
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • June 2001

The Next Meeting is June 11th

The next meeting will be Monday, June 11, 8:00 p.m., at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Kresge Theater is on the top floor of the Grace Library and is accessed from the upper campus.

Carol Kirkpatrick will present "Propagating Native Plants." Carol owns and operates Kirkpatrick's Perennials in Butler, PA, a specialty nursery dealing in native wildflowers and deer-resistant varieties. She has an extensive collection of shade natives and an exquisite collection of gentians. Carol will have several plants available for sale at the meeting, so be sure to take this opportunity to add some new native plants to your garden.

Book and Member News

President Mary Joy Haywood reports: "I have met with our publisher yesterday and the blueline has now been reviewed by me and Phyllis. This is the last step in the publication process. Hopefully, we will have our publication by the June meeting.

We are still in need of book sales. If you need additional forms, contact me or use the form in the newsletter. We not only still owe \$20,000, but also have loans to repay. The \$20,000 must be paid before the release of the books.

Paid orders are coming in well. Thank you for your great support and cooperation."

Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D.
(412) 578-6175
mjhaywood@carlow.edu

3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165

Our Treasurer, Walter Gardill, has served this office for fifteen years! He would like to step down and allow a new member to assume the responsibility.

The duties of the Treasurer involve depositing membership dues, reimbursing expenses, and maintaining records. (Note that financial matters related to the book are handled by the Book Treasurer, Kim Metheny.) You will be asked to report expenses and the checking account balance at each meeting, but if you cannot attend, you can notify and report these items to one of the officers prior to the meeting.

If you would like to serve as treasurer of the Botanical Society, or can suggest an individual who would be perfect for the job, please let us know at the June meeting. If you cannot attend, please call Loree Speedy at (412) 521-9425, or yoree@sgi.net.

Nancy Palmer, who coordinated the field trips for the NA Rock Garden Society this April, has 30 walking sticks available. These polyurethane tubes are very durable but lightweight. Please call Nancy at (412) 366-5799 if you can use any of these sticks, or know of an organization that could use them.

Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Stinging Nettle

Stinging Nettle! Notice the warning in the name. This densely armored plant was familiar to people during Shakespeare's time. He referred to it in I King Henry IV. In Act II,

Scene 3, he has Hotspur say "...but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety."

Armor—barbs, bristles, prickles, spines, thorns, and others—occurs on many plants. Some are in common use such as Holly, Rose, Raspberry, but the armor is usually not part of the name.

The armor on Stinging Nettle is a step beyond. It consists of fine, pointed, hollow hairs with a globular base. These hairs contain a fluid which includes formic acid and histamine. When the hairs pierce the skin this fluid is released and causes intense burning and itching. Fortunately, relief is at hand and is easily applied: oil of the offending plant, crushed stems of Jewelweed or Dock and crushed leaves of plantain.

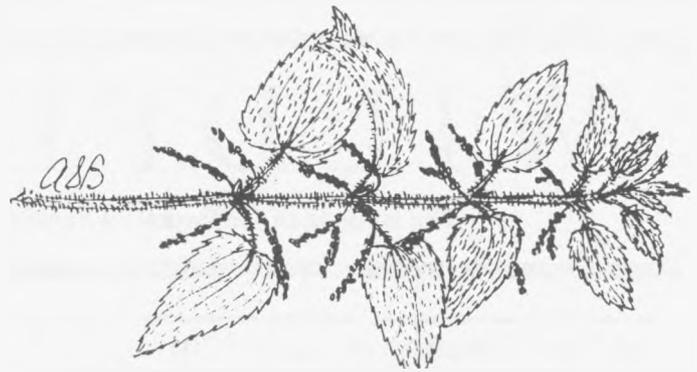
The botanical name of Stinging Nettle is *Urtica dioica*. *Urtica* is from Latin *urere*, burn, sting. *Dioica* is from Greek *di*, two and *oikas*, house. This indicates that the male and female flowers are on separate plants (two houses). The common name, nettle, has counterparts in several European countries. The possibility is that the name is based on a word for needle, because the plant was used extensively in Northern Europe for fiber before hemp and flax were available.

