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# WILDFLOWERS

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

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## Next Meeting is September 12

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The next meeting will be Monday, September 12, **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 **Dr. Mary Joy Haywood**, who will present "**Diseases of Plants**." She will discuss the viruses, microplasm, bacteria and environmental factors that cause disease in plants. Dr. Haywood, botanist and plant pathologist, teaches botany at Carlow University and the Phipps Garden Center.

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## Farewell and Good Luck to Robert

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We wish member Robert Coxe a fond farewell and the best of luck on his new position in the state of Delaware. He has accepted a position as community ecologist with the Delaware Natural Heritage Program. This summer, Robert gathered his bicycle and computer and moved to Dover. We will miss Robert's hard work and his dedication in setting up our programs and leading interesting field trips.

Before he left his position at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Robert completed the Greene County Natural Heritage Inventory. Natural Heritage Inventories present information on unique plants, animals, natural ecological communities, and other important natural resources. They identify, map and discuss important natural areas within a county,

and provide recommendations regarding management and protection. This document (and other county inventories) can be accessed online at [www.paconserve.org/rc/cnhi-greene.html](http://www.paconserve.org/rc/cnhi-greene.html). Hard copies may be obtained from the Greene County Planning Commission, Fort Jackson Building, 49 South Washington St, Waynesburg, PA 15370. Phone: (724) 852-5300.

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## In Memory of Mary Lou Brown

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Cherished member Mary Lou Brown died on July 16, 2005 at the age of 93. Mary Lou was the wife of the late Jasper "Jay" Brown; Mary Lou and Jay were active members of the Botanical Society for most of their adult lives. Mary Lou led many field trips, served as program chairperson, and participated in the initial planning stages of the Society's "Wildflowers of Pennsylvania." Several of her photographs are included in the book.

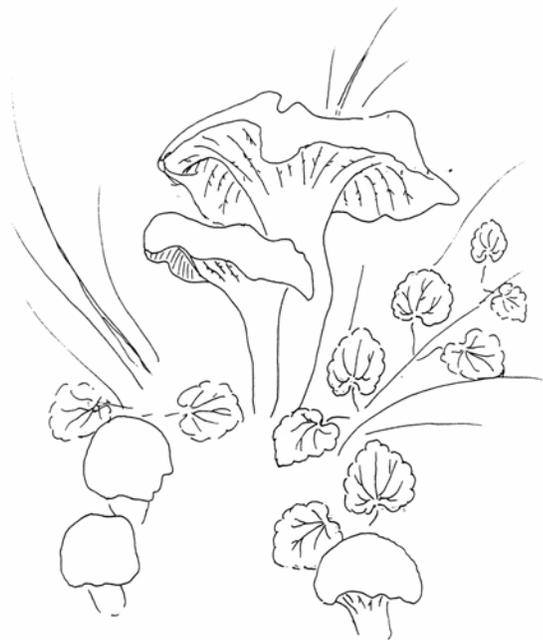
Several years ago, members were reminiscing about the 100th anniversary banquet of the Botanical Society in 1986, recalling the speakers, venue, table favors, etc. Mary Lou began to speak of quite different facets of the event, causing a few members to remind her that those things did not happen in 1986. Mary Lou casually remarked, "I'm talking about the 50th anniversary celebration!" Not many members can boast about attending both the 50th and 100th anniversaries.

Mary Lou was an avid outdoorswoman. Many of us recall her slide shows of mountain climbing in the Grand Tetons in the early part of the century; she and her friends donned thick cable wool sweaters and leather shoes to climb mountains while Mary Lou recorded the sights

on Kodachrome slide film. Her love of nature extended to environmentalism, and she often urged members to support environmental causes and donate time and money to voice concern for the natural world. She was an active member of the Northmont United Presbyterian Church. For Mary Lou, love and respect of nature was a way to worship God.

In addition to the Botanical Society, Mary Lou was a member of Brooks Bird Club, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, Wissahickon Nature Club and countless other organizations. She was an artist and a teacher. She taught physical education in the Pittsburgh school district, and it is heartening to know that she encouraged many young women to explore the outdoors and enjoy physical exercise.

Donations in honor of Mary Lou may be made to the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, 614 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238.



Chantarelle, *Cantharellus cibarius*, by Mary Lou Brown, 1988.

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## Updated Field Guide to Ferns Will Be Published Soon

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In 1956, the late Boughton Cobb wrote “A Field Guide to Ferns and Their Related Families,” a popular addition to the Peterson Field Guide Series. Unchanged in all the years since, it has become the classic on the subject. Now the New England Wild Flower Society has completely updated the text of this book and added 100 color photographs. The incredibly beautiful full-page line drawings by the late Laura Louise Foster have been reproduced from the original art. New subjects include a section on habitats and conservation, a glossary of botanical terms, and a chapter on gardening with ferns. The guide will be released on September 12, 2005, and the price is \$20. Copies will be available at V. F. Thomas Co. at (207) 266-5748 / [www.vfthomas.com](http://www.vfthomas.com), or your favorite bookstore.

