
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • April & May 2006

Next Meeting is April 10

The next meeting will be Monday, April 10, **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 speaker will be **Sandy Feather**. Sandy will present **Underutilized Trees for the Home Landscape**. She will focus on small and medium trees that are appropriate for smaller yards, as well as those that offer more than one season of interest. Not all of the trees and shrubs are native to western Pennsylvania, or even the United States, but all are easy to grow and attractive.

Sandy Feather has been the consumer horticulture educator with Penn State Extension in Allegheny County for nine years. She coordinates the Penn State Master Gardener program in Allegheny County, and has responsibilities for the PSMG program throughout 11 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. Many of us know Sandy from her weekly Gardening Q & A column in the Saturday edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

And the Following Meeting is May 8

The following meeting will be Monday, May 8, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland).

Member **Robert Coxe** will return to Pittsburgh to present **Natural Communities in Delaware**.

Robert grew up in Raleigh, NC and studied at UNC-Asheville, UNC-Charlotte and West Virginia University. After college he worked with Dr. John Kartesz at the Biota of North America Program. In 1999, he worked as an ecologist for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and completed natural heritage inventories for Fayette, Lawrence, Mercer and Greene Counties. Robert is currently working as the ecologist for the Delaware Natural Heritage Program, where he is working on the Natural Community Classification and mapping vegetation for Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge.

Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Marsh Marigold

Marsh Marigold is probably the most conspicuous of the spring wildflowers in its habitat. This is cool-temperature bogs, marshes, swamps, and other wet areas where its thick rhizomes and roots can be in wet soil. It is indigenous in the cooler parts of the northern hemisphere. It is scattered throughout Pennsylvania.

Marsh Marigold, *Caltha palustris*, in *Ranunculaceae*, shares the Marigold part of its common name with other plants in other families. In the *Aizoaceae* it is Fig Marigold, *Mesembryanthemum*. In the *Compositae/Asteraceae*, they are Bur-Marigold, *Bidens cernua*; Pot Marigold, *Calendula officinalis*; Cape Marigold, *Dimorphotheca species*; African Marigold, *Tagetes erecta*; French Marigold, *Tagetes patula*.

The family name of Marsh Marigold, *Ranunculaceae*, is Latin for *rana*, frog and

culus, a diminutive. Together they mean little frog, alluding to the similar habitat.

The genus and species names are Latin. *Caltha* was used in Roman times for Marsh Marigold and another yellow flower, possibly Calendula. Cordus (1515-1544), a brilliant German botanist, used *Caltha* solely for Marsh Marigold in his detailed accounts of plant structure. Linnaeus (1707-1798) retained it when he wrote *Species Plantarum*, now considered the base for botanical nomenclature. *Palustris* means in the swamps.

In England there were about fifty other common names for *Caltha palustris*, some of which were shared with other plants. This is one reason botanical names are necessary. However, when new evidence about plant history and relationships requires it, the International Botanical Congress will change botanical names so that the names adhere to the rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature.



Caltha palustris – Marsh Marigold

The flower of Marsh Marigold can be up to 2” in diameter, with 5 to 9 bright, shiny, golden-yellow sepals (no petals), seemingly an oversized Buttercup. Large leaves, up to 7” across, come directly from the rhizome; smaller leaves are on the stem. The stalks are thick and

hollow. Blooming time is April to June, usually followed by dormancy.

The plant contains toxic substances and must not be eaten unless it has been cooked and rinsed twice and then cooked a third time.

Anne Bahl

Greene County Checklist Available

A “Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Greene County, Pennsylvania” has recently been published in the botanical journal *Sida*, Volume 21, Issue 3. Robert Coxe, Mary Joy Haywood, Cynthia Morton, and Bonnie & Joseph Isaac are the authors. A checklist has not previously been compiled for this county.

Those who explore the natural area of this southwestern county are urged to obtain a copy of the checklist. Contact Bonnie Isaac, Section of Botany, Carnegie Museum, 4400 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; (412) 622-3253; IsaacB@CarnegieMNH.org

How Names of Plants Can Be Learned

Enjoy this excerpt from “How To Identify Plants” by H. D. Harrington (Sage Books, 1957).

The names of plants can be learned in at least two ways.

