
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • April 1999

Next Meeting is April 12

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

Member **Melissa Melan** will present "Traditional Medicine and Mayan Culture in Belize". Dr. Melan will speak about the medicinal plants found in the rainforest, and the traditional healers who use them. She will discuss Mayan ruins at Carachol and Xunantunich, and Terra Nova, a tract of undisturbed rainforest given to the Mayan traditional healers by the government of Belize.

Dr. Melan is Assistant Professor of Biology at Duquesne University. She visited Belize in 1998 with the university's Mylan School of Pharmacy.

Join us in preparing a Plant Checklist at the Pleasant Hills Arboretum

Fifty years ago, the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania prepared a checklist of plants at the A. W. Robertson Arboretum in Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania. The arboretum has asked members to return, fifty years later, and prepare another checklist.

The first group field assessment will be held on Saturday, May 1, 1999, at 1 P.M. Everyone is invited to participate, regardless of plant knowledge.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take Route 51 south. In Pleasant Hills Boro, you will reach a cloverleaf. At the first traffic light after the

cloverleaf (Crown Buick will be on your left), turn right onto Old Clairton Road. At the second stop sign, make a right onto West Bruceton. The well-marked arboretum is at the bottom of the hill on the left.

Member Jeff Polonoli has been exploring and mapping the area, and will spearhead this effort. As the arboretum is open to the general public, members are invited to visit the area throughout the year and pass along their plant lists.

Can anyone accurately identify mosses and lichens? Your expertise would be appreciated. If you cannot attend the May 1st outing, but can visit at another date, call Jeff Polonoli at 724 239-2405.

The arboretum has a very mature woodland of oaks, a wooded hillside and a meadow. It encompasses about 16 acres in the middle of residential development. It will be fascinating to see what changes have taken place.

The Valerian Family –another advanced family

Following 'behind' the Dipsacaceae is the 'Valerian family'. We should be familiar with two common genera found here in southwestern Pennsylvania: Valerian (*Valeriana pauciflora*), a beautiful spring wildflower, and Corn Salad (*Valerianella sp.*), a weedy, delicate looking herb.

This family does not have flowers in involucre heads as do the last two families mentioned (Asteraceae and Dipsacaceae), but family members do have small inflorescences arranged in tight clusters of tubular 5 lobed regular flowers with a pappus-like calyx, or none at all.

Leaves are opposite and usually simple, but pinnately divided in Valerian and Garden Heliotrope (*Valeriana officinalis*). The members of Valerianaceae all have an inferior ovary with a ribbed achene as the fruit.

One of the most exciting and strange feature about this family becomes apparent when you take a close look at the flower of Corn Salad. "All you see are three 'exerted' stamens staring you in the face, ones you're sure you ain't never seen before". Another feature worth mentioning deals with the Valeriana calyx. This spring take a close look at the calyx of Valeriana pauciflora and you will notice it is rolled inward (or more technically, involute). As the flower continues to mature, the calyx seems to 'grow' and spread out revealing many long plume-like structures resembling an Asteraceae pappus. What benefit does this type of calyx perform for the plant?

Here's a question to stir your imagination, and a chance to use the knowledge you are gaining on plant evolution: What would the common Sunflower look like in 1000 years if evolutionary trends (reduction and fusion of parts) continue as they are today in plants?

Jeff Polonoli

What botanical presents did you get for Christmas?

100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names. By Diana Wells. Illustrated by Ippy Patterson. Published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill in 1997. Price: \$16.95.

This little book has stories about the scientists and travelers who brought plants back to Europe from the 1600's through the 1800's.

Member Liz DePiero reports that this book is one of her favorite Christmas presents. What book is enlightening you about the world of plants and flowers? Write the editor a short description of books that you know other members would enjoy.

Spring Presents

- Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation will present fifty paintings in gouache by artist James Linton Sain from April 12 to July 30. The exhibition will be on display on the fifth floor of the Hunt Library Monday through Friday. (412) 268-2434.
- Boyce Park Nature Center presents Arbor Days/Tree & Wildflower Plantings from April 20 through May 29. Come and plant a tree and wildflowers. Trees are provided by the Allegheny County Conservation District and the PA Game Commission. Call to pre-register at (724) 733-4618.
- Community College of Allegheny County – North Campus presents Wildflowers of Spring: Identification and Photo Opportunities taught by Esther Allen. Saturday sessions from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. start April 10th. Call (412) 369-3736.

