

Portrait of Our Artist



Tina Thieme Brown
in her studio.

For many years, a signature feature of the Maryland Native Plant Society's publications has been the beautiful botanical artwork by Tina Thieme Brown, accompanied by Melanie Choukas-Bradley's lively and carefully researched descriptions of the illustrated plants. Tina and Melanie are both longtime and active MNPS members. Their collaboration and friendship encompass more than 10 years of studying and working on Sugarloaf Mountain, during which time they have created two art-filled Sugarloaf Mountain guides: *Sugarloaf: The Mountain's History, Geology and Natural Lore*, and *Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Wildflowers and Trees: 350 Plants Observed at Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland*.



Rhododendron periclymenoides

Wild Hyacinth

In this edition of Marilandica we would like you to get to know Tina Thieme Brown and her Morningstar Studio in Barnesville, in the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain. In addition to having the mountain for her neighbor, she is surrounded by the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, in which she is an active board member of two civic organizations.



Lobelia cardinalis Cardinal flower

Solidago bicolor

Silver-rod



CUTLEAVED-TOOTHWORT - DENTARIA LACINIATA



Phlox divaricata



Monarda didyma Lamiaceae



Blue Lobelia *Lobelia siphilitica*
Campanulaceae

Tina's academic and artistic career includes fieldwork at *Finca La Selva*, a field station of the Organization for Tropical Studies located in the Costa Rican rainforest. There she focused on cryptic coloration in the understory of the rainforest and worked with a team studying the prey/predator relationships of pit vipers. Her field drawings and research informed the environmental art installation *Finca La Selva* which depicted species at risk, ecosystem relationships and scientific research in the Costa Rican rainforest by scientists at Washington University and the Missouri Botanic Garden. Tina also volunteered at the Sea Otter Rescue Center in Seward, Alaska, following the Exxon Valdez oil spill. She used that experience to inspire the *Exxon Valdez Environmental Impact Installation* and to work with the Sierra Club staff on Capitol Hill to defeat legislation that would have opened the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling. Tina also has been a botanical art instructor at the US Botanic Garden, workshops at the Walden Institute at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, and teaches botany and garden sketching for the Brookside School of Botanical Art.

Tina's artwork reflects a commitment to sharing her love and understanding of nature. She knows firsthand that experience with the natural world is personally enriching and that it inspires a passion for conservation. At art workshops in her Barnesville studio, Tina teaches art as a way of seeing nature. And she leads hikes on Sugarloaf Mountain, teaching about its plants and plant communities to bring participants into direct contact with the natural world.

For the time being the many demands on Tina's time and talent require her to take a sabbatical from her gorgeous contributions to Marilandica. Stay in touch with her website —www.tinathiemebrown.com—to see her work and for information about scheduling a studio visit appointment. Morningside Art Studio is also open three times a year on the Country-side Artisans Studio Tour.

- Carolyn Fulton