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## Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Thistles, Part II

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The word, thistle, evolved from the Danish *tidse*. *Carduus*, from Latin *carere*, to card, is the name of a plant used for carding, i.e. for straightening and cleaning fibers for spinning. *Cirsium*, from Greek *kersion*, is a kind of thistle said to cure a *keros*, an enlargement of a vein.

*Compositae*, composed of two kinds of flowers, is the classical family name. *Astereaceae*, for the typical genus, *Aster*, is the updated family name. The family is cosmopolitan except for mainland Antarctica. The family's 25,000 species include plants for drugs, food, an insecticide, medicines, oils, ornamentals, rubber, timber, a vermifuge, and many plants not used commercially so considered weeds.

Other genera in the family that have species with thistle as part of the common name are *Carlina*, *Carthamus*, *Centaurea*, *Cnicus*, *Lactuca*, *Onopordon*, *Silybum*, *Sonchus*.

Species in other families with thistle as part of the common name are Blue Thistle, Forget-me-

not family; Fuller's Thistle, Teasel family; Hundred Thistle, Carrot family; Russian Thistle, Spinach family. Gerard's Herbal, 1633 edition, lists some plants: Gummie Thistle, Poinsettia family; Golden Thistle of Peru, Hedgehog Thistle, Torch Thistle, all in the Cactus family.

Thistle modifies the names of some wild life. Various finches, including goldfinches, are called thistle birds or thistle warp as is the siskin. Thistle cock is the corn bunting. All eat the seeds of thistles. The larvae of thistle butterfly, (the painted lady) and of the thistle plume moth eat the thistle leaves. The thistle cropper is the donkey, the only mammal known to graze on thistles.

Thistle modifies the names of some inanimate objects: thistle dollar and thistle merk, Scottish silver coins; thistle crown, English gold coin; thistle digger, a spade designed for cutting thistles stalks underground and removing them; thistle tube, a chemical tube shaped like a thistle stalk with flowers.

For more than two thousand years people have been using available thistle-like plants for food for themselves and their domesticated animals. They depended upon them for medicines for abdominal and topical ailments, both infections and injuries. A prominent one advertised for liver problems is Milk Thistle, *Silybum marianum*.

Anne S. Bahl

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## Field Trip Schedule

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Registration is **not** required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Trips are not canceled due to rain. Wear shoes that can get wet. Water and sun protection are recommended for mid-summer trips. For questions, call the field trip leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232.

**Saturday, September 17, 2005**

**North Park, Allegheny County**

**Time: 1:00 pm**

**Leader: Diane Machesney (412) 366-7869**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take Route 8 North. About 7 miles beyond Etna, you see a Boston Market restaurant on the right. At this intersection, turn left onto Wildwood Road. After 3 miles, park on the left side of Wildwood Road, across from a Tastee Freeze. This is just before the big intersection with Babcock Blvd.

We will look for the bottled gentian, explore the arboretum and head to Latodami trails and nature center.

**Saturday, September 24, 2005**

**Independence Marsh, Beaver County**

**Time: 1:00 pm**

**Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take the Parkway West (I-376) to the Airport Parkway (Route 60). Continue past the airport exit to Exit 9 Hopewell. Go west (left) on Rte. 151. Shortly after you cross an iron bridge, you will see Amerigas on the corner. Turn right here onto Cowpath Road. Continue about 1/2 mile to the Beaver County Conservation District Environmental Center.

This is a favorite for fall wetland plants. To learn more about the marsh, go to [www.independencemarsh.org](http://www.independencemarsh.org).

**Saturday, October 15, 2005**

**Wyggeston Trail, Moraine State Park, Butler County**

**Time: 1:00 pm**

**Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 North to Exit 99/Butler. Drive east on Route 422 roughly 5.8 miles to the Prospect Exit, and turn left (north) onto Rte. 528. Shortly after crossing over Route 422, turn left onto "Old Rte 422." Continue about 1/2 mile to the parking area/trailhead for Wyggeston Trail on the right.

## Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – September 2005

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### **WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania**

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**Editor:** Loree Speedy, 279 Orr Road, West Newton, PA 15089, (724) 872-5232; E-mail: mousemapper@verizon.net.  
**President:** Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 578-6175, E-mail haywoodmj@carlow.edu; **Vice-President:** Phyllis Monk, (412) 831-2724 E-mail: uscmonk@ieee.org; **Treasurer:** Kimberly Metheny; **Recording Secretary:** Bonnie Isaac

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.

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### **The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information**

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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.

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

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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