



## COCHRAN MILL NATURE CENTER

# The Millstone

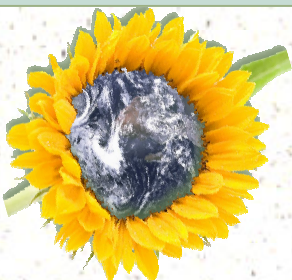
**T**he Millstone is a publication of Cochran Mill Nature Center.

To receive print copies contact Cochran Mill Nature Center at 770-306-0914 or [cmnc@bellsouth.net](mailto:cmnc@bellsouth.net)

**Our Mission** is to encourage community awareness and active environmental stewardship through education and wildlife rehabilitation programs.

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## Meet Olive.....

Cochran Mill Nature Center has had resident birds of prey since its inception. Our birds are all permanently injured and have been used to teach visitors about their importance in the natural scheme of things. Our birds are not tame and have been used purely as visual teaching tools with visitors observing them in their exhibits. We have always wanted a bird that we could use for educating that we could actually handle and allow our students to have a closer encounter with. Well, our wish has been granted! We now have a bird that we can take out of its enclosure and show the students while holding it on our gloved hand. This enables our students and visitors to get a much more memorable and impactful up-close-and-personal experience with a bird of prey.

The new bird that I am referring to is "Olive" our new barn owl. Barn owls are a beautiful, distinctively marked and colored bird. The most noticeable feature is their overall light appearance and their white facial disc bordered by a dark heart-shaped ring of feathers. With their small dark eyes, they somewhat resemble a primate, giving them the common nickname of "monkey faced owl". Barn owls have one of the widest distributions in the bird world. They can be found pretty much everywhere in the world with the exception of some desert and polar areas. As their name implies, they often occupy man-made structures and frequently roost and nest in barns, attics, towers, mineshafts and abandoned buildings. In the wild they rarely survive past their second year due to accidents and predation. Larger owls are one of their biggest enemies. In captivity they have been reported to live up



to 25 years.

Olive came to us through the Southeastern Raptor Center in Auburn Alabama. She was originally found by someone that had cut a tree down. When they were chopping the tree up they found two baby owls. They took the babies home and tried to raise them, feeding them a diet of raw liver. After a period of time one of the babies began to go downhill and eventually died. This prompted the people to take the remaining baby to the raptor center. Upon examining the baby it was found to have fold fractures in the bones of its legs and wings. These broken bones were the result of an imbalanced diet. The raptor center was able to get the bone problems corrected and continued to raise the baby on a proper diet of rodents and mineral supplements. Unfortunately during the lengthy process of rehabilitation the baby became imprinted on its human caretakers. This is a condition where the baby animal, due to so much exposure to humans, loses its natural fear of people and actually craves and depends on human attention. Imprinting is something that rehabbers are very careful to avoid, as our main goal is to be able to release our patients back into the wild where they belong. However there are some rare instances where, no matter how careful we are, imprinting will occur. This is how and why Olive came to live and teach with us.

So the next time you get out to the center make sure you mosey on up to the bird of prey compound and say "Hi" to Olive!

Rick McCarthy

# FROM THE DIRECTOR:



It is not unusual that we get offers of volunteer labor. We appreciate each and every volunteer and the services they perform. Recently we got a call from Convergint Technologies out of Norcross. They have a company-wide volunteer day once a year and wanted to send some folks to us for that day. "Sure. Would love to have them", I said.

Well, not since the construction of the building in 1993-1994 have I seen a group of individuals work so hard and for so long as these folks. They descended upon the building at 7:00 a.m. with chain saws, wheelbarrows, trowels and drills. They dug, mowed, sawed and sprayed. From 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. they worked non-stop on the grounds and the building and did the work that it would take the staff weeks to accomplish.

Fifteen folks gave to the Center many, many hours on a very hot Friday. The Convergint Technology folks surprised us at the end of the day with hundreds of dollars of new outdoor equipment. That was the perfect end to a perfect day.

