

# WILDFLOWERS

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

## Next Meeting is June 14

The next meeting will be Monday, June 14 , at 8:00 p.m., at the Kresge Theater at Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Kresge Theater is on the top floor of Grace Library.

Member **Esther Allen** will present "Invasive Alien Plants and Suggested Natives for Landscaping".

## A Letter from the President

Dear Members:

Thank you for your prayers and support for my recovery from bilateral knee surgery. I am coming along now.

I'm finding it difficult to "stay indoors" now that the sun is shining and the spring flowers are blooming. I recall last year we were a couple weeks ahead; not this year.

As you know, the North American Rock Garden Society will be holding their National Meeting here in Pittsburgh in April 2001. Larry Hankowitz, Chairman of the Allegheny Chapter, is seeking our aid to serve as "identifiers" of plants in Raccoon Creek State Park and Ohiopyle. I know you know these two areas very well.

If you are willing to serve as a guide, would you please contact me? Remember that this is a preliminary request. Days, dates, etc. will be formalized as the time gets nearer. Buses to the areas will be provided.

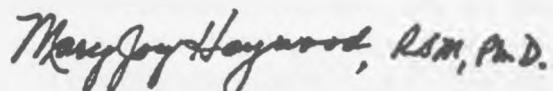
Please send me a note if you can help out:

Mary Joy Haywood  
Botanical Society of Western PA  
Carlow College Biology Dept  
3333 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

There will be internationally known speakers who will speak on "Trilliums and other Wild Flower Gems." I know you will want to attend. The meeting will be held at Sheraton Station Square. Approximately 250 to 275 folks are anticipated to attend.

Thank you for your always cooperative cooperation.

Sincerely yours,



Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D.

## A Walk Along the Oil Creek State Park Bike Trail

Oil Creek State Park is a gem of a place to spend a summer day, whether your fancy turns to hiking, bicycling, fly fishing in the clean, cool waters of Oil Creek or relaxing aboard the Oil Creek and Titusville excursion train.

I joined a hike along the bicycle trail in mid May of this year, sponsored by the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania and Presque Isle Audubon Society. It was a perfect, mid-spring day, and both wildflowers and woodland songbirds were present in abundance.

Our group only hiked the northerly portion of the trail, and with botanists peering at the myriad wildflowers and other plants along the way, we figured our rate of speed at about 1/3 mile an hour.

The slopes along the bicycle trail are exceedingly rich with wildflowers in the spring. While the season has passed this year, keep this place in mind for wildflower hikes next spring. As we entered the woods, sunny verges were carpeted with a blue haze of bird's-eye speedwell and American dog violets. Within the greening woods, warblers sang on high and the melodic, gentle song of the wood's thrush echoed.

Trailsides were lush with the foliage of bloodroot, more here than I had ever seen before. On the slope above was a vast variety of blooming things; the botanists paused to enjoy the red and white trilliums, foamflower, mitrewort, bellworts and yellow mandarin, Solomon's seal and a variety of violets.

The forest above us, of basswood, sugar maple, yellow birch, elms, red oak, cherry and white ash, while periodically lumbered through the years, had never been totally cleared, so the richness of its understory was allowed to remain. As well as wildflowers, this included such unusual shrubs as hobblebush viburnum, purple-flowering raspberry, pagoda dogwood and mountain maple. And there were ferns - New York, crested wood, interrupted, cinnamon, narrow-leaved spleenwort and the delicate, lovely maidenhair.

A special attribute of these slopes which accounted for much of their richness related back to geology, noted fellow hiker, Allegheny College forest ecologist, Gordon Whitney. The 400 foot high slopes above us were capped with sandstone, with some interbedded carbonates. Water percolates down through the sandstone, picking up nutrients from the carbonate beds. At about trail level, this seepage hits impermeable shale bedrock and issues out as nutrient-rich sweet-water springs.

