
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • July 1997

Botanical Society Explores Titus Bog

Eleven members of the Botanical Society waded through three feet of water on June 9th. This murky trip led us to a flat green mat of sphagnum moss. For most of us, this was the first time to experience the quaking of Titus Bog.

Titus Bog, in Erie County, is jointly owned by the Presque Isle Audubon Society and the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

Sphagnum moss, as it grows from the top of the mat, forces its older portions down, where they decay in darkness. The slow decay releases tannins and acid. The compressed and waterlogged sphagnum is so cold and acidic that the dead plant matter is not broken down by decay organisms. Plant nutrients are locked up and minerals do not recycle. And surprisingly, some of the most beautiful and unusual plants can be found growing in such a habitat.

The cameras clicked at the *Arethusa bulbosa*, or Dragon's Mouth. This sphagnum-favoring orchid has a slightly protruding lower petal with a yellow crest.

Leaves of the Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) required close gazing against a background of red-tinged sphagnum. Sundew has sticky secretions on its leaves, which can trap an insect. The leaf folds over the insect and absorbs its nutrients, showing that plants can adapt to a hostile world.

Trip leader Jeanne Poremski knew the bog well. Compared to previous visits, she noticed many more black patches devoid of vegetation, as well as more deer traffic.

Rose Pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*) and Grass Pink (*Calopogon tuberosus*), expected and hoped for, were not to be found. Buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) blossoms were still waiting for spring.

Scott Shriver reported that, also on June 9th, he was visiting a bog in New York's Erie County where Rose Pogonia is known to grow profusely. It was not growing there either.

Jeanne explained that last year, the same shrubs at shoulder height which guided our way through the moat were almost completely inundated. One slip in a mudhole would probably have put us under water.

One wonders if last year's high water flooded the bog with an inflow of minerals and nutrients, changing the bog's chemistry and nutrient level for a period of time. The cold wet spring is delaying many blooms.

The lack of expected bloomers seemed to distress no one. We enjoyed flowers of the small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), blueberry (*Vaccinium spp.*), and chokeberry (*Pyrus spp.*). Titus Bog was magical.

Loree Speedy, with thanks to George Bercik

Volunteers are needed for the Jerusalem Botanical gardens

Volunteers for Israel is a worldwide organization providing volunteers to work on projects important to the State of Israel.

On July 27 interested volunteers are needed to work in the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens, pruning, seed cleaning, seed transplanting, weeding, planting, painting and doing carpentry.

The plan of the Gardens is to grow trees, shrubs and flowers from all the continents of the world in continental groupings and alongside their natural plant neighbors. The Garden is a living laboratory for botany students, as well as a resource for school children and their teachers.

Program cost, including R/T airfare from NYC, is Adult \$1069 and Youth \$849. Room and meal costs are extra.

For more information contact Dave Lambert, phone 621-2122, fax 621-0280, or e-mail deevho@aol.com.

Terms to Learn

Is it a grass or a sedge?

Grass A grass has simple leaves, a jointed and tubular stem or cork-like interior, and a husky calyx (glume). The seeds are single. Examples of grass are wheat, oats, or sugar cane.

Sedge A sedge is a grasslike plant of the genus *Carex* of the northern and temperate regions. Sedges have no joints in their stems. Sedges grow in clumps or tufts in marshes and swamps.

Bernadette Lesko



left - Foxtail Sedge - *Carex vulpinoidea* Michx.

right - Panic-Grass - *Panicum* spp..

Errata

Last month's Field Trip Report for Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve listed the incorrect botanical name for Lyre-leaved Rock Cress. It is *Arabis lyrata*.

Field Trip Schedule

Saturday

June 28, 1997 - Todd Sanctuary,
Leader: Vicki Nebes
Time: 1:00

Directions: From Pgh., take Rt. 28 north to Exit 17 at Rte. 356. Travel 0.9 miles, and turn right (across from a cinema) onto Monroe Road. Travel 1.3 miles to a fork in the road; take the right fork, onto Kepple Road. Travel at least 1.8 miles - look for a wooden sign on the right indicating the entrance to Todd Sanctuary's gravel parking lot.