Thanks, guys, for your generosity and kindness. You know where to find us next year!

## SATURDAY SPOTLIGHT, A SUCCESS?

January of 2009 marked the beginning of what was at the time referred to as our Saturday Adult Programs. Now called Saturday Spotlight, we are in our second year of this program which has offered many great family programs on Saturdays such as Rain Barrel workshops, Composting workshops, Bats, and more.

With 2010 halfway through we are wondering if our Saturday Spotlight program will make it into a third year or not. Even with the incredible programs being offered our participants just aren't there. We have even offered a few programs and had zero participation! Hopefully this is temporary.

Saturday Spotlight programs are geared toward environmental issues and projects that you and/or your family might be interested in learning more about. They generally last about an hour and include a question and answer period at the end. Some of the programs include field work, hikes, and PowerPoint presentations. Some, like our Rain Barrel workshop or our Beekeeping presentation have you taking things home with you.

Another great thing about Saturday Spotlight programs at Cochran Mill Nature Center is that 100% of the proceeds earned from them goes to funding wildlife rehabilitation and environmental education! CMNC is a non-profit organization that relies on donations and grants to stay around.

So check out our line-up of great programs for the rest of 2010 on our website under the environmental education link.

## You Know you're a Naturalist or An Environmental Educator When.....

- You decorate your home with rocks, skulls, pinecones, and lichens.
- Your binoculars cost more than your car.
- You know all the words to "Bats Eat Bugs".
- You come up with a lesson plan every time you go for a walk.
- When someone says "you're outstanding in your field" and they literally mean that you are out standing in your field.

## Volunteers of The Month

January	Carlos Montano
February	Bobbie Laminack
March	Linda Mann
April	Stephanie Tobacco and The Saturday Rebels
May	Ted Wansley

### Please support those who support us!

**Carlos Montano of Casa Montano** in Fairburn has donated beautiful garden statuary items to the Nature Center for years now. Please visit his shop next time you're in Fairburn.

**His number is 770- 969-6466.**

**Dr. Justin Verner of Sweetwater Creek Animal Hospital** in Douglas County has been an invaluable help to CMNC and its wildlife rehabilitation program. Please consider him as your veterinarian if you are on the south side of town.

**His number is 678-838-7387.**

**Jim Reis of Event Photographer** of Fayetteville has photographed two of our annual events just beautifully. Jim and his staff are extremely professional and easy to work with. Please consider them for your next event or family portrait. Their number is 678-491-6222 or you can find them online at [www.besteventphotographer.com](http://www.besteventphotographer.com)

**Dr. Brad Wilson of Veterinary Clinic West** in Marietta has assisted us with injured animals for years. If you are on the north side of town, please consider giving Dr. Brad your business. His number is 770-424-5484.

**[www.theveterinaryclinic.net](http://www.theveterinaryclinic.net)**

**One More Generation** founded by Olivia (7) and Carter (9) Reis is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of endangered species. Their goal is to ensure all endangered species survive at least One More Generation...and beyond. We have been very fortunate to partner with this great organization! [www.OneMoreGeneration.org](http://www.OneMoreGeneration.org) 1-877-OMG-THANKS

**CALENDAR**

**JULY**

17 - Saturday Spotlight  
"Raptors in Flight"

**AUGUST**

14 - Saturday Spotlight  
"Water Quality Monitoring"

23 - Home School Day  
"Ecosystems in Action"

28 - Snake Day Festival

**SEPTEMBER**

19 - Home School Day  
"Granite Rock Outcroppings"

**OCTOBER**

18 - Home School Day  
"Reptiles"

22 - Halloween Hayride

**NOVEMBER**

13 - Saturday Spotlight  
"History of Cochran Mills"

**DECEMBER**

4 - Saturday Spotlight  
"Amphibian ARK"

20 - Home School Day

**CMNC Summer Camps**

Cochran Mill Nature Center has presented kids fresh out of school with the chance to escape into nature during the summer for countless years now. Children spend the greater part of their time here outside in nature. Each week they have the opportunity to hike, play in creeks, canoe, fish and have water fights with our local Chattahoochee Hills Fire Department. Each week also has a different topic so repeat campers are never bored. In fact many of our campers attend the entire summer! Being outside, in nature is crucial for every child's development and CMNC's summer camp program is a great way to meet that need.