The high point of the walk was the discovery of a wildflower which many of us had never seen before, except as illustrated in our guidebooks. This was a lush bed of rose twisted stalk, which resembles a branched Solomon's seal, but with colorful rose-pink blossoms. Even our resident expert, Esther Allen, exclaimed that in all her years of hiking and wildflower study, she had seen this plant only once before. It was a grand way to top off our day's walk in the greening woods of Oil Creek.

In the late afternoon, I parted with the group, and picked up the Gerard Hiking Trail, and followed it down the steep slope into the bottomland. A boardwalk below kept feet dry through a skunk cabbage swamp. Beyond, stately black cherry trees shaded a fragrant understory of wild crabapples and hawthorns, masses of pink and white. Rose-breasted grosbeaks warbled loudly in the forest canopy, and the season's first catbirds mewed.

#### *Karlin Marsh*

*The above is excerpted from an original article by member Karlin Marsh appearing in the Meadville Tribune.*

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#### **Don't look for flowers on the Frasera**

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Member Virginia Phelps has been tracking the blooming patterns of *Frasera carolinensis*, the Monument Plant, at Jennings Prairie. No blooms are expected this year; last year there were 310 blooms.

Virginia describes the Frasera as "monocarpic", meaning the plant flowers and bears fruit only once, then dies. The term is applied to perennials, biennials, or annuals.

## 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. Sun protection and water are recommended. For questions, call the trip leader or Loree at (412) 521-9425. **Take note of varying meeting times and dates!**

**Saturday, June 12, 1999** Friendship Hill National Historic Site, Fayette County  
Leader: Esther Allen  
(412) 366-0786  
**Time: 1:00 p.m.**

Directions: From north of Uniontown, take U.S. Rte 119 south to Point Marion. Take PA 166 north. Park entrance is on the left, 3 miles north of Point Marion.

**Saturday, June 19, 1999** Presque Isle State Park, Erie, PA  
Leader: Lou Ammon  
(412) 798-0886  
**Time: 1:00 p.m.**

Directions: Take I-79 north to Erie. Exit at 26th Street. Turn left and drive approx. 1 mile until 26th St. intersects Rte. 832 (Peninsula Drive). Turn right and continue to the Park entrance. The well-marked Interpretive Center is approx. 1 mile from the entrance on the left-hand side.

Expectations: We will drive to then explore various hot spots. Prepare for sandy feet.

**Sunday June 20, 1999** Boyce Park, Allegheny County  
Leader: Tammy Watychowicz  
**Time: 2:00 p.m.**

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-376 East (Parkway East) to Exit 16 B. Turn right onto Rte. 48 north. Travel straight through the red light, travel straight through stop sign. Follow the road as it bears to the right onto Center

Road. Cross the bridge over the turnpike. Turn right onto the next road (Old Frankstown Road). The nature center is the second building on the left.

First we will visit the Natural History Museum, the greenhouse and gardens, then we will walk the trails to look for flowers.

**Saturday June 26, 1999** Cottage Road, Beaver County  
Leader: Esther Allen  
(412) 366-0786  
**Time: 1:00 p.m.**

Directions: Meet at the parking lot of Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve. From Pgh, 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.

## The Macrolichens in West Virginia: Book Now Available

A new publication, *The Macrolichens in West Virginia* by Don G. Flenniken, is now available for distribution to naturalists, ecologists, and anyone interested in learning about lichens. This 231 page, soft-bound, 8.5 x 11" manual covers 284 species found or reported from West Virginia and includes 320 color photographs on 26 plates, keys to genera and species, and distribution maps in West Virginia.

Although regional, it should cover most of the species common to Pennsylvania as well.

Copies are available from the author for \$28.00 plus postage (\$3.20 priority mail). Send check or money order payable to Don Flenniken, 2273 Blachleyville Road, Wooster OH 44691. Don't forget your return address. For additional information, e-mail the author at [FlennikenD@aol.com](mailto:FlennikenD@aol.com).

**Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – June 99**

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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 \$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>.