



# Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

## Enjoy Your Wildflowers

NORTHERN BLUE FLAG *By Anne S. Bahl*

The plant to which Tennyson was referring probably was *Iris pseudacori*, Yellow Iris, that reaches six feet. It is native to Europe and probably deliberately brought into the States. It is in scattered locations in Pennsylvania as if it had been planted in water gardens and escaped. It now grows in all the eastern and the north central states.

Northern Blue Flag, *Iris versicolor*, is a native bog and marsh plant that will extend its territory into wet meadows and open, wet, brushlands that the sun reaches. It grows in most counties in Pennsylvania, and in the eastern and north central States. It is the source of commercial orris root and has the fragrance of violets. The fragrance is used in flavorings and perfumes. Blooming time is May into July.

The structure of an Iris flower may bewilder a first time observer of it. Compare the flowers of a Wild Rose and Northern Blue Flag. The Wild Rose has five green leaves called sepals at the base of the flower. Iris has three large colorful sepals called falls. They flare out and down from the flower's center.



Near the center the falls have stamens (male flowers) with pollen. The Wild Rose has five petals resting on the sepals. The Iris has three petals that are erect, are shorter than the falls, and are called standards. The Wild Rose has a ring of stamens surrounding the style (female flower). The Iris has a three-branched style, resembling petals. In the center, each branch connects with a fall to form a tube marked by lines of color, waiting for the pollen. Inside the tube, the stamens wait to dust the pollinator with more pollen. With this method, cross-pollination, a necessity for Iris, is ensured.

The botanical name of Northern Blue Flag is *Iris versicolor*: Greek, *Iris*, rainbow; and Latin, *versicolor*, color changing. Iris is also the name of the goddess of the rainbow for the beautiful, colorful clothing she wore.

The botanical family name of Northern Blue Flag is *Iridaceae*. Some other members of the family are Crocus, Freesia, Gladiolus, all of them used in horticulture. The only economic uses are orris root and a dye from Saffron. Iris is essentially a temperate climate plant.

We glided winding under ranks  
Of Iris and the golden seed.

*In Memoriam*  
Alfred Lord Tennyson

Meetings are held on Mondays at 7:15 p.m. at Kresge Theater, Carlow University, 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.

# June & July

*Wildflowers*, Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania, is published bimonthly 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 address below. Deadline for submissions is the 16th of the previous month. *Wildflowers* is printed on recycled paper.



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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.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual dues are \$10 for individual and \$15 for family. Students can join at half-rate. To join, mail your name, your address, and check payable to "Botanical Society of W PA" to Judy Boyer, 211 Lee Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Your membership includes a subscription to the bimonthly bulletin *Wildflowers*.



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.

Registration for Botanical Society field trips is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Trips last 3 to 4 hours but one can leave at any time. For questions, call the field trip leader or Loree Speedy at 724-872-5232. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy. Water and a hat are recommended in the summer. Poison Ivy can be everywhere; long pants can prevent the rash.

## Sunday, June 13, 1 p.m.

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

**Leader:** Bonnie Isaac; IsaacB@CarnegieMNH.org; 724-944-8770 cell

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 96 (Portersville). Turn left to travel PA-488 about 4 miles to Heinz Camp Road. Turn right onto Heinz Camp Road and continue about 2 miles to a T. Turn right and cross the Armstrong Bridge. Continue up the hill about 2½ miles and make 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.

**Notes:** The half-mile trail leading to a waterfall is easy hiking. Those who wish to continue should wear sturdy shoes.

## Sunday, June 20, 11 a.m.

### Tanbark Trail, Allegheny National Forest, Warren County

**Leader:** Lee Ann Reiners; tidhouse@zoominternet.net; 814-484-3059  
Call or e-mail Lee Ann to let her know you are coming.

**Directions:** From the intersection of I-80 and I-79, travel east on I-80 to Exit 29 (PA-8/Barkeyville) and continue north on PA-8 for 17 miles to Franklin. Join US-62 in Franklin and travel US-62 east for 40 miles to the intersection of US-62 and the Tidioute Bridge. Meet at this intersection.

**Notes:** Join us for a walk on the Tanbark Trail in the Allegheny National Forest through pockets of blooming Mountain Laurels from Heart's Content Rd. to Sandstone Spring. This is a joint trip with the Allegheny Canoe Club and Waterfolk. Bring water containers to fill at Sandstone Spring to take home with you!