1. *Ask someone who knows.* This method is satisfactory when dealing with rather few numbers and when your authority is constantly at hand. Probably this is the most enjoyable way of learning the names of plants, as a boy who becomes acquainted with trees by having them pointed out by his father. However, few of us have this opportunity of constant expert advice. Add to this the fact that our trusted authority may turn out to be a broken reed and we may learn a lot of incorrect names! It is just as hard to learn the wrong names as the right ones. The

sad fact seems to be that the less some people know about plants the surer they are in making snap identifications! A real expert is always cautious, sometimes exasperatingly so!

2. *Learn to identify the plants yourself.* This is the best and surest way because you can determine plants anywhere and at any time. All that is necessary is the correct manual or flora and the skill to use it.

Why Plant Identification Cannot Be Made Easy

1. *There is a special knack involved.* Some people pick up this skill more quickly than others. Discouragement always comes at the beginning when progress seems slow.

2. *Technical descriptive terms must be mastered.* These terms are freely used by the manuals because they have a definite and exact meaning that cannot be expressed in ordinary language, at least with reasonable brevity. For example, two related species may differ only in the type of hairs on the leaf surface, one “tomentose”, the other “pilose”. This is a clear out difference to one who understands these terms but almost impossible to state briefly in anything but botanical parlance. At least three ways of mastering these technical terms are possible.

- a. Deal with each new term as it is encountered. Almost every manual includes a glossary explaining these terms.
- b. Attempt to memorize all or most of the terms used by the manual and try to understand their exact meaning before starting the identification proper.
- c. Drill on the important terms that are continually used and look up the others as needed.

The third method is the best for students. The first one slows the work down so much that a beginner becomes discouraged. The second method would surely work out but it would certainly be monotonous and uninteresting. The last procedure allows one to understand these

commonly used terms better by giving a chance to compare related ones. For example the exact meaning of “lanceolate” as a leaf shape becomes apparent when one compares it with the related “linear” and “ovate”. Some students find it worth while to keep a list of each new term with its definition. These can be reviewed from time to time. However, some of the names on this list may be uncommon and may not be used again for some time. Form the habit of checking the meaning of each new term as it comes up. Trying to get the meaning from the context, comparing it with its contrasting term, skipping over the phrase and trusting to luck — all these methods may work in certain cases but can never lead to a real skill in identifying plants.

3. *Constant practice is necessary.* This means that a student must be really in earnest about acquiring the skill. Either a stern necessity or an unflinching determination (or both) are prerequisites in learning to identify plants. The most efficient method of acquiring this technique is to learn it under the direction of some competent teacher where help can be given when it is most needed. However, many people in various walks of life have picked up this discipline entirely on their own without the aid of a formal course in the subject. Remember, do not allow yourself to become discouraged at first.

Field Trip Schedule Enclosed

The field trip schedule for April and May is enclosed. Also scheduled is a weekend trip to **Dolly Sods on June 24-25, 2006**, led by Bonnie Isaac and Charles & Martha Oliver.

Canaan Valley is approximately 140 miles from Pittsburgh. Timberline Realty offers rentals, especially for groups, 1 (800) 633-6682; Canaan Valley Resort offers comfortable rooms, (304) 866-4121. For information on other accommodations in the Davis, WV, and Canaan Valley area, call 1-800-CALL WVA. Camping is available at Blackwater and Canaan Valley State Parks.

Field Trip Schedule – April/May 2006

Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. For questions, or if you would like to lead or sponsor a field trip, call Loree at (724) 872-5232.

Saturday, April 22, 2006

Pumpkin Run, Greene County

Leader: Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 578-6175

Time: 1:00 p.m.

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.

Sunday, April 23, 2006

Dark Hollow Woods, Allegheny County

Leader: Glenn Davis, (724) 335-4252

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Directions: From PA Route 28, take Exit 11 (PA 910/Harmer). The ramps exit onto PA 910; take PA 910 (south toward the Allegheny River) to its intersection with Freeport Road. Turn right onto Freeport Road and continue about 0.8 mile to the Hulton Bridge into Oakmont. Once you cross the bridge, turn right onto Allegheny River Blvd. Continue 1/4 mile and turn left onto Pennsylvania Avenue. Follow Pennsylvania Avenue to the top of the hill to the lot for Dark Hollow Woods. If lot is full, park along the street leading up to it.

Saturday, April 29, 2006

Wolf Creek Narrows, Butler County

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 105 (Slippery Rock/PA 108). Turn left onto PA 108 toward Slippery Rock. Go about 0.7

mile and turn left at an intersection that has a Dairy Queen on the right. Continue 1.7 mi to the first paved road on the right and turn right onto this road. Pass a dairy farm on the left. Bear right at the T intersection and continue a little less than a mile to the parking area on your right, which is just before a bridge over Slippery Rock Creek.

