

2023

DELAWARE

NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

Plant of the Year

This year marks Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association's Twenty-Ninth Annual Plant of the Year selection. The 2023 Herbaceous plant is *Spigelia marilandica*. The 2023 Woody plant is *Cephalanthus occidentalis*. These plants were chosen because they are particularly well suited to thrive in Delaware.

Spigelia marilandica Indian Pink



Photo courtesy of North Creek Nurseries

Spigelia marilandica is a underutilized native gem. It can be found from New Jersey south to Florida and west to Texas growing on deeply wooded slopes and streambanks. Indian Pink has trumpet-shaped red flowers with yellow insides that flare to form five pointed yellow stars at the tip of the bloom. It flowers in early summer with sporadic rebloom through the growing season and is an absolute hummingbird-magnet. The genus name honors Adrian van der Spiegel (1578-1625), professor of anatomy at Padua. Indian Pink prefers moist soil but will tolerate wet soils. It works well in shaded

border fronts, shade gardens and woodland gardens.



Photo courtesy of North Creek Nurseries

Cephalanthus occidentalis Buttonbush

Buttonbush is a native, deciduous shrub with an open-rounded habit. It occurs most frequently in wet open areas, low woods, thickets, swamps, upland sink-hole ponds, river bottomland and stream/pond margins. Flowers are fragrant and appear in white, spherical flower heads. Long, projecting styles give the flower heads a distinctively pincushion-like appearance. Some people say the flower looks like an exploding firework. Flower heads are very attractive to hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insect pollinators. They mature into hard spherical ball-like fruits that persist throughout the winter. Buttonbush is one of the few woody shrubs that tolerates standing water, so it makes a great rain garden plant. If plants become unmanageable, they may be cut back near to the ground in early spring to revitalize.



Photo courtesy of Rick Darke