
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • April 2005

Dr. John Kartesz Will Speak at April 11 Meeting

The Botanical Society is pleased to announce that John T. Kartesz, Ph. D., is our speaker for the April meeting. Dr. Kartesz is a highly respected researcher who has been compiling a valuable and widely utilized synonymized checklist of the plants of North America and cataloging and mapping distribution information. He is Director of the Biota of North America Program.

Dr. Kartesz will speak on his county-level synthesis which shows the distribution by county of all plant taxa found in North America. He will also discuss the movement of invasive species and the control of their spread.

The program is Monday, April 11, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**, Carlow University, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Someone will be available to direct you to parking and to the Kresge Theater once you proceed up the hill from the university entrance from Fifth Avenue.

RSVP to Dr. Haywood if you plan to attend this special event. This will enable us to plan for parking and for refreshments that follow the meeting. Call her at (412) 578-6175 or e-mail her at mjhaywod@carlow.edu.

All of our meetings are open to the public. Thanks to Carlow University for making this free event possible.

The Next Meeting is May 9

The meeting for the month of May will be Monday, May 9, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**,

Carlow University, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland).

Christopher Tracey will present "The Oak Openings of Northwest Ohio." The Oak Openings are a complex of ecosystems ranging from wet meadows to dry sand barrens that occur in a narrow band west of Toledo, Ohio. This system was created by the western edge of glacial lake Warren and is ecologically similar to Presque Isle. This region harbors more than 180 species of rare plants and animals and is one of the most biodiverse regions of Ohio.

Christopher researched the ecology and genetics of the Wild Blue Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), the host plant for the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly. He will present a geological, ecological and cultural history of the Oak Openings, as well as give an overview of his research on the ability of small populations of Lupine to adapt to changing light conditions.

Christopher is an adjunct professor for the Landscape Architecture Program at Chatham College and an ecologist for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

Japanese Knotweed Feast!

On **Saturday, April 16**, the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania and Venture Outdoors will again sponsor a Japanese Knotweed Feast! From 2 to 5 pm, in Pittsburgh's Highland Park, we will cook heaping helpings of this rhubarb and buckwheat relative. The day's menu includes Knot Soup, Apple-Knotweed Pie, and other wild edibles recipes. There will also be short hikes to see and harvest samples of Japanese Knotweed in its wild habitat.

Too many botanists won't spoil the knotweed soup! Members of the Botanical Society are needed to forage, cook, and show others how to identify this and other nasty invasives. Members are also needed to assist with registration. **Botanical Society members who volunteer for any period of time will not be required to pay the admission fee!**

Call or e-mail Sean Brady at (412) 255-0564 or sbrady@wpfi.org to let him know that you will attend and help out. Let him know you can help, or ask him how you can help. Sean is also looking for recipes using wild edibles that might be available at that time of the year. If you do not wish to volunteer, you can attend the Knotweed Feast for a fee of \$13.00 (Venture Outdoors member) or \$15.00 (non-member).

Nature by Max Henrici

Max Henrici was a noted local nature columnist. This article was published in the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph on February 21, 1944.

Familiar as the Indians were with our native flora, if those which inhabited Allegheny County prior to the coming of the white man were to return, they would fail to recognize many of our common wild flowers. For most of our field and wayside plants are, like the present human inhabitants, immigrants from the Old World.

The Indians had to be good botanists. They had no livestock of any kind—no cattle, no swine, no sheep, no goats, no poultry, no horses. Their only domestic animal was the dog. They had none of the grains with which we are familiar except corn. Their weapons for hunting were of the crudest character—they had no firearms or metal fish-hooks. Consequently they were often starving, and in their desperation they tried every kind of plant that they could find, to see if it could be used for food. Nothing that grows went untested. In this way they became acquainted with the nutritive, poisonous or medicinal qualities of all our plants.

At that time this region was solid unbroken forest and the wild flowers were almost exclusively those that demand shade. When the white settlers cleared the forests the flowers exposed to the sunshine were unable to survive in the clearings. Their places were promptly taken by European wild flowers, the seeds of which were brought to America in the fodder that the immigrants took on board their ships with them to feed their livestock during the voyage. Almost every roadside wild flower that you see here in summer is European. The Indians called the common plantain (*Plantago major*) “the whiteman’s footprints,” by the way, because it promptly appeared wherever he came.

Nearly every spring the Botanical Society finds in Washington County a wild hyacinth (*Camassia esculenta*), the bulb of which was an important item in some Indian’s diet.

Know Your Wildflowers – Virginia Bluebells

Strolling in the woodland,
Admiring the jewels;
Are there any blue ones?
Ahhhh! Virginia Bluebells!

