



# Cattails



7130 Marshy Point Road, Middle River, MD 21220  
www.marshypoint.org  
410-887-2817

## The Marshy Point Nature Center Council Newsletter June - July - August 2019

*The Summer Solstice Faerie Festival will feature a variety of live music, dancing, bubbles, magicians, fairies, goblins, renowned craft vendors, and winged things both common and uncommon. Activities for humans and faeries of all ages include wildlife encounters, parades, drum circles, faerie and gnome villages, storytellers, and much more! Purchase tickets at:*

*www.marshypoint.org*



## 18th Annual Members Picnic-Tuesday, June 18, 2019, 6-8 p.m.



Will Play for Fish

### You are invited to the Members Picnic!

Light dinner served!  
Bring an appetizer or dessert to Share!

Music by "Will Play for Fish"  
(Tom Reedy, Lisa Roberts, Amy Hopkins)

Free for Members, Join Now! \$25 (Family) \$15 (Individual) Membership

Please call the office to R.S.V.P. by June 14th  
(No Walk-ins, Space is limited), 410-887-2817

Summer in Maryland means tomatoes. There’s nothing like them—tomatoes on sandwiches, in salads, in soups, in stews. Tomatoes, sweet and warm from the vine, plucked fresh from our gardens. And from our neighbors’, from our in-laws’, from our coworkers’... Tomatoes. I can’t wait till the season is here, and then I’m not sure what to do with their abundance.

Canning those red beauties gives us a bit of summer year-round. Canning is a lot easier than most people think, and homemade canned tomatoes are healthier than store-bought tinned tomatoes, with more vitamins and no added sugar. Plus, if you get your tomatoes at harvest-time prices, they are a fraction of the cost.

Tomatoes can be either pressure-canned or water-bathed, also know as steam-canned. This is the method described here. Regardless of your choice of canning, you need a small amount of an acidic substance added to prevent the growth of bacteria.

You will need the following equipment:

a boiling water-bath canner	two large saucepans
jars with lids and bands, pint- or quart-sized	an acidifying agent
fresh, firm tomatoes	canning salt, optional



The first step is to choose your tomatoes. What kind of tomatoes can be canned? Pretty much any variety: slicing tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, Roma... as long they are firm and spot-free.

Now you need to decide which ingredient you will use to acidify your tomatoes. Here is a useful chart from the University of Minnesota.

Acidifier	Pros / Cons	Amount
citric acid	not always easy to find little change in flavor	¼ tsp per pint ½ tsp per quart
bottled lemon or lime juice	easy to get and use	1 tbsp per pint 2 tbsp per quart
vinegar (5% or higher)	easy to get and use noticeable change in flavor	2 tbsp per pint 4 tbsp per quart

Now you need to sterilize your jars. This not only prevents the development of bacteria, it keeps mold from forming. First, examine sealing surfaces of lids and jars to make sure they are smooth. Wash everything in hot, soapy water and rinse well. Leave jars in hot water until needed. Put your sealing surfaces in a saucepan of water and simmer until needed.

Next you need to prepare your tomatoes. Tomatoes can be canned whole, in half, in quarters, diced or crushed. It is advised that you peel tomatoes before canning. This is quite simple: scald in boiling water for thirty seconds to five minutes (depending on the size of the tomato and toughness of its skin) until the skins crack and start coming off. Then plunge them into a pan, sink, or large bowl of very cold water. The skins will pull off easily. Once cool enough to be handled, dice, quarter, or half, unless canning whole. If you are not canning whole, you should core the tomatoes. This means to cut out where the tomato was attached to the stem. Removing the seeds is a matter of taste. Leaving the seeds leaves more nutrition but also more water, so keep that in mind.

At this point, you are ready to begin the canning process. Remove one jar from the hot water and drain. Add your choice of acidifier according to the amounts outlined above. Pack the warm tomatoes into the jar, leaving a half-inch space at the top. Pour hot cooking liquid over tomatoes, just covering them, making sure to leave a half-inch space. Add salt if using, a half teaspoon per pint or one teaspoon per quart.

