
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • October 2002

The Next Meeting is October 14

The next meeting will be Monday, October 14, 7:15 p.m., at the **A. J. Palumbo Hall**, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). As you approach the campus on Fifth Avenue (heading toward downtown Pittsburgh), do not turn right into the Carlow Campus entrance. Instead, pass the entrance, stay in the right lane, and make the immediate right into the parking area. Park here and cross the street. Place a note on your dashboard saying "Botanical Society Meeting," or use your parking permit.

The Botanical Society will celebrate 116 years this month! **Bonnie Isaac** will present "The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania: A Retrospective."

Bonnie is Collections Manager at the Section of Botany - Carnegie Museum of Natural History and an active contributor to the botany of western Pennsylvania.

She will present a brief history of the society and a look at some of the folks that have influenced it over the years, such as O. E. Jennings, Werner Buker, Virginia Phelps and Robert Bahl.

Field Notes - Tionesta Scenic Area, August 24, 2002

On August 24, 2002, member **Ted Grisez** of Warren, PA, led the Botanical Society on a field trip to the Tionesta Scenic Area. **Paul Brown** shares his field notes.

The Tionesta Scenic Area is a 2,018-acre old growth Hemlock-Beech forest. In recent years two major disturbances have occurred to this landscape. In 1985 a tornado leveled 800 acres of the forest and within the past few years beech bark disease (beech scale and *Nectria* fungi complex) has killed or severely weakened most of the mature Beech trees.

The understory consists mostly of beech coppice which has sprouted from the living roots of the mature Beech trees that succumbed to the tornado or to beech bark disease. Many of the Beech leaves had turned brown which Ted Grisez attributed to a hard frost in May. Beech tree seedlings were common and hopefully some will have resistance to beech bark disease.

While Hemlock seedlings were seen in fair numbers, Hemlock saplings were absent. It appears that deer browsing is preventing the regeneration of Hemlock trees. As Ted pointed out, oaks and White Pine do not grow in the Scenic Area and we saw no evidence of them. Striped Maple was a common understory shrub. Only one Hobblebush plant was observed. Pin Cherry, Blackberry, Steeplebush, and Hercules' Club were not seen in the forest interior. These species were only observed along the edge of the circle drive at the entrance to the Scenic Area.

Woody plant species observed:

Tsuga canadensis, Eastern Hemlock
Fagus grandifolia, American Beech
Betula alleghaniensis, Yellow Birch
Betula lenta, Black Birch
Prunus pensylvanica, Pin Cherry
Prunus serotina, Black Cherry
Rubus allegheniensis, Common Blackberry

Spiraea tomentosa, Steeplebush
Acer pensylvanicum, Striped Maple
Acer rubrum, Red Maple
Acer saccharum, Sugar Maple
Aralia spinosa, Hercules' Club
Fraxinus americana, White Ash
Mitchella repens, Partridgeberry
Viburnum alnifolium, Hobblebush

Paul Brown

Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Ragweed

The judges proclaimed "Not guilty!" at Goldenrod's trials for causing sneezes. If not Goldenrod, what is guilty? Ragweed is about 90% of the time, some of Ragweed's relatives less than 10%.

The two species of Ragweed common in Pennsylvania are tall plants; one to five feet, the other to fifteen feet. They tend to blend into the landscape because their 1/16" green flowers are inconspicuous. Ragweed will grow almost anywhere even from cracks in sidewalks. Seeds remain viable for several years.

Goldenrod's twenty-five species in Pennsylvania range from two feet to six feet. Its large, yellow, flower clusters stand out in the landscape. Its pollen is heavy, sticky and not wind-blown. There seems to be at least one Goldenrod species in most habitats in the state.

Blooming time for both genera is midsummer into autumn, and bloom they do no matter what their height. Ragweed's yellow pollen, profuse and extremely light, is easily blown over everything. Goldenrod is blamed because people see it.

Ragweed is monoecious, Greek mono, one and oecious, house. The flowers are unisexual, i.e., the male flowers (stamens) and the female flowers (pistils) are separate on each plant. Each staminate flower is a tight cluster of stamens, with as many as one hundred flowers on a raceme. A plant only two-feet high already

may have twenty racemes. The pistillate flowers may be immediately below all the staminate, or in the axil where the stalk of a raceme or a leaf joins the stem, or on their own raceme. All these variations can be on the same plant.