A delightful experience during a spring, wildflower-walk is seeing a colony of blooming Virginia Bluebells. Their flower stalks, which can reach two feet, have coiled ends. Pink buds, emerging on the outer side of the coil as it unrolls, develop into clusters of nodding, one-inch, blue, flowers. Some observers describe them as bell-like, others prefer trumpet-shaped, for the visiting bees it is not relevant.

Blue is the most common color; however, both pink and white forms exist, and their cultivars are available horticulturally. Descriptions of the blue color range from light blue to purplish-blue. Virginia Bluebell needs an acid soil, so the degree of soil acidity may be the determining factor in the shade of blue.

The plant seems to exhaust itself making its six-inch, basal, leaves and its many flowers. Shortly after seeds have set, the plant loses its color, collapses, and becomes dormant. It is an ephemeron, Greek, *ephemeron*, a short-lived plant or flower.

English settlers named the plant. They sometimes differentiated plants similar to those they knew in their homeland by adding the geographic area name. At that time Virginia was the name for an indeterminate area inward from the Atlantic Ocean. For plants north of Virginia, Canada would be used, southward, Carolina.

The botanical genus name, *Mertensia*, honors a distinguished German botanist, Prof. Franz Karl Mertens, 1764-1831. The species name is *virginica*. The family name, *Boraginaceae*, is from Middle Latin, *borra* or *burra*, rough hair, short wool. Most members of the family have hairy foliage. Virginia Bluebell's foliage is smooth, but the flower has a few hairs inside at its base. Some relatives are Borage, Comfrey, Forget-me-not, Heliotrope, Lungwort.

Virginia Bluebell, also called Virginia Cowslip, is the only wild species of *Mertensia* in Pennsylvania. Its usual habitat is a somewhat wooded, moist, flood plain. Thomas Jefferson included it in his garden at Monticello. It is one of our finest, native, wildflowers.

Anne S. Bahl

Plant Advocate Receives Boy Scout's Highest Honor

David Machesney, a Boy Scout in Troop 368 in Perrysville, chose to construct a deer exclusion fence in North Park to protect native plants from the browsing effects of deer. With the support and encouragement of the Botanical Society to complement his hard work, he successfully completed this Eagle Scout project. On May 7, David will receive the Boy Scout's highest honor, Eagle Scout. If you would like to

join David and Troop #368 at the Eagle Court of Honor, please call Diane Machesney at (412) 366-



7869.

Virginia Bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*

Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada. Vol. 3: 83. From USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

PICE Comes to Western Pennsylvania

Founded in 2002, the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education (PICE) is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to advancing knowledge and skills in natural history and conservation.

In 2005, PICE will be offering programs in western Pennsylvania. Hal Korber will teach "Photographing Wildflowers" at Raccoon Creek State Park in April and "Techniques of Macro-Photography" in the Laurel Highlands in May. In October, Jim Bissell will teach "Swamp and Wetland Ecology" at Pymatuning State Park. For information about these courses, and the other classes offered throughout Pennsylvania, contact PICE at (570) 458-5227 or download a 2005 brochure at <http://servives.juniata.edu/pice.html>.

Field Trip Schedule

Registration is **not** required (except for Barking Slopes trip on April 30). Everyone is welcome, including non-members. For questions, call the field trip leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232.

Saturday, April 16, 2005 – Don't forget to volunteer for the Knotweed Feast, beginning 2 pm. See newsletter for details.

Sunday, April 17, 2005
Boyce/Mayview Park, Allegheny County
Leader: George Bercik, (412) 655-4701
Time: 1 pm

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 south to the Exit 54 - Bridgeville/Route 50. Turn right at end of exit ramp, then turn right at the stoplight onto Washington Pike (Route 519 south). Continue 2 miles and turn left onto Boyce Road. Continue across a bridge over Chartiers Creek. Just past the bridge turn left into Ardolino's Pizza. Continue past the pizza shop to a parking area.

Or from Pittsburgh, take Route 19 south. About 3 miles beyond South Hills Village, turn right onto Boyce Road. Travel 1.1 miles to a paved turnoff into Ardolino's Pizza. Continue past the pizza shop to a parking area.

The woodlands in the undeveloped tract promise Sessile Trillium (*Trillium sessile*) and a host of early spring ephemerals. Let's see if we can add to the list created by Phyllis Monk, the Botanical Society and Upper St Clair Citizens for Land Stewardship in 2003! See www.usccls.org/BoyceMayview/Flora.html.

Sunday, April 24, 2005
Wilmore Dam, Cambria County
Time: 12:30 pm
Leader: Debbie Bodenschatz, (814) 495-5252

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take Route 22 East through Blairsville and Armagh. About 15 miles from Armagh, take Route 219 south and travel 6 ½ miles to the South Fork-Portage exit.

Head east (or north) on Route 53 for approximately 3 miles to the junction of Route 160, at the first stoplight in Wilmore. Meet at the restaurant on the left at this intersection.

This is a joint trip with the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society.

