
WILD FLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • September 2006

Next Meeting is September 11

The next meeting will be Monday, September 11, 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.

Richard W. Kerrigan, of Sylvan Research, will present "**Agaricus: the beautiful mushrooms.**" The mushroom genus *Agaricus* is a large and diverse group of saprotrophic fungi. We'll look at examples drawn from the phylogenetic breadth of the genus, including edible, poisonous, medicinal, indigenous, introduced and cultivated species. Dr. Kerrigan will make the case that these are interesting, important, and esthetically endowed organisms. A number of undescribed taxa as well as more familiar species will be introduced.

Dr. Kerrigan completed his mycological training with David Arora, Harry Thiers, Ian Ross and Jim Anderson. He is Director of Research at Sylvan Inc., a preeminent research organization in the mushroom industry. He is the author of *Agaricales of California Vol. 6: Agariceae* (Mad River Press, 1986), several patents, various popular, trade, and symposium papers, and 29 peer-reviewed publications.

Botanical Society Contributes to Botany In Action

At the June 2006 monthly meeting, members of the Botanical Society voted to contribute \$1000 to Botany In Action.

Botany in Action (BIA) is a 501(c)(3) organization with the following mission statement: "Botany in Action is a commitment to botanical research, habitat conservation and environmental education. BIA supports doctoral graduate student ethnobotanical or ecological fieldwork. Preference is given to work on ethnomedicine or plants important to our region. Grantees are funded to live and research in the field, return results to the informant communities, share their work at scientific conferences, and educate the public in Pittsburgh once a year."

Botany In Action was conceived in 1995 by Susan Clancy and Paula Cook Sculley, members of the Garden Club of Allegheny County who felt compelled to do something about the global loss of biodiversity. The program is designed to award multiple-year grants of about \$3000 annually to support graduate fieldwork in botany, ecology and ethnobotany. Money raised by the organization is used only for the student grants. In 2000, the education department of Phipps Conservatory stepped in to take over responsibility for the BIA program, but the program still relies heavily on volunteers for many day-to-day operations.

The donation from the Botanical Society will help fund the field work of Christopher Heckel, who is working on a Ph. D. in Evolution and Ecology at the University of Pittsburgh. He is looking at the population dynamic effects of deer on Jack-in-the Pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*. Jack-in-the-Pulpit is typically not browsed by deer, but Chris' research will document the effects of deer overabundance on a non-preferred forest herb. Can a non-preferred species be negatively impacted by deer trampling, soil compaction, or changes in

ecosystem processes that result from changes in community composition? Chris will perform fieldwork in Crawford County, Trillium Trail in Allegheny County and Powdermill Nature Reserve in Westmoreland County.

Chris Heckel will speak about his work at the Botany In Action Public Program, scheduled for Saturday, January 6, 2007. Details will be announced in our upcoming newsletter.

Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Invasive Species

Representatives from several groups attended workshops in St. Louis and Chicago to explore and develop workable voluntary approaches to reduce the introduction and spread of non-native invasive plants. The voluntary codes offer professional codes of conduct designed to curb the use and distribution of invasive plant species through self-governance and self-regulation by various groups such as nursery professionals, the gardening public, government organizations and botanic gardens. Following are voluntary codes of conduct for the gardening public:

- Ask for only non-invasive species when you acquire plants. Plant only environmentally safe species in your gardens. Work towards and promote new landscape design that is friendly to regional ecosystems.
- Seek information on which species are invasive in your area. Sources could include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies. Remove invasive species from your land and replace them with non-invasive species suited to your site and needs.
- Request that botanical gardens and nurseries promote, display and sell only non-invasive species.
- Help educate your community and other gardeners in your area through personal contact, and in such settings as garden clubs and other civic groups.
- Invite speakers knowledgeable on the invasive species issue to speak to garden clubs, master gardeners, schools and other community groups.
- Seek the best information on control of invasive plant species and organize neighborhood work groups to remove invasive plant species under the guidance of knowledgeable professionals.

- Volunteer at botanical gardens and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.
- Participate in early warning systems by reporting invasive species you observe in your area.