Run a plastic or wooden spatula between the tomatoes and jar to release any trapped air, and wipe top and threads of jar with a clean, damp cloth. Remove a lid from the simmering water and place it flat on top of the jar to seal. Then screw the band down evenly and firmly.

*Continued.*

Repeat this process with all your jars. As each jar is filled, stand it on the rack in the canner of hot—not boiling—water. Make sure there is enough water to cover the jars by one to two inches. Add additional water as necessary. Once the canner is full, put the cover on and bring the water to a boil.

Process jars at a gentle but steady boil. Here is a chart to give you the general idea of how long the various types of processing takes.

Type of product	1 pint	1 quart
whole/half tomatoes, in tomato juice	85 minutes	85 minutes
whole/half tomatoes, in water	45 minutes	50 minutes
diced tomatoes, in tomato juice	75 minutes	75 minutes
diced tomatoes, in water	40 minutes	45 minutes
crushed tomato sauce	40 minutes	45 minutes
tomato paste	35 minutes	40 minutes

When the processing is complete, using tongs, carefully remove the jars from the canner and set them on a wooden or cloth surface, away from any drafts, placing the jars several inches apart. Do not retighten the bands. Allow the jars to cool about twelve hours.

Once cool, remove the bands and test one of the lids to make sure it is sealed. Wash the outside surface of the jar and store in a dry, dark, cool place.

## Queen Anne's Lace

Anna Stoll



During the heat of summer we see lovely Queen Anne's lace flowers blooming along roadsides and in open fields. Some consider it a weed and to others it's a wild-flower. Queen Anne's lace is native to Europe and southwest Asia, and it has become naturalized throughout most of the United States. It was named for Queen Anne of England, who died in 1714. If you look closely at the flower, you'll see a dark red floret near the center. According to legend, this is the drop of blood shed by Queen Anne while she was tatting lace.

The scientific name for Queen Anne's lace is *daucus carota*, and like its cultivated cousin, the carrot, Queen Anne's lace is biennial. The leaves come up during the first year and bear a strong resemblance to the lacy foliage of carrots. The flowers appear in the second year. As the flowers dry up they curl inward, forming what looks like a small "bird's nest," which is another common name for the flower. The root smells like a carrot, and although it's edible the texture is tough and has none of a cultivated carrot's sweetness. The roots have been used for various medicinal purposes, and eighteenth-

century colonists made wine from them.

Because of the beauty of the flowers, Queen Anne's lace is sometimes planted in gardens and used in bouquets. The plants will grow easily in poor soil and require little watering. Remember, though, that they are highly invasive and will quickly take over a garden or lawn. Deadheading the flowers helps to keep them under control.

If you decide to pick wild Queen Anne's lace for a bouquet, there are two things you must remember. The first is that handling the plant can cause an allergic reaction in some people. The second is that Queen Anne's lace bears a strong resemblance to poison hemlock, a plant in the same family. Poison hemlock is toxic and can cause a serious allergic reaction when handled, and ingestion of any part of the plant by a person or animal will cause serious illness and could lead to death if not treated quickly. So how can you tell the difference between Queen Anne's lace and poison hemlock? The stems of Queen Anne's lace are green and covered with fine hairs, but poison hemlock stems are smooth and covered with purple blotches. Also, Queen Anne's lace is generally one to three feet in height, but poison hemlock can grow to eight feet or higher.

## Naturalist Report

Ben Porter

A connection to the natural world may mean different things for each of us, but there is no doubt about its basic importance. The great conservationist Rachel Carson wrote that, "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." Every day at Marshy Point, we are fortunate enough to share the sense of wonder with students and other children who visit the Nature Center—with school field trips, the Chesapeake Adventurers, and walk-in visitors.



Those of us with a few more years and a few more cares might find ourselves a bit more distant from the sense of wonder at times. Reestablishing this connection to nature is a way to renew, refocus and rejuvenate oneself. Marshy Point is an ideal place to connect to nature and realize that we do not exist in isolation from but rather as a part of the world around us.

Marshy Point offer opportunities every day that are sure to awaken your sense of wonder. Whether your connection to nature is best established by taking early morning photos (like mine), birding, hiking, paddling, or coming to a program or special event the opportunities abound at Marshy Point. In addition to our many weekend family programs we have some exciting special programs upcoming.