Sunday, April 30, 2006

Enlow Fork Ecology Extravaganza!

Enlow Fork Natural Area, Greene County

Leader: Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 578-6175

Time: Pack a lunch and arrive early!

This year's Ecology Extravaganza will again feature a variety of outings to explore the area's flora and fauna. The day begins at 7:30 am with guided bird walks. Events continue throughout the day to explore wildflowers, trees, butterflies, dragonflies, streams, amphibians and snakes, geology and watershed conservation.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 south to Exit 14 (Waynesburg). Follow PA 21 west through Waynesburg and Graysville for approximately 19.5 miles to Nebo Ridge Road. Turn right and travel Nebo Ridge Road for about 2.7 miles. Make a right onto Walker Hill Road, then left onto Smokey Row, the dirt road that leads to the state game lands parking lot.

Saturday, May 6, 2006

Hell's Hollow Trail in McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Robert Coxe

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 96 – Portersville. Turn left onto PA 488 and travel about 4.2 miles to Heinz Camp Road. Turn right onto Heinz Camp Road, cross the Armstrong Bridge and continue up the hill to a right onto Shaffer Road. The Hell's Hollow trailhead parking lot is on the right about 100 yards after the turn, just before a one-lane bridge.

Saturday, May 13, 2006
Olsen Sanctuary, Crawford County
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Leader: Lee Ann Reiners ,
reiners@surferie.net (814) 398-8571

Laura Olsen Sanctuary is a 50+ acre protected area in Crawford County owned by Presque Isle Audubon Society for over 30 years. Although it has been neglected somewhat over time, we now are working to revitalize it—eliminate alien invasives, restore the walking trails, inventory breeding birds and identify and label plants on the property. The Botanical Society and Presque Isle Audubon Society hope to work together during this field trip to begin the identification and labeling process.

Directions: Take I-79 to the Saegertown exit; Rt. 198 east to Saegertown; Rt. 19 north to Cambridge Springs (watch for Rt. 19 to take a right turn at the intersection in Venango). In Cambridge Springs, when you come to the red light, go straight onto Rt. 408. Follow it for about 1 1/2 miles to the American Legion building on the left. Pull into their parking lot to meet (we'll gather by the tool shed behind the building) and we'll head to the sanctuary from there, another 8 miles or so. (Restrooms will be available at the Legion. It's open to members and their guests only, but Lee Ann can let you in.)

Saturday, May 13, 2006
Indian Creek Valley, Fayette County
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Leaders: Lisa Smith and Mark Bowers,
4beagles@verizon.net (724) 872-5232

We will join the Mountain Watershed Association and local community members for a spring wildflower walk. Board member and ecologist Lisa Smith will provide the conservation background on Indian Creek Valley and Mark Bowers will assist with wildflower id.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike to Exit 91 - Donegal. Turn east (left) on PA 31. Travel about 2 miles and turn south

(right) on PA 381. Travel about 11 1/2 miles on PA 381. Once you cross the iron bridge over Mill Run Reservoir, turn right onto the next unpaved road. Continue on this road a short distance. Park on the right across from the sign for Camp Christian on the left.

Saturday, May 20, 2006
Narigan Run in S.G.L. 232 - Buffalo Creek Valley, Washington County
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Leaders: Loree Speedy and Gail Wadzita

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 south to I-70. Take I-70 west to Exit 11 – (Taylorstown/PA 221). At the stop sign, turn left. At the next stop sign, take a right. Continue about one mile to a blinking red light at US 40. Proceed straight through the light and meet in the parking area about 200 yards on the left, just past the S-bridge.

Saturday, May 27, 2006
Aunt Clara Fork, Washington County
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Leaders: Loree Speedy (724) 872-5232

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-279 Parkway West and continue on U.S. 22 west to the Bavington Exit. At the end of the ramp, turn right and then left and continue 1.2 miles to the Bavington Inn on the left, where we will meet.

Saturday, June 3, 2006
Butler-Freeport Trail,
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take Route 28 north to Exit 17 (PA356/Butler/Freeport). At the end of the ramp, head west or north on PA 356. After roughly 3.5 miles, turn right onto Sarver Road (SR2018). Continue a little over 1/2 mile, traveling down a hill. After crossing a creek and passing a volunteer fire department on the left, turn left into the bike trail parking area, where we will meet.



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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