From the Center for Plant Conservation website www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives/

Outings Revisited: Dolly Sods Wilderness

About twenty people showed up at the Canaan Valley Resort Lodge for this botanical outing into this remote, rich plant area. The Dolly Sods Wilderness was once covered with an old growth virgin red spruce forest. After it was clear-cut by the early loggers a hot fire swept through the area scorching the soil. Heavy rains washed away what was left of the topsoil exposing the conglomerate bedrock and it became "bald." Over the next century alpine vegetation slowly moved in and bogs formed.

Great views of the Canaan Valley can be seen from these heights, but not on this particular outing. The fog was so heavy on Saturday you could barely see the road in front of you...as we caravanned up the mountain. Consequently, slow driving was the rule because if the guy in front of you stopped, you didn't see the taillights until you were fifteen feet away.

We began exploring the Bear Rocks area. Despite the fog, the landscape was beautiful. Pink mountain laurel was almost at peak bloom and stood out in the fog with white rock outcrops and windswept trees for a backdrop. Pink azalea was also abundant and just a day or two past peak bloom. The white flowers of mountain ash added contrast. Two specimens of flame azalea were found, one right along the trail. Rain did not begin on the mountain until 3:45, at which time we quit.

On Sunday the rain began ten minutes after the morning field trip began and continued to pour throughout most of the day, but the paths we

chose were beautiful and no one seemed to mind. Even in pouring rain, people were using their field guides under umbrellas to identify plants. It's no wonder the general public thinks all naturalists are crazy.

Dick Byers, reprinted from the Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club Newsletter. For information about the Club, contact Dick at otusasio@lhct.net or (724) 593-3543.

Field Trip Schedule

Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Trips are not canceled due to rain. Wear shoes that can get wet. For questions, call the trip leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232.

Saturday, September 9, 2006
Panhandle Trail, South Fayette Township, Allegheny County
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Leader: Joe & Bonnie Isaac

Directions: From Pittsburgh, travel I-79 south to Exit 54/PA 50/Bridgeville. Travel PA 50 west about 5/10 mile and turn right onto Millers Run Rd. Travel 2.1 miles on Millers Run Rd and turn right onto Old Oakdale Rd. (Look for signs to an elementary school). Continue 2.1 miles on Old Oakdale Rd; you will pass schools on your right and then reach a stop sign.

At this intersection, turn left onto Battleridge Rd. At the first Y, bear left to travel on PA 978 south. At the second Y, make a right onto Robinson Run Rd. Travel Robinson Run Road 1.2 miles, and make a sharp right onto Cemetery Hill Rd. At the bottom of the hill, the road will cross over the Panhandle Trail in the village of Sturgeon. Meet at the pavilion on the right.

The Panhandle trail is a 29-mile former Conrail rail line beginning in Collier Township in Allegheny County and traversing through Washington County to Weirton. It is being

converted into a multi-use, non-motorized, recreation and health trail.

Saturday, September 23, 2006
Spruce Flats above Linn Run State Park, Westmoreland County
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Leader: Mary Joy Haywood

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike east to Exit 91/Donnegal. At the end of the tollbooth ramp, turn left onto PA 31 and then, after a short distance, left onto PA 711. Continue on PA 711 north for about 9 miles. Turn right onto Darlington Road (this may be unmarked) and travel about 1 mile to its junction with PA 381. Continue straight onto PA 381 for a short distance, then turn right onto Linn Run Road. Travel through Linn Run State Park to the top of the hill to a Picnic Pavilion for Spruce Flats Wildlife Area, where we will meet.

The 28-acre Spruce Flats Bog formed in a natural depression on top of Laurel Ridge. At 2700 feet above sea level, its open bog characteristics mirror conditions common in the area during the Ice Age. If you wish, you may come prepared for wet feet, or you can stay dry in surrounding observation areas.

Saturday, October 7, 2006
Fern Walk at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland County
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Leader: Tom Pearson

Need practice identifying those infernal ferns? Join Tom on the new Armstrong and the Black Birch Trails at the Nimick Nature Center.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike east to Exit 91/Donnegal. At the end of the tollbooth ramp, turn left (east) onto PA 31. Follow Route 31 east for 2.7 miles. Turn left onto PA 381 North. Follow PA 381 North for 6.4 miles to the Nimick Nature Center on your left.

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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