This 160-acre tract of forest, streams, and thickets in SE Butler County is owned by the Audubon Society of W. Pa. We will search for ferns, fern allies, and the Virginia Snakeroot.

Saturday

July 19, 1997 - Dolly Sods Area,
Tucker County, W Va.
Leader: Esther Allen
Time: 1:00 p.m.

Directions: Suggested ways to reach Rte. 219 South in northwest Maryland: **1.** Take Route 40 west. You will meet Rte. 219 south near the exit to I-68 (but do not get on I-68). **2.** Take I-79 South toward Morgantown, then I-68 east.

Take Rte. 219 south to Thomas WV, then Rte. 32 through Davis WV. Continue on Rte. 32; about 11 miles south of Davis, you will drive through a roofless tunnel-like pass. Begin to look for a "Dolly Sods" sign; the sign will be on the right, but it designates a road to the left (Laneville Road). Turn left here and follow Laneville Road to an iron bridge crossing of Red Creek. Take the Forest Service road up the mountain about 4 miles. Meet at the Dolly Sods Picnic Area.

Sunday

July 20, 1997 - Dolly Sods Area,
Tucker County, W. Va.
Leader: Esther Allen
Time: 10:00 a.m.

Directions: We will again meet at the Dolly Sods Picnic Area. See Saturday's directions. Note that we are meeting at ten in the morning.

Plan to attend the field trip for one day or both days.

Dolly Sods is approximately 140 miles from Pittsburgh. Allow ample time for traveling, and give yourself at least 45 minutes to make the trip from Davis WV to Dolly Sods. Forest roads are often graveled and narrow, and dusty conditions can be encountered.

The Dolly Sods Area ranges in elevation from 2500 to 4700 feet above sea level. Cold temperatures and fog can occur anytime of the year. Please dress for the weather! Also, wear sturdy foot gear!

For information on accommodations in the Davis, WV, area, call 1-800-CALL WVA. Camping is available at Blackwater and Canaan Valley. Tell the receptionist that you wish to lodge or camp near Dolly Sods.

Tent camping (sites limited) is available at Red Creek Camp Ground, on Dolly Sods. Call (304) 636-1800.

WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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WILDFLOWERS is published monthly by the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

We welcome short articles of botanical interest, drawings, letters to the editor, and notices of botanical events and group activities. Articles, notices, drawings, etc. should be sent to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 17th of the previous month. Material on computer diskette is welcome; call to discuss file format.

We especially welcome news about our members! Please call or write the editor, or Bob Bahl at 921-1797.

Changes of address - Notify the editor at the above address or phone number.

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information

The object of the Society shall be to bring together those who are interested in Botany and to encourage the study of this science and a knowledge of plants. Our members include both amateurs and professionals.

Annual Dues: Individual: \$5.00 Family: \$8.00 Students: Half-rate

To join, mail your name, your address, and check payable to "Botanical Soc. of W PA" to Loree Speedy, 5837 Nicholson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 8 PM sharp, at Trinity Hall or Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome. The business meeting is followed by an informative program.

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Field Trip Information

Everyone is welcome on field trips; amateurs, professionals, non-members, and anyone who is curious about the natural world.

- ◇ Trips are not canceled due to rain or cold.
- ◇ Dress for the weather. Comfortable shoes, water-proof boots, all-weather gear are suggested; water bottles, sunhats, and rainwear are strongly recommended.
- ◇ Trips usually last three, sometimes four, hours. You can depart earlier if you like.

Field trips are often at a leisurely pace, but may require some hiking and traveling through wet and muddy areas. If you have any questions about the nature of a trip, feel free to contact the trip leader or Loree Speedy at 521-9425.