Field Trip Schedule

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

**Saturday
April 17, 1999**

Kidds Mill in Eldersville,
Washington County
Leader: Carl Patsche
(304) 723-0139
Time: 12:00 noon

Directions: From Pittsburgh, travel west on I-279 Parkway West. Exit this highway to continue on Rte. 22 West. Exit Rte. 22 at the Star Lake-Burgettstown exit near Florence. Continue 4.5 miles south on Route 18 to the third traffic light in Burgettstown. Turn right onto Langeloth Road. Continue 6 miles to the small village of Eldersville. We will meet at Heritage Hall on the right side at the crossroads. (Refreshments and restrooms available at Hall.)

Expectations: Bluebells, larkspur, wild blue phlox, and ramps.

**Saturday
April 24, 1999**

Roaring Run,
Armstrong County
Leader: Loree Speedy &
Mark Bowers
(412) 521-9425
Time: 8:30 A.M.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, travel I-376/Parkway East. Continue on Route 22 East to Rte. 286 (Golden Mile Highway), which eventually becomes Rte. 380 after the commercial development. Stay north on Rte. 380 to Rte. 66. Take Rte 66 north (right) to Apollo. Cross the Kiskiminetas River into Apollo. After crossing the bridge you will see a traffic light, and a shopping center to the left. Park in the lot; we will meet in the corner of the lot closest to the bridge.

Expectations: Trillium and violets in a wild and scenic hemlock ravine. This is a joint trip with the Westmoreland County Bird Club.

**Saturday,
May 1, 1999**

Pleasant Hills Arboretum,
Allegheny County
Leader: Jeff Polonoli
Time: 1:00 P.M.

Everyone is welcome to join us on a botanical assessment of this area. See directions above.

**Sunday,
May 2, 1999**

Enlow Forks,
Greene County
Leader: Esther Allen
(412) 366-0786
Time: 1:00 P.M.

Directions: I-79 south to I-70 west. Proceed 11.6 miles to the Claysville exit (Exit 2). At the stop sign at the bottom of the exit ramp, turn right and right again on U.S. 40 towards Claysville. At center of town, 0.8 mile, turn right just beyond Sacred Heart Church on PA 231 South.

Proceed 3.5 miles to a fork; PA 231 goes left, but you should bear right on the high road toward Good Intent and West Finley. Continue 8 miles into West Finley. At the stop sign in

West Finley bear left towards Graysville. Cross the bridge over Enlow Fork after 2.4 miles, and turn right immediately onto a small bridge.

Follow the dirt road 1.6 miles; then make a very sharp right onto another dirt road, which leads downhill 1.3 miles to a pull-off. Park here.

Expectations: Blue-eyed Mary, Red and white trilliums, Ohio Buckeye. A beautiful drive to a beautiful mess of wildflowers

These field trips have been scheduled for May:

May 15 – Oil Creek State Park – 1 p.m.

May 29 – Stony Creek Lake in Somerset County
– time to be announced

We hope to schedule weekends of May 8/9 & May 22/23. Call Loree at (412) 521-9425 if you can lead a trip or have a suggestion.

Frick Park Celebrates its 80th Anniversary

The city of Pittsburgh received a gift of 150 acres in 1919, upon the death of its donor, Henry Clay Frick. He had purchased the wooded area in Pittsburgh to build a home but decided to live at a nearby residence. He and his young daughter Helen would often walk from their home to ramble through the woods; this was one of her greatest pleasures. The Frick family moved to New York City, but kept the Pittsburgh residence intact.

Helen, in one of her rare moments of rebellion, returned to her Pittsburgh home to celebrate her “coming out” party at age 18. Her father, displeased, followed her to Pittsburgh. Fathers do soften and he asked her what she wanted as her gift.

She asked that the 150 acres be given to the City of Pittsburgh as a woodland park. The original 150 acres was designated Frick Woods Nature Reserve in 1991 to be set aside for the preservation of its natural resources.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – Apr 99

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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.

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 \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 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>.