

Greetings fellow MNPS Members!

I'd like to start by welcoming **Kirsten Hoffman** to the MNPS Board of Directors. Kirsten has jumped in with both hands and feet to fill a much-needed role as Treasurer. We're thrilled to have her help and we look forward to working with her to advance MNPS's mission. Learn more about Kirsten in our Welcome (p. 22). And, please check out this month's "Members Spotlight" (p. 23) featuring two MNPS members—**Alba Tirado** and **Liz McDowell**. These two heroes have each contributed in exceptional and unique ways to educate people about native plants and their important role in ecological systems.



The board has chosen the Apiaceae (aka the Celery, Carrot, or Parsley Family—illustrating why Latin names are better!) as its Family of the Year for 2024 (see article on p. 5). I am looking forward to learning more about this diverse family of about 54 species in Maryland including 36 native and 18 non-native species (5 of which are well known invasives). Members of this family have diverse lifestyles: the native understory species Hairy Sweet-cicely (*Osmorhiza claytonii*) greens up in the winter to capture sunlight; the native and beautiful Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) blooms in the spring; and the non-native invasive Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) is very difficult to eradicate; and all of them grow on my property.

We've got a great lineup of speakers and events (see p. 24, Upcoming Events), including a few which will highlight citizen

science projects and how you—our members and the public—are driving a new understanding of the natural world through the use of apps like iNaturalist and EDDMapS (see article on p. 16). In this vein, we are excited about our upcoming MNPS Plant Blitz in May—a series of field trips, talks, and trainings to increase plant observations in our state, in partnership with the Maryland Biodiversity Project (see article on page 14). During the field trips, and whenever you are out and about, we encourage you to use the iNaturalist app to record observations of native and non-native plants that may then be included in the MBP database or in other projects and studies. We especially call on the deep knowledge of our members to help with identifications of plants when they make or view an observation in iNaturalist. We are offering an iNaturalist training session via Zoom on April 23 (see mdflora.org/events).

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events and hope that you will be inspired to start or continue to participate via iNaturalist or in other ways to add to our collective knowledge and stewardship of native plants here in Maryland. Every one of us has something to contribute and our knowledge grows exponentially when we learn from each other.

Lauren Hubbard, *MNPS President*

