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# WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • October 1998

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## Next Meeting is October 12

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The next meeting will be Monday, October 12, at 8:00 p.m., at the Kresge Theater at Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland).

The speaker will be member **Janyce Erlich-Moss**. Janyce is an accomplished photographer. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums around the country.

Her program is titled "Pennsylvania Impressions". She uses the subdued light of Western Pennsylvania to capture the soft, intricate shapes of streams, flowers, and forests. Her images combine photography and watercolor painting.

Member Lou Ammon is the Society's new program chairperson. If you have a program, or an idea, please call him at (412) 798-0886.

Many, many thanks to Scott Shriver, Clete Smith and Al Shriver for setting up excellent programs for the last two years!

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## Third "Biological Assessment Volunteer Days" is October 3rd

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The Horticultural Society of Western Pennsylvania (HSWP) is asking for volunteers to assist in another broad botanical survey of its 400 acre site for the proposed botanical garden at Settlers Cabin Park. Volunteers will identify and map major stands of trees, shrubs and herbaceous vegetation, and also note uncommon or rare species as well.

The final survey date for this year is **Saturday, October 3rd at 10:00 a.m.** Please call HSWP at (412) 361-8677 to confirm your attendance.

Wear good walking shoes, and rain gear if the weather calls for it. Bring tree, shrub, and/or wildflower guides if you have them. HSWP will provide refreshments and facilities.

Meet at Settlers Cabin Park at an unmarked gated entrance on Noblestown Road outside Oakdale. Take Parkway West to exit for 22-30 West (shortly after Campbell's Run Road). From 22-30 West, take Oakdale exit and turn left off of exit ramp onto McKee Road. Take McKee Road into the village of Oakdale and bear left onto Noblestown Road. Site entrance will be approximately 1 mile further on your left across from a cement pipe factory.

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## What Gardening Has Taught Me: wildflowers and a new perspective

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How many times have we battled nature in our gardens? In the quest to create works of beauty, gardeners pull out all the stops: buying the right tools, trying disease-resistant hybrids, spreading black plastic between the rows, spraying chemicals to kill bugs and weeds. For years I shoveled, yanked, watered and transplanted, and still I was fighting a losing battle. Nature always won. Drought withered my impatiens; hail cut holes in my hostas; beetles munched my roses. One frustrating morning I gave up.

It was a Thursday, the day of the weekly "housewives' walk" in nearby North Park. Needing an escape, I picked up my binoculars, stuffed field guides into my pack and headed for a morning of birdwatching. It was the day I met

Jay and Dean, and learned to look down instead of up.

About 20 of us walked the trail that day, but I noticed almost immediately that the walkers broke into two groups. I looked back and saw Jay (Jasper) Brown and Dean Weltmer sauntering along about 100 yards behind us. My mother, a veteran housewives' walker, saw the question before I even uttered it. "They're our botanizers," she said. "They watch the wildflowers, we watch the birds."

Hmmmmmmmm....wildflowers. As a kid I headed to the fields and found daisies, black-eyed Susans, hawkweed, and examined each flower closely, noting the intricate beauty of each individual. Maybe those fellows would let me join them! I lagged behind, shyly waiting for them to catch up. I discovered there was no need to be shy--they included me as if I were an old hand at this wildflower business!

We strolled a grand distance--about 10 feet--when Jay knelt and peered at a flower through his hand lens. "This might be a *Viola pennsylvanica*, but the stems are hirsute and there are no basal leaves," Dean said. Jay pointed out that the leaves were veined, not smooth, and the stipules were toothed. "Then it must be *Viola pubescens*," Dean decided.

Gosh, what was this foreign language? Had I gotten in over my head? I had a year of Latin long ago, enough to know I was lousy at foreign languages! And more than the Latin, the English terms were foreign too! As I was about to scream and run to the safety of the birders, Jay handed me the lens and began to explain in his non-condescending way.

Okay, I was hooked. Before long I picked up the terms through constant use. I looked forward to my Thursday mornings; the days between filled with wildflowers. I stopped pulling weeds from my garden--they weren't weeds! When a new plant volunteered in my garden, I nurtured it till bloomtime so I could explore its intricacies.

I very seldom battle nature in my yard nowadays. By reducing the plants that cause me grief and increasing native plants, I work with nature. When you have a problem it helps to change your perspective, rethink the situation, then alter your course of action. My garden and my wildflowers gave me a new philosophy which has helped me through my most trying times.

