

Wildflowers

THE BULLETIN OF THE
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF W. PA.

MAY, 1996

MAY MEETING

Monday, May 13, is Bruce Night. A number of members who have been to the Bruce Peninsula will give the program. Phyllis Monk will be the coordinator.

The meeting will be at Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Ave., Oakland, but it will not be at our customary place. Because of the large attendance anticipated, we will have it in the Kresge Theater on the Carlow Campus. Students will be there to direct you.

Meeting starts at 8:00 PM.

Field Trip Schedule

Everyone is welcome on our field trips, both newcomers and long time members. This is a great way for everyone to become aware of the wonders of the natural world around us.

Dress for the weather. Trips are rain or shine (within reason). Keep an extra pair of boots, old shoes and wool socks in the car. The leaders can usually inform you if you may need them that day.

Bring along a snack and something to drink. Many folks tote along their cameras, binoculars and favorite field guide. Invite a non-member to come along and enjoy the wild splendor of Western Pennsylvania.

Trips usually last three, sometimes four hours. You can depart earlier if necessary.

Please notify me if you have a suggestion for a field trip or would like to lead one. The field trips do not have to be in exotic places. A variety of common plants can be as rewarding as a few rarities. When was the last time you have led a field trip? Wow! Has it been that long ago? Proficiency with plants is not necessary. You do, however, need to know the area and where the interesting things are. The group will do the rest.

Come and learn something that you can share with others.

May 4, 1996: *PLAIN GROVE BOG, Lawrence County*
Leader: Jeanne Poremski
Time: 1:00

Directions: Leave I-79 at Slippery Rock exit; then drive west toward Hartiansburg on State Rte 108. Turn right at first crossroad to Plain Grove. Meet at the new church across from the cemetery. We haven't been to Plain Grove for quite a while. It is the station for *Trollius laxus*, the Spreading Globeflower. Dress for wet feet.

May 11, 1996 No trip scheduled. Happy Mother's Day!

May 18, 1996: *WILDFLOWER RESERVE, Raccoon Creek State Park, Butler County*
Leader: Phyllis Monk
Time: 1:00

Directions: Take Rte 30 west of Pittsburgh to Imperial. Continue on Rte 30 approximately 7 miles. Meet in the parking lot of Wildflower Reserve. This is just east of the main park entrance.

May 25, 1996: *WOLF CREEK NARROWS, Butler County*
Leader: Howard McIvried
Time: 1:00

Directions: From Pgh, take I-79 north to Slippery Rock Exit (the first exit past Route 422 exit).

Turn left onto Route 108 toward Slippery Rock.

Go about one mile and turn left at intersection that has a Dairy Queen on the right. Continue to first paved road on right. Turn right.

Go past a dairy farm on the left to a T intersection. Turn right and park in lot on right just before a bridge over Slippery Rock Creek.

June 1, 1996: *FERNCLIFF PENINSULA, Ohioyle State Park, Fayette County*
Leader: Loree Speedy
Time: 1:00

Directions: From Pgh, take the tumpike east to Donegal exit. Turn left onto Rte 31 East. After 2 miles turn right onto Rte 381/711. Travel 18.5 miles south into the town of Ohioyle. After crossing the railroad tracks, park in the Ferncliff parking area on the right.

Scott Speedy - 412-639-3517
Jeanne Poremski - 412-343-6546

DOROTHY PEARTH

Dorothy Pearth, a member of the Botanical Society for 50 years, died on March 22 at the age of 82.

Dorothy kept an autograph book in high school. This is an entry from a friend in 1927:

When your work on earth is ended;
And your feet no longer trod,
May your name in gold be written,
In the autograph of God.



Robert F. Bahl, Sec.
401 Clearview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
(412) 921-1797

CYPRIPEDIUM CALCEOLUS var. PUBESCENS

It is only fitting that this month's illustration of the Yellow Lady's-slipper should be one that Dorothy Pearth drew.

It is one of 48 drawings that Dorothy made for the book, "*Western Pennsylvania Orchids*" by LeRoy K. Henry, Werner E. Buker and Dorothy L. Pearth.



A WEEK ON THE BRUCE

Enclosed with this bulletin is a registration form for the "WEEK ON THE BRUCE" June 22-29.

More than two dozen Botanical Society members had a terrific time there last year.

If you are planning to go this year, get your application in as quickly as possible. It is not a matter of not having any more room. If not enough people sign up, the whole thing could be cancelled, and that would be a rotten shame.

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL
WEST VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE
BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK
MAY 9-12, 1996
For information,
call Catherine Knapp (304)428-0607
or Vickie Hash (304)558-3370

A LETTER FROM DICK BYERS

The grapevine twist from our member --

Dear Bob,

Enclosed is a postcard Mayor Murphy is sending to residents adjacent the city parks in behalf of Partners in Parks. It bothers me that they are portraying our native wild grapes as alien invaders killing every tree in sight. This erroneous notion that grapevines kill trees is based on very superficial observation by untrained naturalists. Fungus diseases, insect attacks, mineral deficiencies in the soil, air pollution and a whole host of other causes account for tree mortality in our area, but the grapevine seems to take all the blame. Grapevines do overwhelm some of the trees in the Pittsburgh area, but if one looks a little closer they'll notice those trees suffer a host of other ailments that allows the sun loving grape to take advantage.

Animal lovers see grapevines as a plus. Over 75 species of birds and mammals utilize the fruits for food and white-tailed deer eat the stems and leaves. Both birds and squirrels nest in the tangles and utilize the bark in nest construction. For non-cavity denning wildlife species, the grapevine tangles provide the best protective cover the forest has to offer. In years when the mast crop fails, the wild grape is often the only winter food available. Complete eradication of the vines would create a wildlife food shortage and force park animals to spend more foraging time in the residential areas where they can become a nuisance, a problem I'm sure Mr. Murphy doesn't want.

I have written a letter to Mayor Murphy similar to this one urging him to channel his efforts to real alien invaders such as Japanese knotweed and honeysuckle, but being an out of townner, my opinion doesn't carry much weight. He might pay more attention to members of the botanical society if they let their feelings be known. Partners in Parks can be reached at 255-2676 and letters to Mayor Murphy will reach him at City County Building, 15219.

Sincerely,

Dick Byers

LAST CALL

If there is a red dot in front of your name on the envelope, this could be your last issue of *Wildflowers*.

Send delinquent dues to Robert F. Bahl, 401 Clearview Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15205.