The [Summer Solstice Faerie Festival](#) will be held on June 22 and 23 to celebrate the magic of nature and the Summer season with live music, dancing, renowned vendors, and a variety of winged things. After 27 years at Spoutwood Farm in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania I'm very excited about Marshy Point being the new home for the country's longest running Faerie Festival.

For the youngest of all, Marshy Point is also now accepting registrations for the [Chesapeake Adventurers Pre-K](#) for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. From our start last spring, this program has been an amazing journey for our students, volunteers, and staff. By popular request the program will now run to mirror a full academic school year.

No matter how old you are or how you connect to nature, Marshy Point has something to offer!

## Osprey Update

Dave Oshman



It was a very exciting spring for the Marshy Point osprey. To begin with, the osprey came a bit later than expected and was much later in beginning to build the nest. They begin in mid-March, but this year, they started nest building on March 29th. By April 5th they were putting the finishing touches on it (primarily softer grasses in the center in preparation for eggs). On April 10th, we noticed a duck sitting on the nest and then later realized it had laid an egg. A female osprey continually flew at it and it eventually gave up, leaving the egg in the nest. Within a couple of days, the scavengers (in this case, crows) took care of the duck egg. Over the next two weeks, we watched up to five different ospreys flying around Dundee Creek. We'd often see a female begin to sit in the nest (along with a male stopping by for copulation) and then

shortly thereafter watch a different female chase the first from the nest. One of our community members, Mike McCloskey, took some dramatic pictures of the excitement. This has been seen over and over again. At the time this article was written (April 25th), there were no eggs in the nest. It's suspected that this is due to the territorial spats going on, but we are hoping that we see some eggs soon. If not, it will be an interesting development in the history of the Dundee Creek osprey.

## Support Marshy Point Nature Center

The Marshy Point Nature Center scholarships are presented yearly to college-bound seniors and undergraduate college students who have shown a high level of commitment to the health of the environment and who plan to continue their studies in environmental sciences or nature education, and who have shown a strong affiliation with Marshy Point Nature Center. Qualified applicants are college-bound seniors from Baltimore County or undergraduate college students who wish to pursue a career in nature education or environmental sciences. Applications will be available online ([www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org)) or by calling the Center.

## President's Update

Dave Oshman

I certainly hope you were able to visit our Spring Festival on April 20<sup>th</sup>. It seemed like the better part of Baltimore County was there as this was our most well-attended festival to date. Despite rain threatening in the morning, it turned out to be a fantastic day. The new hayride to the Easter Egg hunting grounds was a big hit.

Please check our calendar for all of the wonderful events we have planned throughout the summer. We're proud and pleased to announce that Marshy Point Nature Center will be the new home for the Spoutwood Farm Faerie Festival on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. With a change of venue and date, the event will be known as the Summer Solstice Faerie Festival. If you're a longtime fan of fae, you'll no doubt already have your tickets purchased. If you're a fan of Marshy Point and want to have a fun-filled family-oriented weekend, you won't be disappointed. Tickets are available at [marshypoint.org](http://marshypoint.org).

## Spring Fest fun!



## Thank You Volunteers!

There is a running joke among the staff at Marshy Point that repeats every spring and summer about how we just couldn't add in anything else or be any busier. Each year we come to this conclusion and every following year we fondly remember how much less hectic things were the year before. The only way that this is possible is thanks to our volunteers.

Every year MPNC volunteers put in around 20,000 hours making Marshy Point this special place it is today. It takes a lot just to put on a festival, both the volunteers you see and the volunteers you don't. Visitors to Marshy Point might see our many volunteer exhibitors, demonstrators, musicians, and event help but it also couldn't happen without the volunteers who mowed the field, worked on the trails, set up the tents, prepared the crafts, and published the event to the website.