The fiber is silky and has the best quality when it is grown in deep, rich soil. It was considered stronger than linen and softer than hemp. It was used for the finest fabrics as well as the coarse, heavy ones, also for sewing thread, cordage, fishnets, and paper. The residue from fiber extraction and the seeds were food for farm animals.

The stinging hairs are harmless when heated, so the plant has been used for nutritious food and beverages, and for rennet, medicines, cosmetics, hair preparations and dyes.

Native to Eurasia, summer-blooming Stinging Nettle is now cosmopolitan.

Anne S. Bahl



Stinging Nettle – *Urtica dioica* by Anne S. Bahl

Botanical Books, off the Shelf

Botany and Artistry—how can you beat the combination?

Every year I wait for the Three Rivers Arts Festival for the return of botanical calligrapher, Susan Loy. Imagine the words of Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost or Ecclesiastes flowing, swirling through the frame, adorned with gorgeous and *accurate* floral illustration. The distinctive matting and framing by her partner, Ron Ayers, sets off each piece to perfection. No newly married couple in my family is safe from a Susan Loy print to celebrate.

And Susan now has published a book, *Flowers, the Angels' Alphabet - The Language and Poetry of Flowers*, a lavishly illustrated dictionary (2900 entries) including information on flower origins and naming, 139 drawings, and 42 historical floral poems and texts in 224 pages. Excerpts can be read on-line at www.cslpress.com or visit Susan's website at www.literarycalligraphy.com. If you've been looking to connect beauty with your passion for plants this is an artist you must see.

Susan Loy will be at the Three Rivers Arts Festival in Pittsburgh, PA from June 1 through June 6 and from June 12 through 17.

Kim Metheny

Field Trip Schedule

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

Saturday, June 9, 2001

Titus Bog, Erie County

Time: 10 a.m.

Leader: Sam Stull (814) 476-1795

This trip requires wading through the bog's moat for a short period, perhaps in water up to 2 foot deep, using shrubs and roots for balance. Old tennis shoes or waders are recommended. Plan on getting wet and climbing over tree trunks.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 166 (Rt. 6N Albion Edinboro). (Ignore earlier exits for Route 6). Head east on Route 6N through Union City. After taking the turn out of Union City (continuing on Route 6N), drive 5.7 miles to the intersection of Routes 89 North and 6N, where we will meet at an old drive-in theater structure on the left.

Saturday, June 23, 2001

Jennings Prairie, Butler County

Time: 1 p.m.

Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 North to Exit 99 (US 422 New Castle Butler). Drive east on Route 422 roughly 5.8 miles to the Prospect Exit, and turn left (north) onto Route 528. Continue on Route 528 for about 7 miles. We will meet in the Jennings Env. Center parking lot on the left (west) side of the road.

Saturday, June 30, 2001

Ferncliff Peninsula at Ohiopyle State Park, Fayette County

Time: 1 p.m.

Leader: Tom Pearson

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike (I-76) to Exit 9 Donegal. Turn left (east) onto Route 31. About 2 miles later, turn right (south) onto Route 381. Follow Route 381 about 18 miles to the town of Ohiopyle. As Route 381 enters Ohiopyle, it crosses railroad tracks. Turn right, after the tracks but before the bridge over the Yough, to enter the Ferncliff parking lot, where we will meet.

WILDFLOWERS OF PENNSYLVANIA contains over 400 pages of text accompanied by 612 color photographs of flowers. Size is 8½ x 5½, spiral bound, with a wrap-around dust cover.

Cost of book: \$20.00 + PA sales tax (7%) + Postage and Handling

Send order form to: Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D.

Carlow College

3333 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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*For organizations exempt from PA sales tax, please include a copy of your certificate.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – June 2001

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Pittsburgh, PA 15217

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WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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President: Dr. Mary Joy Haywood (412) 578-6175; Vice-President: Phyllis Monk (412) 831-2724; Treasurer:
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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. Send to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 20th 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 p.m. 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/bl.html>.