

Wildflowers

THE BULLETIN OF THE
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF W. PA.

MARCH MEETING

Our next monthly meeting will be Monday, March 11, 8 P.M., at Trinity Hall, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland.

Esther Allen will present the program, "Nature in Winter".



Nature gives to every season
some beauties of its own

EDE MOCK GOES TO TEXAS

I'm sending an article on our latest southern trip especially our stay in Texas.

On the last day of December '90 we reached Tupelo, Tenn. There was constant rain, streams were overflowing their banks - we couldn't even see where the original banks had been located. The fields were all flooded, looked like rice paddies. A large percentage of the fields had already been ploughed & disced - ready for spring planting. The erosion was extensive! Mistletoe was growing in the tops of very high trees. If I had brought a rifle - I could have shot down the branches - that is how the mistletoe is harvested for sale during the Christmas season. It is a semi-parasitic plant. All of the lower branches were taken years ago.

We kept hunting for one flower in bloom - couldn't even see one, not even a dandelion.

We did see a red tailed hawk - I wanted to get a picture but as I moved it flew across the road. It was as determined as I was & it finally won - no picture. Later we saw three hawks in a tree close to the road - they didn't even fly as I took their picture. All appeared to be sunning - warming up after a frosty night. Flocks of robins, bluebirds, and blue jays were seen frequently. What a place for an Audubon bird count on New Year's Day! There was still some cotton left on the plants in the fields.

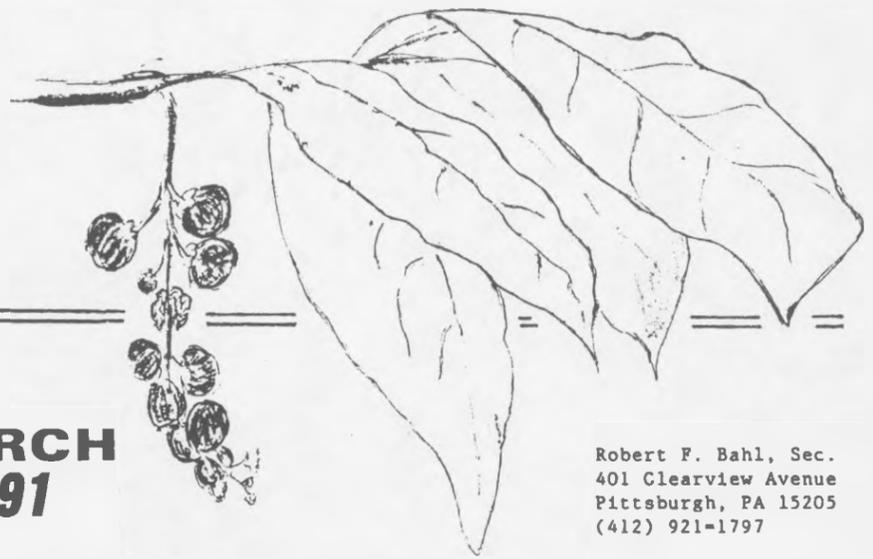
For miles we rode along what was the Natchez Trace - the 500 mile trail followed by early settlers. Many holly trees were growing in the woods. I chased after an armadillo near the Trace - they are surprisingly fast runners. Once you have seen the rooted-out holes along side the road - they are easy to spot. It was interesting to see the buttressed cypress in the shallow edges of wooded ponds. A few great blue heron were wading in the shallow edges. Spanish moss was hanging high up in the branches.

We were shocked and saddened to have a yellow bellied sapsucker fly into our windshield and kill itself.

I got my flower - Spec picked 2 maroon & yellow pansies - very fragrant - from a motel flower garden.

On the way to Lake Charles we saw two V's of snow geese - then a whole field of them.

On our way to Alpine Tx we stopped for breakfast at an old, old hotel - had a hearty breakfast of grits, homemade biscuits & country ham. We looked in the bedrooms - still had original furniture. Out on the highway saw many tall stalks of sotol (agave). It was a drizzly,



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PHYTOLACCA AMERICANA

M. J. Paoli's original drawing of Pokeweed is in color, but we have to settle for black-and-white here.



WILDFLOWERS OF SPRING AT ALLEGHENY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This non-credit course will consist of an introductory classroom session to acquaint the students with field guides and their use, plant characteristics to look for in field identification, habitats, etc. Following the introductory session there will be field trips to natural areas such as North Park, Trillium Trail, Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve and others.

Vincentian High School, Room 118
5 sessions, Sat. 9 a.m.-12, beginning April 13
Instructor: Esther Allen

Registration - CCAC, Office of Continuing Education, North Campus, 8701 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Fee \$20, payable to CCAC. Out of County residents must pay double tuition.



DOTS BEFORE YOUR EYES

If you see two red dots before your name on the envelope, you have your choice on how to make them go away -

1. Make an appointment with your ophthalmologist.
2. Send in a check for your 1991 Botanical Society dues, now past due.

To make sure you don't miss any issues of *Wildflowers*, mail your check to me, Robert F. Bahl, 401 Clearview Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15205. I will forward it to Walt.

If the computer is wrong again, and your dues really have been paid, let me know.

foggy day - which only made the several small herds of antelope appear more pristine white & caramel-colored. Hawks were frequently seen perched on fence posts (crooked old branches of trees). Saw low mountain ranges - some with sharp peaks & columns - some almost in a vertical position. There were huge boulders close to the highway - all with some idiots' names on them - their idea of lasting fame I guess. On Jan. 10 we reached Big Bend National Park - this is an exceptional day - not only because we went 4 wheeling in Stacey's Bronco in the Chisos desert but also because we saw so many flowers in bloom in Jan. We saw the state flower of Texas - the blue bonnet, a rich azure blue, the desert marigold, ocotillo, the agave - the opuntia was part in bloom, part in fruit. There were tiny belly flowers - white and yellow. We also saw a road runner - very strange looking. There were flocks of grosbeaks, black throated sparrows & a few cactus wrens. The motels & restaurants were excellent. The beige colored grasses & sedges alongside the roads shimmered in the morning sun & at sunset - a beautiful sight! At a highway rest stop near Baton Rouge we found 15 violets in bloom. under some picnic tables! What a welcome sight - & one of my favorite flowers. Saw a few goldfinch. Clovers were different looking - each of the three leaflets had a maroon marking on it!

It was a great trip - lots of variety - including Stacey's 3 dogs (it will be 4 when she gets her border patrol dog), a guinea pig, 3 cats and one or more horses.

- Ede Mock