Lee Ann has also invited Botanical Society members for a canoe trip on **Saturday, June 19th**. The Allegheny Canoe Club will be paddling the Allegheny River from Buckaloons to Tidioute, 15 miles, with a lunch stop on one of the wilderness islands. Free overnight camping is offered in Lee Ann's backyard on the riverbank in Tidioute. There is also a bed and breakfast in Tidioute for non-campers. There will be an evening wildflower walk at the Newbold Estate in Irvine, a wonderful treasure

# Field Trips

trove of spring wildflowers. Across the road from Newbold is Anders Run Trail, another option. Meeting time for the canoe trip (kayaks are welcome too!) is 10 a.m. at the Blair Warehouse put-in near Warren. If you are interested in the trip, call or e-mail trip coordinator Lee Ann Reiners.

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## Saturday, June 26, 1:30 p.m.

### Chalkhill Bog, S.G.L. 51, Fayette County

**Leader:** Loree Speedy; mousemapper@verizon.net; 724-518-6022 cell 724-872-5232

**Directions:** Chalkhill-Ohiopyle Road in the village of Chalkhill can be reached by traveling US-40 east about 10 miles from Uniontown. Alternately, from the intersection of US-40 and PA-381 south of Ohio-pyle, travel west on US-40 for 3.7 miles to the intersection of US-40 and Chalkhill-Ohiopyle Road.

Turn north onto Chalkhill-Ohiopyle Road and travel 1.3 miles. You will cross Deer Lake (which may be drained or open water). Take the first left turn onto Greenbrier Road. Travel about a mile; you will enter State Game Land 51. Continue straight to a game land parking lot about 0.2 mile from this entrance on the right.

**Notes:** Prepare for wet feet and sunny conditions. We must walk about 1 mile to the bog.

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## Saturday, July 10, 10 a.m.

### Butler Freeport Trail, Monroe Road section, Butler County

**Leader:** Dianne Machesney; 412-366-7869; diannem15237@aol.com

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh: take PA-28 North to Exit 17 (PA-356/Butler/Freeport). At end of ramp, turn right to travel PA-356 for a little less than a mile. At the Sheetz, turn right onto Monroe Road and travel about 0.8 mile and turn left into a driveway for an unmarked building, just before the bike trail.

**Notes:** This is a new section of Butler-Freeport trail for botanical field trips; will it hold as many interesting plants as the Sarver section in summer? There are no bathroom facilities at the trail, so we suggest that you stop at Sheetz.

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## Saturday, July 17, 10 a.m.

### Ryerson Station State Park, Greene County

**Leader:** Loree Speedy; 724-518-6022 cell; mousemapper@verizon.net

**Directions:** Travel I-79 south to Exit 14, Waynesburg. Head west on

PA-21 toward Waynesburg. Travel PA-21 for 22 miles to the entrance to Ryerson Station State Park (Bristoria Road) on the left. Continue about 1 mile to the park office, where we will meet.

**Notes:** This will be the second of a series of trips to learn more about the park's interesting habitats and plants. April's trip produced many surprises.

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## Saturday, August 7, 1:00 p.m.

### Mount Davis in Forbes State Forest Christner Road Bog, Somerset County

**Leaders:** John and Paulette Zabkar  
johnzabkar@aol.com; 412-364-5820

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike east to Exit 91 (Donegal). Turn left to travel PA-31 east for 2 miles and turn right onto PA-381 south (toward Ohio-pyle). Travel PA-381 south for 9 miles to PA-653. Turn left to travel on PA-653 for 13 miles. In New Lexington, pick up PA-281 south. Travel PA-281 south for 7.5 miles to a left on Fort Hill Road. After 3.5 miles, turn left onto High Point Lake Road. Travel 2 miles to a left onto SR 2004. After 2 miles, pass through Rock Road intersection and continue ½ mile to the well-signed Mount Davis Picnic Area parking lot on right.

**Notes:** Be prepared for wet feet and sunny conditions.

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## Coming Up

**Saturday, August 21, 10 a.m.:** Doak Homestead Meadow, Raccoon Creek State Park, Shane Miller

**Saturday, August 28:** Bonnie Isaac's choice, to be announced

**Tuesday, September 7, 10 a.m.:** Mark your calendars for the day after Labor Day. Forester Robert McBride will host the Botanical Society for an informative day at Forbes State Forest, beginning with a video about the history of Pennsylvania's forests followed by varying levels of strolls to demonstration forests.