Ragweed's family is Compositae, classical name or Asteraceae, updated name. Ragweed's genus is the Greek ambrosia, the feminine form of ambrosios. In Greek legends it was a celestial substance capable of imparting immortality. The two species common in Pennsylvania are Common Ragweed, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, Greek, leaves like Artemesia, and Giant Ragweed, *A. trifida*, Latin, three-part leaves.

Ragweed's fruits are important winter food for game birds. Its tannin has had limited medicinal use. Moisture from its leaves is reputed to relieve poison-ivy itch.

Anne S. Bahl

Creating a Natural Landscape is Theme of 2002 Native Plant Conference

On Saturday, November 2, 2002, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens will present Creating a Natural Landscape. It will be held at the Phipps Garden Center in Mellon Park from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

William Cullina will present Enduring Perennials for Sun and Shade, focusing on underused native with interest throughout the year, and Native Woody Ornamentals. Mr. Cullina is the nursery manager and propagator for the botanical garden of the New England Wild Flower Society.

Dennis Whigham, professor of landscape ecology, will present Orchid Ecology, focusing on the interactions between orchids and mycorrhiza fungi. Garden writer and designer Carole Ottesen will focus on native plants for the residential landscape.

The fee is \$90 for non-members, \$75 for members. To register, or receive more information, call (412) 441-4442.

Carnegie Museum of Natural History Names Associate Curator in Botany

Carnegie Museum of Natural History has announced the appointment of Dr. Cynthia M. Morton to the position of Associate Curator in the Section of Botany. She began her work on August 1, 2002. Prior to joining Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Dr. Morton served as Director of Auburn University's Freeman Herbarium where she was actively involved with the Alabama State Lands Division's project to database the collection.

Dr. Morton received her undergraduate degree in Biology and Computer Science from Trinity College in Vermont. She received her MA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Doctorate from the CUNY/New York Botanical Garden. The focus of her research involves taxonomic relationships using morphological and molecular data of the family Rutaceae, a large tropical group containing many citrus fruits.

The museum's herbarium has significant worldwide holdings as well as the best representation in any herbarium of specimens from western Pennsylvania and the Upper Ohio Basin. In recent years, personnel and resources have been concentrated on the acquisition and preparation of new and unique specimens, and fieldwork has focused on endemics, endangered habitats, and under-collected areas.

News

- We are sorry to learn of the death of beloved member Mary Berger on Thursday, August 22. Mary loved to attend the monthly meetings; we will miss her. Our condolences to husband Luc Berger.

- Many of you submitted recipes for *Cooking on the "Front" Burner*, the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society's fund-raising cookbook. The recipes are mouth-watering, the titles are catchy, and the price is \$13.00 (\$9.40 plus \$0.60 tax plus \$3.00 shipping). Mail your check made payable to Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society to Lee Tosh, 5812 Irishtown Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102.

Field Trip Schedule

Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. For questions, call the trip leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232.

Saturday, October 12, 2002

**Ferncliff Peninsula at Ohiopyle State Park,
Fayette County**

Time: 1 p.m.

Leader: Mark Bowers (724) 872-5232

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike to Exit 91 - Donegal. Turn east (left) on Route 31. Travel about 2 miles and turn south (right) on Route 381. Travel ten miles to Normalville to a stop sign. Turn left onto Route 381 south and continue 11 miles to Ohiopyle. As Route 381 enters Ohiopyle, it crosses railroad tracks. Turn right just before the bridge over the Yough to enter the Ferncliff parking lot, where we will meet.

Saturday, October 19, 2002

**Moraine State Park - South Shore, Butler
County**

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 North to Exit 99 - Route 422/Butler/New Castle. Drive east on Route 422 about 2 miles to the South Shore Exit. Turn left toward the park. At the park office, continue straight ahead for about 0.7 mile and turn right into the Pleasant Valley Picnic Area, where we will meet.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – October 2002

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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, and notices of botanical events and group activities. Send to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 23th of the previous month.

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information

The Botanical Society was founded in 1886. 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. 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, 279 Orr Road, West Newton, PA 15089. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:15 p.m. sharp, at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome to the informative program and business meeting.

Wildflowers of Pennsylvania – Ordering Information – 400 pages of text and 612 color photographs

Wildflowers of Pennsylvania can be purchased for \$20.00 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, to Dr. Haywood at the address below. If you order by mail, add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3.00 for two, \$4.00 for three, \$4.50 for four. Send your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D., 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165 (412) 578-6175; mjhaywood@carlow.edu