

Wildflowers

THE BULLETIN OF THE
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF W. PA.

October 1989

OCTOBER MEETING

Our next meeting Monday, October 9, 8 P.M. - will be held at Trinity Hall, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Ave., Oakland.

The program will be given by our past-president, Tim Manka. His subject will be "Creepy Crawlers".

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Our final field trip of the season is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 1:30 P.M. If you have any questions, call our Field Trip Chairman, Scott Shriver, at 741-9249.

10-7-89 - RED MUD HOLLOW ROAD & NORTH PARK, ALLEGHENY CTY.

Meet at the parking lot next to the Mt. Nebo Exit of I-79. With some luck, the Pinesap (*Monotropa hypopithyes* var. *rubra*) along Red Mud Hollow Road will still be in good shape. At North Park a large stand of Closed Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) should be in prime bloom. Hope to see all members on this our 1989 season finale field trip.

- Scott Shriver

A FINAL MESSAGE FOR 1989

In the autumn of the year, all true wildflower enthusiasts experience distress in knowing that snowflakes will soon whisk another season of botanizing to a close. Such is the case with our 1989 botanical season, my first as field trip chairman. I feel, however, that the outing season cannot come to a peaceful end unless we pay tribute to those indispensable individuals who made 1989 a success - the field trip leaders. These are people who gave of their time and expertise (at their own expense) to share some superb botanical experiences with other members. Heartfelt thanks to all members who acted as field trip leaders this year, especially Mark Bowers, Ted Grisez, Doug Jolley, Bob Morgan, and Al Shriver, who each led 2 field trips. Special thanks to Esther Allen, who not only led 2 great field trips this year, but also proved indispensable in assisting me in planning virtually all 27 of our 1989 excursions afield.

- Scott Shriver

AND NOW A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Scott Shriver, in his characteristic modesty, downplays his role in making our 1989 field trip program such an outstanding success. We know better. We had such a great year strictly because of our chairman's dedication, not to mention the many hours of effort he put into this exacting job.

I agree with my friend, Marie Mellinger of the Georgia Botanical Society, who wrote, "You really have some great field trips!"

We all owe Scott a vote of thanks, and I suggest that we increase his compensation for next year by 50 per cent.

- Bob Bahl

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

The Botanical Society of W. Pa. is 103 years old this month. The first meeting of our society was held on October 7, 1886.

BOTANICAL TRIP - 8-5-89

It is truly amazing that Esther can grow so many wildflowers in her yard. Most of this land was formerly a dry, shaley hillside - which she and Dave built up by bringing in ground, & through making big compost heaps.

Out in the street in front of her house - in the gutter - were lovely, healthy Chinese lanterns (some orange already) & also tall, lovely clear, pink hibiscus. It seemed as if they were determined to grow as close to the yard as possible - even if they couldn't get in it!

Front, back & sides of her very small plot of land were all in flower - except for a small patch of lawn. And the house, of course!

I fully expect her to bring more wildflowers into her garden. The only way she could do this is by building mounds - maybe becoming the last of the mound-builders.

- Ede Mock

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TRIPHORA TRIANTHOPHORA

The Three Birds Orchid, actual size, was sketched by Sara Nasuti, of Penn Valley, Pa.

THE SEARCH FOR THREE BIRDS

For a quarter of a century, I have been looking for *Triphora trianthophora*, the elusive Three Birds Orchid.

First you have to find a station. Needles in haystacks are easier.

Then you have to get there at the right time. When does it bloom? The book says July to November. Some years it doesn't bloom at all. There is no consistency year to year. All the plants in a habitat bloom at the same time, and the flowers may last just a single day. Even Luer doesn't know what triggers off the blooming. It isn't precipitation. It seems to depend upon a night-time temperature drop; blooming comes 48 hours later. Maybe!

Finally, thanks to Doug Jolley, Scott Shriver, and a merciful deity, we located the tiny Three Birds Orchid on our Aug. 19 field trip to Barbour County, WV. We found both pink ones and white ones.

Doug and Scott also took us to a field of *Platanthera ciliaris*, Yellow Fringed Orchid. (Our previous experience was a single specimen at Markleysburg.) This time we found a thousand plants in bloom...not an exaggeration. In the same field were *Lobelia puberula*, Downy Lobelia, *Rhexia virginica*, Virginia Meadow-Beauty, and *Cleistes divaricata*, Rosebud Orchid (in seed).

- Bob Bahl

WILDFLOWER PASTA

Jerusalem Artichoke Spaghetti - we found it on the grocery shelf. To us it tasted the same as regular spaghetti, but was just a little greyish in color.

A DIVERSITY OF INTERESTS

We called it a botanical hike. Some were interested only in rare and endangered species, some in adding to their life lists, and some in a specific plant family.

As we hiked along a little dirt road across a field I exclaimed, "look at all the lovely daisies," but there was no comment from those hurrying ahead. "See where the Queen Anne's Lace and Common St. Johnswort are mixed in to make a beautiful garden." Still no comment. On into the woods we went, across mats of sphagnum and pigeon wheat mosses where mushrooms of orange, white and yellow pushed through like flowers; past ferns and the pure white Wild Calla, but there was not a pause nor a comment from the leaders of the pack. Finally, as we entered the bog, there came back a call from the front - "ORCHIDS! ORCHIDS!" The leaders had reached their goal. They had found two little sticks crawling with small brown spiders; actually, *Listera australis* (Southern Twayblade), a rare orchid and a challenge to find.

We all enjoyed seeing the orchid, and some of us enjoyed seeing Pitcher Plants, Sundews (one with its prey of a bluet* damselfly), Spatterdock and ferns, and dragonflies and their exoskeletons.

On the way back along the road I again feasted my eyes on all the flowers making up nature's garden. In the field we found fossils to remind us of days long gone and the many aspects of nature for us to enjoy. I give thanks for them all and for the leaders who take us to these many interesting areas.

- Esther Allen

* Note Esther's Freudian slip.