Each day volunteers at Marshy Point help with our programs, animal care, and a variety of behind the scenes work that keeps the nature center running. There are still many ways to help make this summer our best yet. If you'd like to get involved let us know! <https://www.marshypoint.org/contact-us/>

## Trail Guide Training



**We are looking for volunteers** to help teach about nature! Trail guides work with group programs, special events, and animal care. Training will familiarize you with our most popular programs, the ecology of Marshy Point & Cromwell Valley Parks and techniques to share more and teach less. Each day features new subjects for enjoying the great outdoors. All training sessions are 10am to 1pm, Sept 11, 12, 13. Breakfast, snacks and coffee provided. New guides pay a tuition fee of \$5 that covers all material handouts. Call 410-887-2817 to register.

### Marshy Point Newsletter Staff

Editor: Gerry Oshman  
Layout and Design: Ginny Elliott

Save the Date - 2019  
Fall Festival! September 28

Many people know the line from the Norwegian duo Ylvis's song, "What does the fox say," but few people know the sounds foxes really make. There are many barks, screams, yaps, and other sounds from foxes, and some of them we still don't know the reason for.

The first fox call I would like to mention is known as the "vixen's scream." But don't get confused! Even though a vixen is a female fox, male foxes (also known as reynards, dogs, and tods) also make this shrill, high scream. This call can be heard all year round, but it is more commonly heard in the mating season. Most foxes will ignore these calls altogether. Often the only fox who replies to this call is the fox's mate. Some say the Irish expression "screaming like a banshee" comes from villagers who heard the screams of owls and foxes in the night. Indeed, we often mistake the vixen's scream for the screeches of owls and even humans sounds. Many people would say that the vixen's scream is from nightmares, but it is amazing to listen to.

The second call I would like to explain is the alarm bark. It is most commonly used by red foxes, but arctic foxes and grey foxes also have a warning bark. The alarm bark is used by foxes to warn their kits or litter (also known as a kite) of oncoming danger. The alarm bark is similar to the vixen's scream; however, it is shorter and the calls are closer together.

The third bark is used by both kits and adult foxes. There is no official name for it yet, but it is known as the, "wow-wow-wow" bark. At around nineteen days old, kits will start to use this bark for attention. Adults use this as a contact call and will use this to greet each other from a distance. Normally, only mates will reply to these calls while others will ignore them.

There is also a call called gekkiring, which is a chattering sound made by two or more foxes while fighting or while kits are playing. It sounds a little like the noise your housecat makes when she sees the birds outside her window. During very aggressive fights, foxes will gekker in between screams.

Did you know that foxes make a sound very similar to purring? While foxes don't have the physical capacity to purr like cats, they have sounds that they make when content. Some sounds are more like a chirp or a squeal, but others make a vibrating noise that sounds very much like a cat's purr.

**Eastern Box Turtles of Maryland**

Bev Wall

Turtles are fascinating creatures. Of the over 244 species of turtles worldwide, nineteen species make their homes in Maryland, fitting into five different groups: Box and Water Turtles, Musk and Mud Turtles, Snapping Turtles, Softshell Turtles, and Sea Turtles. There are far too many different types of turtles to write about here, so this article will focus on the Eastern Box Turtle only, which is the largest family of turtles worldwide and can be found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Eastern Box Turtles live anywhere from eastern Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas to the Atlantic Ocean, from southern Maine to southern Florida. They have been observed in the Great Lakes region too, but that is a rare occurrence.



Eastern Box Turtles measure four and a half to six inches long. The eyes of the male are often red, making them easy to distinguish, while the females are brown. In certain isolated populations, male turtles may have blue patches on their cheeks, throat, and front legs. Their legs are stout and their feet are slightly webbed, with the front limbs having five toes and the back only four. They have high dome-shaped shells, known as the carapace, which are usually brownish or black with orange, red, or yellow markings. This shape makes it possible for them to completely close themselves inside their shells for protection. The male's underside, or plastron, is hinged and the female's is flat, making it easy for the male to fit over the back end of the female's carapace during mating season.

