
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • September 2004

Next Meeting is September 13

The next meeting will be Monday, September 13, **7:15 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. Place a note on your dashboard saying "Botanical Society Meeting," or use your parking permit.

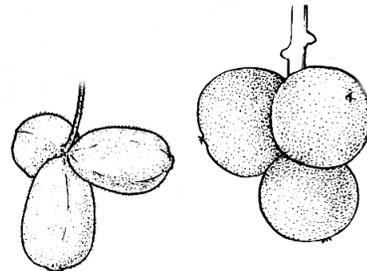
Our September program will feature member **Walt Shaffer**, who will present a program on "**Butterflies**." Walt and Dana Shaffer arrive at Botanical Society field trips with butterfly nets in hand. Come see why an intense study of butterflies is a desirable match for an awareness and appreciation of our native plants. You are sure to leave with tips for learning and identifying butterflies.

Forest Trees

The following is a continuation of an excerpt from "A Geography of Pennsylvania" by Charles B. Trego, published in 1843. He writes at a time when European settlers had recently cleared valleys and ridgetops; in twenty years the only large area of remaining virgin forest would be in north-central Pennsylvania. The text demonstrates how the wood culture affected the lives of the settlers, providing homes, tools, food and fuel.

The Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*) is common in our valleys where the soil is deep and fertile, and frequently attains a height of fifty or sixty feet. Its wood when freshly cut is of a violet color, but becomes dark by exposure to the air; it is susceptible of a beautiful polish, and

remains sound during a long time. Among other good qualities, it possesses considerable strength and tenacity and is not liable to be attacked by worms. It is much used for making coffins and various kinds of cabinet work, also the stocks of military muskets. Where it is abundant it is frequently used in building, and for the posts of fences, which, it is said, will last from twenty to twenty-five years. The nuts are collected and sold in our market; the kernel is large and pleasant to the taste, though inferior to the European walnut. The husks or outer covering of the fruit, as well as the bark, are used in the country for coloring woolen stuffs.



Fruits of Butternut (*Juglans cinera*) and Black Walnut (*J. nigra*) - Illustration from *Flora of West Virginia*, Part II, 1953 by P. D. Strasbaugh and Earl L. Core

White Walnut or Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), though less abundant in some parts of the State than the preceding species, is yet common on hill sides, along streams and other places where it finds a congenial soil. The nuts are longer and more oval than those of the Black Walnut; the kernel is thick and oily, and soon becomes rancid. In the green state, however, and when about half grown, they are used for making pickles. The wood is of a reddish color, and not so heavy and strong as that of the black walnut, but is very durable, and also free from injury by

worms. The bark yields an excellent cathartic medicine which is said to be efficacious in cases of dysentery. It is also used in the country for giving a brown color to wool.

Of the valuable Hickory tree we have several species, the timber of which, though differing in some respects, yet possesses the same general properties of great weight, strength and tenacity, speedy decay when exposed to moisture, and a peculiar liability to injury from worms. But though not adapted to use in buildings and fences, this wood performs other services in which no other kind of timber could so well be employed. It is almost universally used where great strength and elasticity are required, as in the axletrees of carriages, the handles of axes, and other carpenter's tools, large screws, cogs for mill wheels, whip handles, rake teeth, flails for threshing grain, the bows of ox yokes, and for innumerable other agricultural and domestic implements. For fuel it is generally preferred to every other kind of wood, affording in the same bulk more combustible matter, yielding a more lively heat, and leaving a heavy, compact, long-lived coal.

The White Maple (*Acer saccharinum*), sometimes called Silver Maple from the color of its leaves on the underside, and the Red Maple (*A. rubrum*) both grow in Pennsylvania; the latter, however, is the more common species. They may be distinguished by observing that the Red Maple has the young shoots, the flowers and the fruit deeply tinged with red, while in those of the White Maple that color appears but faintly. The leaf of the White Maple is five-lobed and deeply sinuated; those of the Red are three-lobed and unequally toothed. The capsules which contain the seeds of the White Maple are very large, and bear some resemblance to the wings of a huge grasshopper.