This year we have implemented a few changes. First I would like to introduce our new camp director, Vicky Smith. Vicky's name or face may be familiar to some. She is also lovingly referred to as the "bat lady" not to be confused with batty lady! Vicky is the creator of A-Z Animals and owner of the charming Egyptian Fruit Bats on exhibit in our reptile room. She has lead and taught summer camps of her own on a large number of occasions and has brought a lot of energy, resourcefulness, and imagination to the table. Along with a handful of CMNC volunteers Vicky has transformed the basement classroom into an exciting environmental summer camp learning and exploring zone. The campers won't be spending much time in there though; Vicky

has planned an exciting program that will keep them on the go outside. That brings me to another change, our camp programming. Vicky has taken our tried and true method of having a different topic each week of camp and made it even better. She has freshened up the list of topics and brought in some entirely new ones as well. For instance, Session 2 is titled Record Setters and Rule Breakers. The campers learned about animals that set records. Who are the largest, smallest, or fastest? They will learn about animals that are different from what we expect them to be such as egg laying mammals, insects that give birth, and birds that don't fly. Campers will also dissect an owl pellet. These changes have us very excited! Come check them out for yourself!

Cochran Mill Nature Center summer camps are separated into three camps based on the camper's age. We offer a Camp Cricket for rising Kindergarten campers, a Teen Adventure Camp for rising 6th-9th graders, and our original, Junior Naturalist Summer Camp for rising 1st-5th. Our Camp Cricket is the only camp that **does not** continue until 3:00pm; it dismisses at 1pm.

So come, let your child spend their summer outside with us at Cochran Mill Nature Center! For more information and pictures you can visit our website at [www.cochranmillnaturecenter.org](http://www.cochranmillnaturecenter.org).

**Great Nature Books for Families and Children**

A Child's Introduction to the Night Sky: The Story of the Stars, Planets, and Constellations and How You Can Find Them in the Sky, Michael Driscoll (*Black Dog & Leventhal, 2004*)

Best Hikes with Children series, guides by geographic region (The Mountaineers)  
Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife, David Mizejewski (*Creative Homeowner, 2004*)

Backyard Bird Watching for Kids: How to Attract, Feed, and Provide Homes for Birds, George H. Harrison (*Willow Creek Press, 1997*)

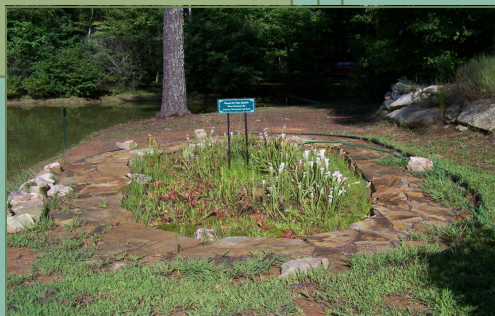
*There is new life in the soil for every man.  
There is healing in the trees for tired minds  
and for our overburdened spirits, there is  
strength in the hills, if only we will lift up  
our eyes. Remember that nature is your  
great restorer.*