Eastern Box Turtles in Maryland usually mate in the spring, producing one clutch a year. The male is not monogamous and will mate with more than one female or even the same female multiple times. The female is able to store sperm for up to four years, so she doesn't necessarily mate every year. Some time during early summer, the female seeks a safe spot to dig her egg chamber. She digs the nest out with her hind legs, deposits her eggs, covers the hole with dirt, and simply walks away, never to check on her clutch again. Each clutch consists of two to eight eggs with an incubation period of eighty to one hundred and twenty days. The temperature of the nest determines the sex of the hatchlings. Warmer nests produce mostly females, while cooler nests produce mostly males. Eastern Box Turtles reach maturity in ten to twenty years and it's not unusual for them to live to be over 100 years old. They live in and around small ponds, non-tidal and tidal wetlands, woodlands, streams, rivers, and bogs, where they feast on a mixed diet of insects, seeds, berries, and occasionally, carrion. They are also known to eat snails, worms, slugs, and beetles. They are indigenous to deciduous forests and mixed forests where the bottomland is moist and there is brush and fallen leaves to hide under. While they love to stretch out on a log in the sun in early spring, they have the uncanny ability to fully emerge themselves in mud for days on end to escape the summer heat.

The Eastern Box Turtle has a brain the size of a lima bean, so it's surprising how astute and intelligent this turtle actually is. For their size and pace, it's amazing that they are able to travel fifty-five yards in a single day, always able to find their way home. They have a strong homing sense and should never be removed from their habitat. If you ever see an Eastern Box Turtle crossing the road (or anywhere else that might be dangerous for them), always help it in the direction it is heading.

# Sunset Summer Camp

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Beat the heat, explore woodlands, wetlands,  
and shallow creeks as nature gets ready for bed.

This is a drop-off evening camp.



**July 22 - 26, ages 5 to 7**  
**July 29 - August 2, ages 8 & 9**  
**August 5 - 9 ages, 10 to 12**

\$125 week, \$100 for members

To register call 410-887-2817 or visit our office Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm.



## CHESAPEAKE ADVENTURERS PRE-K

2019 Fall Session Registration Now Open



**DATES:** September 4 through December 20, Mon/Wed/Fri, 9:30am - 1:30pm  
15 weeks, (no program October 14, November 11 & 29)

**AGES:** 3,4,5 (must turn 3 by September 4, 2019 & be potty proficient)  
\$100/week \$90/week MPNC Members (due monthly)

**SAVE THE DATE:** Spring Session, January 6 to May 29 (age 3 by Sept. 4)

Alongside two Adventure Guides, children will journey through the forests, wetlands, and tidal creeks that make up Marshy Point. We will explore vernal ponds, play in meadows and climb trees. Along the way, we will discover the flora and fauna that surround us, allowing each child to make their own special connections with nature. To register call 410-887-2817 or visit our office Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm. Class size is limited to 15 and the first month's tuition is due upon registration. Questions about our program? Contact Bella Kline and Courtney Meadows at: [adventurers@marshypoint.org](mailto:adventurers@marshypoint.org)



Marysh Point Nature Center  
7130 Marysh Point Road  
Baltimore, MD 21220



## Wildlife Corner - Why We Love Birds

Valerie Greenhalgh



For my wildlife article this quarter, I thought it would be interesting to write about birds and why they are important. In my research, I expected to discover all the various ways in which they contribute to nature. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised to find that their importance, for most, comes from the simple joy that they bring to so many.

Take the majestic eagle. Its sheer size and fierce facial features are jaw-dropping. Or the beautiful painted bunting, whose vivid colors resemble the brightest of rainbows. There's the silly, smart crow, whose antics make him a popular subject of online videos (including one that shows a crow in Russia repeatedly sledding down a roof!). And the thick-billed murre, which can dive nearly 700 feet underwater. Or the natural-born fisherman—the osprey (Check out our own MPNC osprey!), with its powerful curved talons and phenomenal vision. Let's not forget the peregrine falcon, which can zoom downward through the air at speeds that sometimes exceed 250 mph! And who doesn't love owls? Not only are they incredibly beautiful in an eerie sort of way, but they are a marvel of nature with their keen binocular vision and specialized feathers that allow them to fly silently through the air. Maybe best of all is the unmatched music of songbirds. There's no better alarm clock in the morning than a symphony of singing birds.

Of course, birds do serve other important purposes. Some eat insects and rodents, some pollinate plants and spread seeds, and many others are a source of food for a variety of animals. But when you think about all that they add to our lives—everything from beauty, majesty, amazement, music, and entertainment, to peace and joy, their real value is clear.