## MOUNTAIN NATURE CAMP

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Mountain Nature Camp starts Sunday, June 13 and ends Saturday, June 19.

The first week is a regular camp focusing on birds, wildflowers and herps, with trips planned to Swallow Falls and Dolly Sods. Other trips, such as Cranesville Swamp, will be created from camper interest. The week's schedule is at the website listed below.

Registration forms are available on the Oglebay Institute website [www.oionline.com](http://www.oionline.com), click on "Environmental Education" at far left, then select "Terra Alta Mountain Camp". Scholarship applications, for you or someone you might want to introduce to camp, are also found on that site.

The new showers and toilets will be ready for camp. Jane will be cooking. If you want a paper brochure or to register by phone, call the Schrader Center, 304-242-6855.

*New York Flora Association (with The Bailey Hortorium) Presents*

### **ROSA & RUBUS — ROSES & BRAMBLES WORKSHOP WITH ARTHUR HAINES**

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**Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> 7 p.m. to Sunday June 27<sup>th</sup> 12 Noon, 2010  
Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York**

Arthur Haines is a plant biologist specializing in the taxonomy and identification of New England tracheophytes. He is currently employed by the New England Wild Flower Society as a research botanist and is involved in writing a new tracheophyte flora of New England. His extensive publications include *The Flora of Maine* and papers on a wide diversity of often "challenging" taxa. In addition, Arthur is a regional reviewer for the North American Flora project and director of the Delta Institute of Natural History in Maine. His work and insights although grounded in past work are highly original and attempt to correct past mistakes.

This will be an intensive weekend studying *Rosa* and *Rubus* (roses and brambles) of the central NY region. The weekend will consist of presentations, indoor study of specimens, and plenty of field work. Participants will learn the characters useful to identifying and distinguishing between the species of *Rosa* and *Rubus* that occur in central New York. There will also be time to work on specimens that participants bring to study.

For questions, registration and other details, contact David Werier, 607-273-1765, [Nakita@lightlink.com](mailto:Nakita@lightlink.com).

## ESA ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN PITTSBURGH

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Pittsburgh will host the 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America (ESA) August 1–6 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The theme for the ESA Annual Meeting is "Global Warming: The legacy of our past, the challenge for our future". The ESA will place global warming at center stage to draw a critical combination of scientists, policy makers, and concerned citizens to understand further its causes and consequences and to elucidate a clear scenario for addressing what is perhaps the most serious environmental threat facing the biosphere.

The Ecological Society of America is the world's largest professional organization of ecologists, representing 10,000 scientists in the United States and around the globe. Since its founding in 1915, ESA has promoted the responsible application of ecological principles to the solution of environmental problems through ESA reports, journals, research, and expert testimony to Congress.

Symposium topics include *Alternative Approaches to the Study of Global Warming Effects on Natural Communities*, *Environmental Impacts of Mountaintop Removal-Valley Fill Coal Mining and Landscape Planning*, *Species Ranges, and Climate Change*. There will be a series of workshops such as *Natural Areas...from Napkin Sketches to Built Environment*, *Emerald Ash Borer in the Classroom: Invasive Pest an Opportunity for Citizen Science*, and *Visual Communication of Ecological Knowledge: Photography as a Tool of Style and Substance*. Field trips are available and include *Disturbance Ecology on the Allegheny Plateau*, *Urban agriculture in action: Greening blighted land and revitalizing communities*, and *Parks, Streams, and Urban Systems: Successes and Challenges in Restoration*.

On Saturday, July 31, an urban bioblitz will take place in the Larimer area. See *Brownfield Blitzes: A Dialog with Inner-city Pittsburgh neighborhoods* in the registration information.

For more information and to register, go to [www.esa.org/pittsburgh](http://www.esa.org/pittsburgh).

## NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NE OHIO WORKSHOP

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**Fern Workshop.** Saturday, July 10, 9 a.m.  
Woods Edge Shelter, Swine Creek Reservation, Geauga County

Discover the lush diversity of ferns found in the ravines and valleys of Swine Creek Reservation. Over 12 species of ferns have been identified. This is a joint program with Geauga Park District.

**Directions:** From downtown Middlefield, take Rt. 87 east 2½ miles to Hayes Road. Turn right (south) 1½ miles to park entrance on right. Bear right to last parking area. 16004 Hayes Road, Middlefield, 44062. Call Judy to register at 440-564-9151 (H) or 440-286-9516 ext 2011(W).