The wood of the Red Maple is harder than that of the White, and has a finer and closer grain. It is much used by chairmakers, and for bedsteads, spinning wheels, saddle trees, and a variety of other purposes. This wood is of a solid texture, and by polishing acquires a glossy and silken

surface. The variety called Curled Maple is commonly found in old trees, in which the fibers of the wood, instead of following a perpendicular direction, are undulated and waving. This renders the wood difficult to split, but when skillfully polished produces the most beautiful effect of light and shade. But few trees, however, afford this curled and waving disposition of the woody fiber. The bark of the Red Maple yields a purplish color by boiling, which, by the addition of copperas (sulphate of iron) becomes dark blue, approaching to black. It is used in the country for dyeing, and sometimes for making ink.



Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*) - Illustration from *Flora of West Virginia*, Part III, 1953 by P. D. Strasbaugh and Earl L. Core

Of the Sugar Maple we have two kinds; the true Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) and the Black Sugar tree, or Black Maple (*A. nigrum*). The former is most abundant in the northern parts of the State, and along the elevated range of the Allegheny tableland, where the soil, though fertile, is cold and moist. It is also found on the steep and shady banks of the streams which rise among the mountains. The Black Maple is more common in the low rich soils along the western

rivers. The leaves of the latter are of a darker green and a thicker texture than the true Sugar Maple; they are also slightly downy on the underside, while the others are smooth. Both are large trees, growing to a height of from fifty to seventy feet; the wood of the Black Maple, though much like the other, is coarser grained and less brilliant when polished.

The woody fiber of the Sugar Maple is sometimes waved like the curled maple; but a more beautiful and rare accidental form is the Birds' Eye Maple, where an inflexion of the fiber produces spots, sometimes contiguous, and sometimes a little distance apart. This wood when polished is very beautiful, and is used in various articles of cabinet work. Both these species of maple yield the sap from which sugar is made.

Congratulations to Members!

Our past president, (Ranger) Tim Manka, was recently selected Volunteer of the Month at the Carnegie Science Center. Tim started volunteering in 1996 and has over 1,750 hours of service.

Emily Hyre Mac Cadden received the Rosemary Circle Award for 25 years of membership in the National Herb Society of America. Emily is a Master Gardener, a volunteer at Penn State's trial Garden, and a docent at Phipps Conservatory.

Elizabeth DePiero received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Herb Society of America. She was recognized for her 28-year career teaching at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children; for her Braille signs in the Elizabethan Garden at the Pittsburgh Garden Center; and most notably for her careful recreation of Sidney Duerr's wonderful 1960's crewel embroidery kit titled Herbs for Use and Delight.

Field Trip Schedule

Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. For questions, call Loree at (724) 872-5232. **Note varying dates and times!**

Sunday, September 19, 2004

Buffalo Creek Valley, Washington County

Leader: Gail Wadzita

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 south to I-70. Take I-70 west to Exit 11/Taylorstown/Rte 221. At the stop sign, turn left. At the next stop sign, take a right. Continue about one mile to a blinking red light. Proceed straight through the light and meet in the parking area about 200 yards on the left, just past the S-bridge.

We will join Gail and friends to botanize along Buffalo Creek and tributaries. After the field trip, Gail has invited us to a picnic.

Saturday, September 25, 2004

Stavich Bicycle Trail, Lawrence County

Leader: Robert Coxe (412) 531-0137

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Biking field trip – Bring your bike!

Directions: The trail is about 1.25 hours from Pittsburgh. From Pittsburgh, follow the Parkway West past Pittsburgh International Airport, continuing north on PA60 and PA Toll 60. About 4.7 miles after the Exit Toll Booth, take the US224 west exit (Sampson St) and follow the sign for US224 to Poland. Approximately 0.7 miles after turning onto US224, turn left onto Covert Rd (SR3010) at Riley's and a ballfield. Follow this road, bearing to the left at an intersection, 1.4 miles to trailhead parking, on the right.

Stavich Trail is an 8-foot asphalt surface with noticeable but slight slopes, through farmland and woods along the Mahoning River. We will bike and botanize as we head to Struthers, Ohio.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – September 2004

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West Newton, PA 15089

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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. WILDFLOWERS is printed on recycled paper.

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