(Jay, Dean and I became fast friends. Dean and I drifted into a wicked identification competition. He usually won, much to my dismay. Of course we knew that Jay could run circles around both of us, he was that good.)

*Lee Ann Reiners*

*This article was originally published in the Eastern Wildflowers Homepage. Visit it at <<http://www.suite101.com/articles.cfm/2985>>*

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## Dr. Duke to speak on Medicinal Plants of Western PA and Amazon

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Dr. James Duke, an internationally-acclaimed authority on medicinal plants of both the U.S. and Amazon, will speak at Carnegie Museum of Natural History on October 28, 1998 about "The Green Pharmacy: Major Medicinal Plants of Western Pennsylvania and the Amazon."

Duke was a distinguished researcher for 30 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and he is the author of *The Green Pharmacy* (presently selling in Pittsburgh bookstores), the *Peterson Field Guide on Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*, and the monumental *Handbook of Medicinal Herbs*.

Duke is renowned as an entertaining lecturer on botany, and is in high demand as a speaker.

The lecture will be from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Carnegie Lecture Hall, 4400 Forbes Ave., Oakland. Tickets are \$5.00 each and may be purchased in advance (call 412-622-3288) or at the door on the evening of the lecture. Parking

is available in the Carnegie parking lot (entrance at corner of Forbes Ave. and Craig Street).

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## The Natural Landscape: Your Backyard and Beyond

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The Natural Landscape: Your Backyard and Beyond is a symposium devoted to exploring the relationship of people to the environment. It will be held on Friday, October 30 and Saturday, October 31, and will be hosted by the Pittsburgh Civic Garden Center.

Saturday's session offers two keynote addresses. In the morning, Charles Little and Jenny Hager will discuss past, present and future threats to the forests of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. Mr. Little and Ms. Hager have recently published *An Appalachian Tragedy* – a pictorial documentation of the current crisis in our forests.

In the afternoon, Dr. Peter Del Tredici, director at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, will discuss the basic principles involved in creating and maintaining a woodland garden in a "naturalistic" style.

On Friday and Saturday, six additional programs will be presented by notable experts and members of local environmental organizations. For program information, call Marjorie Radebaugh at (412) 441-4442 ext. 206.

The symposium is jointly sponsored by the Pittsburgh Civic Garden Center, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

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## Field Trip Schedule

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Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Trips are not canceled due to rain. For questions, call the trip leader or Loree at (412) 521-9425.

**Sunday**                      **Moraine State Park**  
**October 11, 1998-** Butler County  
Leader: Esther Allen  
(412) 366-0786  
Time: 1 p.m.

Directions: From I-79 North to Exit 28 (PA 488, Portersville). Go west (left) 0.6 miles to US19. Turn north (right) on US19, go 0.5 mile, and turn right on SR4007 (West Park Rd). Follow signs for "North Shore Moraine State Park". Go 2.8 miles on SR4007, crossing I79, US 422, and Muddy Creek. Just after crossing the creek, turn right and follow signs 0.8 mile to the bicycle rental area, where we will meet.

And please note that we are meeting on Sunday!

**Saturday**                      **Wildflower Reserve**  
**October 24, 1998-** **Raccoon Creek State**  
**Park**  
Beaver County  
Leader: Loree Speedy  
Time: 1 p.m.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-279 south/US 22-30 (Parkway West). After about 7.5 miles, exit this highway to continue west on U.S. 22-30. After 3.9 miles, exit this highway to continue on U.S. 30 (Imperial exit). 9.5 miles from this exit, watch for the entrance for the Wildflower Reserve, on the right, just over the hill. Meet in the parking lot.

The Botanical Society visited Raccoon Creek at this time of the year in 1966 and 1967. Let's find out why.



Acorn of Scarlet Oak - *Quercus coccinea*  
Found on rocky, thin-soiled slopes of mountains east of Pittsburgh. Leaves turn scarlet red in autumn.

**Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania**  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15217

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## **WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania**

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Editor: Loree Speedy, 5837 Nicholson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 Telephone: (412) 521-9425;  
E-mail: <yoree@sgi.net>.

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.

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## **The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information**

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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 \$5.00 for individual and \$8.00 for family. 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. Visit the Botanical Society Homepage at <http://home.kiski.net/~speedy/b1.html>.