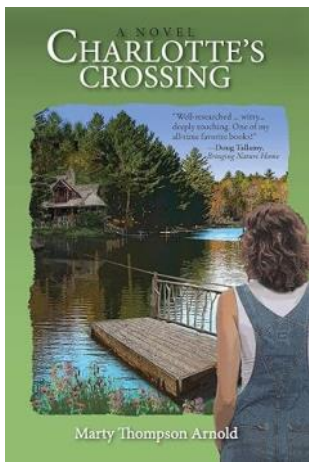


Dane Shackelford and Dr. Rodrigo Diaz in the field at the LSU Aquatic Lab.

Book Review

By Phyllis Griffard

Charlotte's Crossing (2023) by Marty Thompson Arnold



LNPS Members: we invite you to contribute your book reviews of fiction or non-fiction books that would be enjoyed by our native enthusiasts. Email any of our editors.

Our book club down in the Lafayette area just happens to be full of native plant enthusiasts. Although the books we choose generally have some connection to Louisiana, one of our members pitched that we break from Louisiana for the month by reading *Charlotte's Crossing*, which she received from her sister in Michigan, where the book was written and set.

Charlotte's Crossing is a novel "as much a love song to native plants and a plea for their protection, as it is a story of one woman's uncommon love for an uncommon man". We didn't know what to expect from this self-published author whose work we had not read. We all were pleasantly surprised at the quality of the story about Charlotte, a young landscaper whose first big native landscape project was a challenging job on a small island belonging to an enigmatic, big-hearted attorney. Rolling our over-60 eyes at the prospect of wading through sappy love story, in the end we enjoyed the humanity of the characters, family, and community. Imagine a page-turner set among native plants! We especially felt validated by the parallel stories about how everyday locals could fight city hall over the planting of invasive species. It's sadly reassuring that our challenges here are not so different from those elsewhere. Doug Tallamy himself praised it as "well-researched...witty...deeply touching. One of my all-time favorite books!" Check it out. Maybe it will be one of yours too.

LNPS Member, Linda Auld is awarded the annual Caroline Dorman Award from Louisiana Master Naturalists

Linda has written numerous articles about bugs, butterflies, and monarchs in particular, including one about the namesake of the award she will receive, Caroline Dormon. Many of her articles have been turned into presentations she has made across Louisiana and in neighboring states. She has raised hundreds of butterflies and has done her own research into how the protozoan parasite, "Oe," cripples monarchs.

Perhaps Linda is best known for a long career of partnering with schools, municipalities, state agencies, arboretums, and more to make real things happen. In other words, Linda Auld picks up her trowel and gets her hands in the dirt, helping start native plant gardens friendly to butterflies across the state. She is also a long-time counter and compiler of butterflies for the North American Butterfly Association.

Many of Auld's articles are available through her website, NOLABugLady.com, as is her recently authored book titled "BugLady's Butterfly Summer."



In Memoriam

Loice Kendrick-Lacy

(March 8, 1925 – April 16, 2024)



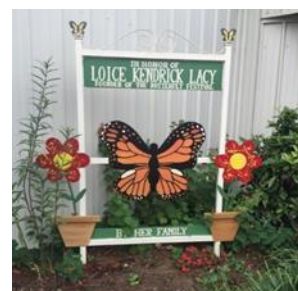
Loice Kendrick-Lacy, a beloved naturalist, was born in 1925 to a family of farmers in Talpa Texas. Loice grew up during the Depression in West Texas and withstood all the dust storms and learned what it meant not to have enough food to eat. The necessity of self-sufficiency and these early memories of living with nature stayed with her throughout her life. She married in 1944 and after the war moved to Haynesville with her husband where she lived the rest of her life.



Loice was a member of the Louisiana Native Plant Society since 1983. She raised 4 children and when she retired, followed her passion by joining the Audubon Society, becoming a Master Gardener, and teaching an ecology camp in Arkansas. In 1999 she founded the Haynesville Celebration of Butterflies which has been held every September since then. Loice, a journalism major in her youth, wrote her first gardening book published in 2012, *Gardening to Attract Butterflies, The Beauty and the Beast*. Then she wrote *Richard Johnson, Protégé of Caroline Dormon*, followed by a book about her family in Texas and one more about the Kendrick family. Her latest book was published in 2022, *Wise as an Owl, Shy as a Fox*. At the time of her passing, she was working on a book of poems.