Saturday, April 30, 2005
Barking Slopes, Allegheny County
Time: 10:30 am
Leader: Pat McShea of the Allegheny Land Trust, (412) 604-0422

Allegheny Land Trust will be hosting a one-mile guided trillium walk along the foot of the 200-acre Barking Slopes Biological Diversity Area in Plum Borough. **Please call (412) 604-0422 to let the Allegheny Land Trust know you are coming!**

Directions: From Allegheny Valley Expressway, take Exit 11-PA Rte 910. Head east on Route 910 to intersection, and turn right onto Freeport Road. Continue for less than a mile to the lavender-colored Hulton Bridge. Crossing the bridge into Oakmont, follow Hulton Road for 1.3 miles as it climbs out of the river valley. Continue straight ahead, through a traffic light, onto Route 909 at the point where Hulton Rd. curls to the right. Follow Rt. 909 for 1.9 miles to Veltri's Restaurant, on the left at the top of the ridge. The restaurant parking lot will serve as the meeting place and car-pooling point.

Sunday, May 1, 2005
Enlow Fork Spring Extravaganza!
Enlow Fork Natural Area, Greene County
Leader: Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 232-8441

The day begins at 8:00 am with guided bird walks directed by local ornithologists.

Wildflower tours begin at 10 am and 2 pm. There will be a special speaker at 12 noon.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 south to Exit 14- Waynesburg, then follow Route 21 west through Waynesburg to Wind Ridge. At the eastern edge of Wind Ridge, turn north to

follow Nebo Ridge Road for about 3 miles. Make a right onto Walker Hill Road, then left onto Smokey Row, the dirt road that leads to the game lands parking lot.

Botanical Society members who can help lead wildflower tours for the event should call Mary Joy at (412) 232-8441.

Saturday, May 7, 2005
Trolley Line Trail at Erie National Wildlife Refuge, Crawford County

Time: 1 pm

Leader: Lee Ann Reiners,
reiners@surferie.net, 814-398-8571

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 154 Saegerstown/Conneautville/PA 198. Turn right (east) on PA Rte 198 for 2.9 miles. Turn left on US Rte 19/6 north for 8 miles to Cambridge Springs. Pick up PA Rte 408 and travel east about 5 miles to the corner of Rte 408 and Swamp Road, the trailhead for the Trolley Line Trail.

We'll join our friends from the Presque Isle Audubon Society.

Saturday, May 7, 2005
Friendship Hill National Historic Site,
Fayette County

Time: 2 pm

Leader: Robert Coxe, (412) 531-0137

Directions: From Pittsburgh, head toward Uniontown (via Route 51 south or via the PA Turnpike to New Stanton Exit, then Route 70 west to Route 51). As you approach Uniontown, take Route 119 south about 17 miles to Point Marion. Just before you cross the bridge into Point Marion, turn right onto Route 166 north. The park entrance is on the left, 3 miles north of Point Marion. Meet at the Gallatin House Visitor Center parking lot.

Saturday, May 14, 2005
Forest Trail, Raccoon Creek State Park,
Beaver County

Time: 1 pm

Leader: Esther Allen, (412) 366-0786

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the Parkway West (I-279 south/US 22-30) to the Airport Expressway (Route 60). Continue past the Airport entrance to Exit 7 – Clinton. At the end of the ramp, turn left and continue 1.1 miles to Route 30. Turn right on Route 30 and drive about 5 miles to the entrance for the Raccoon Creek State Park, on the left.

Travel the park road about 0.6 mile, and turn right at a sign for Lakeside Lodge. Continue about 0.7 mile to a parking area for the trail and boat launch.

Sunday, May 15, 2005
Pumpkin Run County Park, Greene County

Time: 1 pm

Leaders: Robert Coxe, (412) 531-0137 and
Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 578-6175

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 South to I-70. Head west on I-70 to I-43. Head south on I-43 (toll), which eventually turns into PA 88. Continue south on PA 88 until its intersection with PA 188 in Dry Tavern. Turn left and keep left at the next fork. Continue about 1 mile down the hill. Proceed under an underpass, then turn right onto Main St. Meet at the picnic pavilion on the left.

Upcoming Field Trips

The following trips are scheduled:

May 21: Camassia (Wild Hyacinth) sites in Lawrence County with Bonnie Isaac.

May 28: Cedar Creek Park with Tom Pearson and Mark Bowers

June 11: Kyle Woods State Nature Preserve in Mahoning Co., Ohio with Carl Patsche

July 9: Ginseng Mini-tour with Eric Burkhart

If you would like to lead or sponsor a field trip, please call Loree at (724) 872-5232; mousemapper@verizon.net. (Sponsoring field trips simply involves settling property permission issues, if applicable, providing directions to a parking area, and being present.)

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – April 2005

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West Newton, PA 15089

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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 University, 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