*CALVIN COOLIDGE, speech,  
Jul. 25, 1924*

**Tips for Planting Your Bog Garden**

1. For a carnivorous plant bog, choose a spot where there will be at least 5 or 6 hours of direct sunlight. The more sun, the better.
2. Once you choose the size and shape of your garden, dig out the space to a depth of 12-14". The bottom of your hole should be flat and level or slightly sloped.
3. Line your hole with a commercial plastic pond or a rubber pond liner at least 4 mil thick. (If you are using a liner, it is good to leave an excess of 10-12" of extra liner around the outside top of the bog. This can later be covered with mulch, rocks, etc.)
4. Cover the bottom of your bog with 2-3" of wet river sand.
5. In a wheelbarrow or other container, mix river sand with peat to a 50-50 mix.
6. Add water to the container and mix until the peat/sand is thoroughly saturated. (It is easier to do this in smaller quantities in the wheelbarrow, as the peat is hard to get saturated).
7. Add the saturated peat/sand mix to the bog until it is about 1" from the top of the bog.
8. Allow a week or so for the mixture to settle and you are ready for planting.

**Important tip:** Although your bog doesn't have to be constantly soaking, you really don't want your soil to dry out. You will need to monitor the moisture levels during hot summer months or prolonged periods of drought. Installing a soaker hose is a great way to avoid over drying. Rain water is the best way to go, so installing a rain barrel nearby to collect rainwater from a roof and hosing it to your bog could be the optimal solution.



**Come Out and See Our Bog Garden**

What's a bog garden you ask? There are different types of bogs in nature. For the most part they are usually moist to wet areas with soil that is often lacking in nutrients. Due to the special qualities of these bogs, many plants and animals have developed unusual adaptations in order to survive and sometimes thrive under these unique and, often less than optimal conditions. In order to compensate for the lack of nutrients in the soil many plants have gone so far as to develop a hankering for a little meat in their diets! Many of the plants that we know as "carnivorous" plants happen to inhabit these nutrient poor bogs.

Our bog garden was built by first choosing the sunniest location we could find on our property. Then we dug a large hole approximately 15' long by 8' wide by about 18" deep. This hole was then lined with a heavy duty commercially made rubber pond liner. The next step was to fill the lined hole with a 50-50 mix of river sand and peat. This was a bit of a lengthy process as the peat tends to be real dry and "floaty" until it has time to absorb water. Therefore the next step was to saturate the sand/peat mix with water and let things settle down for a bit. We then contacted our friends at Atlanta Botanical Gardens and were graciously given many flats of carnivorous and other associated bog plants. This initial planting took place early in the spring of 2009. The plants took root and prospered beyond our expectations.

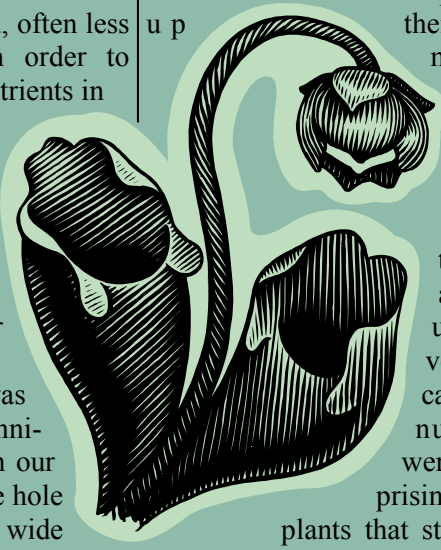
The bog was actually quite

impressive in its debut summer. Our only problem of note was that once the pitcher plant flowers started shooting skywards, the deer would nibble them off and we were not able to enjoy a single flower! Once the summer wound down and winter began to creep in we could see the plants finishing up their strong summer growth as they began to die down for their winter dormancy.

Well, this spring they all sprang back up with a vengeance and came back in numbers that were totally surprising! There were plants that started with perhaps a half a dozen individuals last summer that came back with perhaps fifty plants this spring! Also there are plants up this year that we didn't even know we had!

So, if you find yourself with a little spare time on your hands and would like to get outside and enjoy nature a little bit, stop on down and visit CMNC and check out the wonders of our bog garden. We have nearly 20 different species of carnivorous plants such as pitcher plants, butterworts, sundews and Venus flytraps (which are blooming as I write this) as well as some orchid species and other interesting plants.