As written in the Haynesville Guardian and quoted from Loice, “I have worked with nature, not against it, all my life.”

I will remember Loice as a gentle, giving soul with a sweet smile. Loice, you will be missed.



Louisiana Treesilience Program Grants

Louisiana Nature Conservatory

Trees are the Key

In addition to beautifying the landscape, a healthy urban tree canopy buffers neighborhoods from severe weather, reduces air temperature, stores carbon and supports wildlife. Southeast and Southwest parishes in Louisiana have taken recent hard hits from hurricanes. Through Louisiana Treesilience Program, cities, parishes, non-profits, local communities can apply for grant funding from The Nature Conservancy to rebuild tree canopy on public property in affected areas.

Types of projects might include: pruning public trees for storm readiness, remove potentially hazardous dead or dying trees, reforestation with native, climate change resistance species, inventorying public trees through imaging, establishing management plans to expand urban forests.

Application information:: [treesilience-guidelines-louisiana.pdf \(nature.org\)](https://www.nature.org/usa/landscapes/urban-forests/louisiana-treesilience-program-grants)



It's Official!

April is Native Plant Month

On March 20, 2024, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution which designated April as National Native Plant Month for the fourth year in a row. This year all 50 states have signed laws, resolutions, or proclamations. Louisiana HB 356 passed unanimously on May 23, 2024 which recognized April as Native Plant Month.

LNPS Board Member, Caitlin Robbins, spoke on our behalf in order to support the Proclamation at the Louisiana Legislature Committee Hearing



The national logo is a Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*.



ONGOING ACTIVITIES

1. The Louisiana Native Plant Society has submitted a resolution to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) about “Managing Roadside Mowing for Wildlife Habitat Benefits” that will be voted on at the August 16-17 LWF 85th Annual Convention in Lafayette.
2. Dona Weifenbach is heading up a team to design and implement a certification program by which local landscape professionals are trained to understand the ecology of, identify, design with, propagate and maintain native plant landscapes. This program would create a listing/directory of those successfully completing the instruction and their level of certification, easing the process for homeowners, municipalities and government entities of finding qualified and knowledgeable professionals in this field.
3. Briarwood Bio Bash, Friday August 2 through Sunday August 4. For information and registration go to [Briarwood Bio Bash \(briarwoodnp.org\)](http://briarwoodnp.org)

DIVE DEEP INTO NATURE AT THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF CAROLINE DORMON

The Briarwood Bio Bash is a unique event and opportunity for all ages. Participants will have the privilege to attend different workshops outlining everything from edible mushrooms to learning how to create a pollinator garden. We have remarkable individuals from across Louisiana who will be presenting these workshops. Participants are also asked to join the iNaturalist BioBlitz.



Bob Dillmuth—LNPS Past President

Oral History Recording found at the link below:

[Oral Histories - LMNGBR](#)

Bob talks about his work with early recycling programs at LSU, his long-time commitment to Hilltop Arboretum, and his first LNPS Conference, later serving as President.

New Venue for 2025 LNPS Conference

Acadiana Baptist Center

Acadiana Baptist Center is in the small village of Richard, 37 miles northwest of Lafayette and 15 minutes southeast of Eunice (home of CPHPS prairie restoration site). Lodges, dormitories, RV spaces, tent camping and cabins will be available to rent.



On the 93-acre compound, many trails afford views of the abundant native plants.

Mark your calendar for February 14-16, 2025 for the next LNPS Conference at the Acadiana Baptist Center.

2024-25 OFFICERS

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LNPS NOTICES

1. If you are interested in the **Louisiana Certified Habitat Program**, please email louisianacertifiedhabitat@gmail.com for more information and to receive the application.
2. The Board of Directors has once again allocated monies to fund **grants** to assist native plant related projects and research. Details will be announced along with instructions on how to apply in September. So stay tuned.

Newsletter Co-Editors may be contacted as follows:

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Wendy Rihner, wrihner@gmail.com

Janie Braud, jlbraud@gmail.com

The deadline for newsletter articles, etc. is November 15 for the next LNPS newsletter. Any article involving native plants is welcomed.



Buttonbush—*Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Cardinal Flower—*Lobelia cardinalis*



Annual LNPS Dues

Circle one: Individual, \$10. Student/Senior, \$5. Family, \$15. Organization, \$25. Sustaining, \$50. Corporate, \$100.

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