



Connecting people, science, and nature for
a healthy Delaware River and Bay

Perennial Pages

Gardens for Clean Water: A Seasonal
Newsletter for Habitat Owners and Caretakers



Autumn Greetings 🍁

The first signs of fall come with sycamores and black walnuts dropping their leaves and maybe you've already spotted a sumac or maple beginning to turn bright red. As we look toward the changing of the season, we prepare our gardens for the cold days ahead.

This fall issue will look at some interesting native species, an awesome insect, and seasonal maintenance reminders.



Agastache 'Blue Fortune' with fading blooms offering late season forage
for native bees in Newark, DE. (Photo: Kaitie Evers)

Time for Action: Fall 2023

Leaves dance on the breeze, the evenings chill, and pumpkin spice lattes abound! Fall is here and that means it's time to put your garden beds and

It's quite easy to do – or not do!

- Leave the leaves, stems, and seeds. This dying and dead roughage makes great habitat for insects like mourning cloak butterflies for winter hibernation, and leftover leaves help blanket and insulate the ground from the frosts to come. Additionally, letting your final blooms go to seed to will provide food for birds like American goldfinches.
- Plant any woody additions to your gardens. Since it's too cool to trigger growth at the shoots, your new plant will focus energy on establishing strong roots in the fall.

As always, check previous issues of Perennial Pages for even more tips and tricks!



Halloween Pennant Dragonfly (*Celithemis eponina*);
(Flickr: Ken Slade)

Halloween Pennant Dragonfly

Need a Scary Costume?

Consider dressing as a Halloween pennant dragonfly, (*Celithemis eponina*), the orange and black banded terror of the sky. Halloween



Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) stem with 'wings' and berry shown (Photo: Mykola Swarnyk via Wikipedia Commons)

Space Invaders

Invasive Species Spotlight

Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), also known as 'Winged Euonymus' is an invader introduced by the nursery trade. Their blazing bright red fall foliage makes it an attractive

voracious predators that snatch unsuspecting gnats, flies, mosquitos or other flying insects right out of the sky. some of the best in the insect world – they are master hunters and are great at pest control. Halloween pennants and other dragonflies are born vicious, beginning life in the water as an aquatic nymph (i.e., juvenile). They wait in the depths of the water and ambush anything that fits in their hinged lower jaw. Their prey includes tadpoles, snails, little fish, other young dragonflies, and insects including mosquito larvae.

Want to encourage these stunning creatures in your garden? Install a small pond allowing them to breed, making sure to include native aquatic plants. If you can't have a pond, no worries. Even at a mile away from the water, you are within the flight range of most dragonflies. If you create a space with a diversity of native plants, then you'll attract the pennant dragonfly's dinner.

[Learn More](#)

ornamental, but homeowners beware! This bush is a noxious alien invader that has now become widespread in the forests of 25 states, displacing and outcompeting many native species.

How can you identify this invader? Look for distinctive corky 'wings' on its stems, a trademark feature in the above photo. Keep a look out for these bushes and remove them from your landscape, but be sure to scan the surrounding ground where you find them. There is bound to be a mass of seedlings spreading on the forest floor nearby, so if possible, pick those up too!

Our recommendation is to champion and plant native flora that also offer gorgeous fall displays. There are is a vast array of native bushes, like Virginia sweetspire or Winterberry holly, which also provide picturesque fall colors in your garden.

[Learn More](#)



Burning Bush (Euonymus alatus). The blazing red fall foliage makes this invader easy to spot. (Photo: Adobe Stock Photo #417674278)



Virginia Sweetspire (Itea virginica). This native option also offers beautiful red foliage and is a better option for native landscapes (Photo: The Spruce: David Beaulieu)

PDE News



The Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) celebrates 20 years! Join this free event to learn more about the history and collaborations that turned the SAN into a nationally recognized model of success!

[Learn More](https://bit.ly/SANnual23)

Thanks to Our Partner

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc., received financial support from the EPA under an Assistance Agreement funded by the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support this work.