Rick McCarthy



*"Flowers are beautiful hieroglyphics of nature, with which she indicates how much she loves us."  
--Wolfgang von Goethe*

# Composting Tips

**DO Compost:**

- grass clippings
- leaves
- shrub prunings
- flowers
- sawdust
- fruit scraps
- vegetable scraps
- coffee grounds
- tea bags
- shredded uncoated paper
- pine needles
- egg shells

**DO NOT Compost:**

- butter
- lard
- mayonnaise
- oil
- meat
- milk
- peanut butter
- salad dressing
- fish scraps
- dog manure
- chicken
- cheese
- cat manure
- bones

Symptoms	Problem	Solution
Bad Odor	Too Wet	Add Browns
Bad Odor	Not Enough Air	Turn Pile
Center is Dry	Not Enough Water	Moisten and Turn
Pile Only Warm In Middle	Pile Too Small	Mix Into Larger
Will Not Heat Up	Lack of Nitrogen	Mix in Nitrogen Source

**Your Basic Compost Recipe:**

1. **Chop** compostables.
2. **Mix** 2/3 dry brown material with 1/3 moist green.
3. **Add** water as you build your pile.

**Uses For Compost Include:**

- soil amendment
- mulching
- potting mix

**Potting Soil Recipe**

- 1/3 Compost
- 1/3 Coarse Sand
- 1/3 Ground Pine Bark



# Georgia Gardening with Native Plants

Why grow native plants? What plants are native to this area? What exactly is a native plant? Where can I find plants that are native to my area for my planting



the amounts of kudzu in Georgia knows the destruction of a non-native invasive species. Native plants have natural predators that keep them in check

So how do I find out what plants are

needs? So what are native plants? Native plants are plants that grew naturally in an area before humans began to bring in outside plants. These native plants have adapted to the climate and particular conditions of an area and became a part of the ecosystem. Of course a plant could be native to the entire area of North America or it could be native to just one little town.

native to my area? There are many websites on the internet today that are geared toward the native gardener. There are also plant nurseries springing up all over the place that specialize in native gardening. Please make sure that you are purchasing from a reputable plant dealer though to ensure you are not buying plants that are endangered. It is illegal to harvest endangered plant species!

Why should I grow and garden with native plants? I really like some of the non-native varieties! One great reason is that they are easier! Native plants are already accustomed to your soil, temperature, rain or lack thereof, and predators. They will also not require as much fertilizing if any because they have already adapted their own methods of getting the nutrients they need to survive. A native plant is rarely invasive. And anybody that has sighed at

**Check out these websites for more information.**

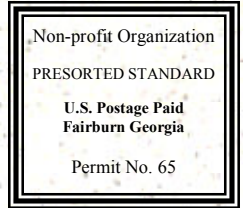
- [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com)
- [www.plantnative.org](http://www.plantnative.org) - Find Out What Plants Are Native To Georgia
- [www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org) - Native Plant Society of Georgia



Melissa Laughner



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# THE MILLSTONE

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We're on the Web!  
*See us at:*

[cochranmillnaturecenter.org](http://cochranmillnaturecenter.org)

**Become a member today!**  
**http://**  
**www.cochranmillnaturecenter.**  
**org/membership\_app.htm**

## About Our Organization....

Our Vision is to be the dynamic resource center for outstanding environmental education and wildlife rehabilitation, serving our diverse communities within the Atlanta Southern Crescent region. CMNC will also be recognized for providing fun, flexible, thought-provoking programs and exhibits.

Our Values: CMNC priorities are to:

1. Instill environmental stewardship in future generations
2. Educate our communities and members in environmental conservation and protection
3. Support dedicated Volunteers, Staff, and Board of Directors, who possess a desire to serve our diverse community
4. Provide humane treatment of the wildlife under our care

## Our Staff:

Maribeth Wansley, Executive Director  
Rick McCarthy, Wildlife Specialist  
Melissa Laughner, Environmental  
Education Coordinator

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children. "

-- John James Audubon