## NEW FIELD GUIDE LOOKS AT AQUATIC PLANTS

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Duckweed or Pennywort? If you're unsure about aquatic plants, a new pocket-size guide can help.

"*A Field Guide to Common Aquatic Plants of Pennsylvania*" is published by the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. Written by Dana Rizzo and Susan Boser, Penn State Extension water quality educators, the guide details more than 40 common plants found in ponds and waterways, offering a written description, drawing, and photograph for each.

The guide provides information on the benefits of various aquatic plants, such as pennywort's ability to provide food and shelter for animals and duckweed's reputation for reducing mosquito reproduction. It flags invasive as well as endangered species and cautions that trying to mechanically control some plants can actually make them become more of a problem if they reproduce quickly when broken apart. The guide also covers algae commonly found in lakes and ponds, such as *Nitella*, *Chara* and *Didymo*.

Hard copies are available for \$11.00 at the office of the Penn State Cooperative Extension Westmoreland County, 214 Donohoe Road, Suite E, Greensburg, PA 15601. For mail orders, add \$2.00 shipping. The guide is also available on the Westmoreland Conservation District's website, [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

## ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK CLUB

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The Environmental Book Club meets at North Hills Borders Book Store on McKnight Road on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. It is not compulsory to have read the book or to buy the book at Borders. For more information, contact Kim Metheny, [kmetheny@hotmail.com](mailto:kmetheny@hotmail.com).

## LIFE IN THE MIST: RAINFOREST IMAGES

Paintings by Jan Lutz and sculptures by Kathe Umlauf are on display through June 27 at Kelly Run Gallery, 264 Main St., Cambridge Springs. 10% of sales will be donated to the Rainforest Foundation.

For gallery hours and other information, call 814-398-9331 or visit [www.kellyrungalleyandframing.com](http://www.kellyrungalleyandframing.com).

## GLEASON & CRONQUIST MANUAL TO BE UPDATED

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Robert Naczi is leading the task of updating the *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada* by Henry A. Gleason and Arthur Cronquist (1991, The New York Botanical Garden Press). Many know of this indispensable reference as the Gleason & Cronquist Manual, or the "green" book. Advances in botany since 1991 through molecular and species-level research and through field work have made revisions to this manual a necessity.

Rob is interested in information from the botanical community. Please let him know if there are keys or things that don't work well in the current Gleason & Cronquist Manual. Contact Rob at [rnaczi@nybg.org](mailto:rnaczi@nybg.org) or International Plant Science Center, The New York Botanical Garden, 200<sup>th</sup> Street and Kazimiroff Blvd., Bronx, NY 10458-5126. Rob is Curator of North American Botany at the New York Botanical Garden.

The updated manual will be available both as a hardcopy and as an electronic edition on a website. Read about this project at <http://www.nybg.org/wordpress/?p=5678>, or watch Rob talk about updating the manual at: <http://www.vimeo.com/10897997>.

*Wildflowers*

June–July 2010

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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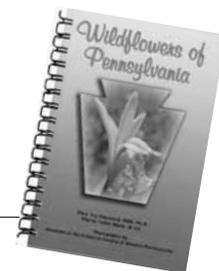
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**Wildflowers of Pennsylvania** (400 pages, 612 color photos) can be purchased for \$20 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3/two, \$4/three, \$4.50/four. Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, and your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, PhD, 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165; 412-578-6175; haywoodmj@carlow.edu

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## *June Meeting*

JUNE 14. This will be our last meeting before “summer break” (our next meeting will be held September 13). The June meeting speaker will be Steve Grund, botanist with the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. His presentation is titled “*Floristic Quality Assessment*”. FQA is a methodology for monitoring and assessing the condition, or quality, of ecosystems based on the plants that grow there and their individual affinity with unaltered habitats.

Steve studied botany at the University of Michigan. With the Western Pennsylvania

Conservancy since 1995, he is also a Research Associate at the Carnegie Museum, Section of Botany. Steve studies floristics and conservation of the plants of Pennsylvania. He has been Chair of the annual Pennsylvania Rare Plant Forum since 1997.

About this year’s gathering, Steve said: “We had a great meeting this spring at Wilkes University. This was the first time we have met in the NE part of the state, and it paid off with about 8 people attending for the first time. The minutes of this meeting, as well as for previous meetings, can be downloaded at <http://www.paconserve.org/256>.”