
WILDFLOWERS

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

Next Meeting is December 8

The next meeting will be Monday, December 8, at 8:00 p.m., at Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Signs will be posted at Aquinas Hall and at Kresge Theater directing you to the exact location.

This is the wild Christmas Party. There will be all sorts of wild foods. Members bring in pies, cookies, candies, fruits, berries, and their wild selves. Don't dare stay away if you have nothing to bring, for there will be plenty!

This is Member's Night. A member can bring up to twelve botanical slides taken this year.

Please Remit Your 1998 Membership Dues

Annual dues for the Botanical Society are \$5.00 for an individual, and \$8.00 for a family. Students can join at half-rate.

Bring your dues to the meeting, or mail your name, your address, your phone number (optional) and a check payable to "Botanical Society of W PA".

Mail your check to our Treasurer:

Walter Gardill
PO Box 226, Grosick Rd
Ingomar, PA 15127

Thank You, Field Trip Leaders!

A joy shared is a joy doubled. – Goethe

Thanks to the folks listed below, members and guests enjoyed the area's greatest displays of native plants and flowers this year.

Esther Allen: Crouse Run; Raccoon Creek State Park; Independence Marsh; Dolly Sods; Femcliff Peninsula; Moraine State Park

Luc Berger: Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve; North Park

Mark Bowers: Cedar Creek County Park; Core Arboretum

Chris Knoll: Sewickley Heights Borough Park

Howard McIlvried: Wolf Creek Narrows; Chalk Hill Bog

Phyllis Monk: Markleysburg Bog

Bob Morgan: Enlow Forks Natural Area

Vicki Nebes: Todd Sanctuary

Jeanne Poremski: Titus Bog

Veronique Schreurs: Duff Park

Scott Shalaway: His home in Marshall County WV

Loree Speedy: Raccoon Creek State Park

Scott Speedy: Roaring Run in Armstrong County

And thanks to the many who followed, through rain and mud, through the warm spring sun. Along clubspur orchids and long forest roads, along shores and streams, and a long list of plants!

Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Christmas Fern

In December, a walk through most any shaded area, be it woodland, ravine, stream-bank or swamp, will reveal plants still green. One of them is the especially attractive Christmas Fern. It is not killed by frost, as are most of our ferns. The fronds may relax, but they hold their deep green color through the winter.

This evergreen feature as well as the graceful form of the fronds, makes them particularly appealing for Christmas decorating. In addition, the shape of each pinna can be suggestive of a stocking "hung by the chimney". Either or both of these factors may have inspired the common name, the "Christmas Fern".

The botanical name is *Polystichum acrostichoides*. Both genus and species are from the Greek. *Polystichum* means "many rows", referring to the sori. *Acrostichoides* means "resembling *Achrostichum*", a particular tropical fern.

In spring, new shoots emerge from the soil. They are in the shape of croziers or fiddleheads. These are covered with long, silvery-gray hairs, that glisten when moist. The croziers uncoil to form the fronds. Most of the fronds are produced in spring. Some may come up in summer.

Christmas Fern has two kinds of fronds, fertile and sterile. The fertile fronds have upper pinnae that are smaller than the lower ones. These upper pinnae have sori, containing spores, on their undersides. These sori are round and green at first. Gradually they merge and ripen to a velvety golden covering.

When the sori are mature, the fertile part of the frond dries and withers away. The spores, released from the sori, fall to the ground. If their required cultural conditions are present, they grow. They develop reproductive structures,

and a new fern emerges. Ferns do not have flowers or seeds.

Christmas Fern is desirable for home landscaping. It grows readily in most any kind of soil that is not too dry. It likes shade, but it will even grow in sunny areas as long as it doesn't have prolonged exposure to hot sun.

The illustration is a print of a Christmas Fern frond.

Anne Bahl



1998 Seed and Book Catalogue from the New England Wild Flower Society Is Now Available

Gardeners will find seeds and spores of more than 200 varieties of flowers and ferns for sale in the 1998 Seed and Book Catalogue. Included are natives for woodlands, wetlands, and meadow gardens. The Catalogue is part of New England Wildflower Society's worldwide seed distribution and conservation effort.

To obtain the Catalogue, send \$2.50 to Seeds, New England Wild Flower Society, Garden in the Woods, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

Botanical Society Member authors "The Brown Algal Origin of Land Plants"

Member Anthony J. Miklaussen has written "The Brown Algal Origin of Land Plants and The Algal Origin of Life on Earth and in the Universe".

Dr. Miklaussen received his Ph. D. for paleobotanical research from the University of Pittsburgh, and has published abstracts on *Lepidocarpon* in the *American Journal of Botany*. This book provides substantial evidence in support of a brown algal origin of land plants, negating the long-held belief in a green algal origin.

To order the book, contact Ragged Edge Press at (717) 532-2237, or fax (717) 532-7704, PO Box 152, Shippensburg, PA 17257. Ordering information: 1-57249-095-0 \$60.00.

Malaxis

Britton and Brown lists two species of *Malaxis* – *Malaxis unifolia* and *Malaxis monophylla*.

How do you tell the difference? Let's fall back to translating the botanical names. That usually tells you something.

1. *Unifolia* means "one leaf".
2. *Monophylla* means, er, "one leaf".

Unifolia is Latin; *monophylla* is Greek

Bob Bahl

We are on the World Wide Web!

As part of my studies at Duquesne University, I have created a Home Page for the Botanical Society. The World Wide Web is the world's largest encyclopedia.

Our URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is <http://ansel.his.duq.edu/~speedy/b1.html>
This works like a telephone number for computers.

This technology is great. Unfortunately one needs to have a computer to see it. That's not so great. For those of you without a computer, you can access our home page by using public computers at the libraries. A librarian can assist you.

This site will be useful to teachers and their students in our area or anywhere who want to learn about our flora. The wonderful thing about world wide publishing is that we control our home page's content. We can continually update the articles. However, we must honor copyright laws.

Someone in Papua New Guinea can type the words "Pennsylvania botany", and a list of "sites" will appear on their computer screens. The Western Pennsylvania Botanical Society home page is now included among those sites. With a single click, they can travel here electronically and see our newsletters, or find out how to join.

You can participate in this effort by submitting any ideas, original articles, drawings or photos. As a start I could use photos depicting our changing seasons and the various landscapes of Western Pennsylvania. I have equipment to restore or modify images. If you have a great picture with a few flaws it may be salvageable.

A section on Local Botany and a section for Images is in the works. We need clear, simple explanations about our area.

If you can help, contact me at 801 Walnut St., Saltsburg, PA 15681. (412)-639-3517

Scott Speedy

Denver Weather

Member Dick Schwendinger, of Denver, Colorado, wrote on October 24 this year, "We haven't been back for awhile but we enjoy hearing the news of fellow flower-lovers. Right now, we are in the midst of a wet snowstorm with 8 inches predicted. The trees in Denver are less than 50% defoliated, this will mean a mess of broken branches"!

And Cabin Fever

Sister Mary Joy Haywood was suffering from "cabin fever" and anxious to check out a few plants. With Esther Allen as passenger, she took her 4 X 4 up the hill near her Greene County home to check out a few trees.

They found a Blackjack Oak (*Quercus marilandica* Muench). They also checked out a few hickories: Red Hickory or Oval Pignut (*Carya ovalis* (Wang.) Sarg.) Shellbark Hickory (*Carya laciniosa* (Michx.f.) Loud.) and, of course, the Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata* (P.Mill.) K.Koch.).



Print of Blackjack Oak leaf- *Quercus marilandica*

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.

We especially welcome news about our members! Please call or write the editor or Bob Bahl at 921-1797. For 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 are: Individual - \$5.00 and Family - \$8.00. Students can join at 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. An informative program follows the business meeting.