

# Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

“Well, I started to get interested in wildflowers, and hiked around on my own, and then I met Esther.”

This is an oft repeated phrase members of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania have heard many times when meeting up with a fellow wildflower enthusiast. Mrs. Esther Allen, one of the area’s most talented and beloved naturalists, became a mentor to almost everyone who set foot with her on the hiking trail. Her love of the wildflowers was obvious, but what struck many was her keen eye for detail and beauty. Even the smallest flower, the tiniest insect, the most distinctive leaf shape, the most unusual gall, was for Esther a way to get others, adults and children, enthralled with what nature can offer. With her southern Ohio drawl and wit, she made every-thing in nature a story.

For over thirty-five years Esther has played a role in leading nature hikes: for the Botanical Society, for the Wissahickon Nature Club, garden clubs, community colleges, environmental organizations, and informally, for a vast number of friends and admirers. Her specialty was wildflowers — she learned the flora of this region with determination and pleasure. With her admiring husband Dave at the wheel, they traveled the countryside, visiting favorite wildflower haunts. One of her favorite tools to teach others was her stunning wildflower photography. Esther was a major contributor of photographs to the Society’s book, *Wildflowers of Pennsylvania*, by Haywood and Monk.

These photographic slides also served as material for her many nature programs. With slide projector at her side, Esther presented hundreds of nature programs. One of her favorites, as well as the favorite of her female friends, was an inspiring program about her mother “Grandma Gatewood”, the first woman to hike the Appalachian Trail at the age of sixty-seven. Many would remark that Esther certainly had her mother’s genes and gumption. Esther was hiking at North Park, remarking on the pink of Mountain Laurel, the day before she suffered a stroke at the age of ninety-three.



At her small home in Ross Township, Esther tended a plant sanctuary — a collection of interesting native trees, plants and ferns — in a backyard that was once a shaley slope. She predated the “native plant” movement by decades, demonstrating to many how planting with natives can transform a boring and barren lawnscape into a beautiful low-maintenance garden.

In 2000, the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania presented Esther with the W. E. Clyde Todd Award for teaching others about native plants. Soon after, a hiking trail was named in her honor at Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve, positioning her with fellow Botanical Society members O. E. Jennings and Max Henrici.

Esther Gatewood Allen grew up on a farm near Gallipolis, Ohio, where she learned to work hard while developing a love of nature and wildflowers.

Photo courtesy of John Berckbickler

Continued inside

wildflowers

JULY  
AUGUST  
2011

*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.



Editor: Karen Sandorf; 412-885-8237  
Post Office Box 97994, Pittsburgh PA 15227  
E-mail: bswpnews4k@comcast.net

President: Bonnie Isaac; 412-622-3253  
E-mail: isaacb@carnegiemnh.org

Vice-President: Dr. Mary Joy Haywood  
412-578-6175; E-mail: mhaywood@carlow.edu

Treasurer: Judy Boyer; normanjb@aol.com

Recording Secretary: James Nusser; 412-784-1234  
E-mail: birdmanjen@verizon.net

Program Chairpersons: Anne & Dave Koenig  
412-798-5336; E-mail: craneffy47@verizon.net

Field Trip Chairperson: Loree Speedy  
724-872-5232; E-mail: mousemapper@verizon.net

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.

# July and August

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.

## Saturday, July 23, 1 p.m.

### Titus Bog, Erie County

**Leader:** Tim Lyons

**Contact Info:** 814-725-5764; timclyons@verizon.net

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 166 (US 6 north Albion Edinboro). Head east on US 6 north for 9.8 miles to its intersection with PA 19 & US 6. Continue straight on US 6 to Union City. After taking the turn out of Union City (continuing on US 6), drive 2.6 miles to make a right onto Elgin Road (to avoid an upcoming detour on US 6). Continue on Elgin Road for 3 miles to the next intersection (Elgin). Turn left and continue 1 mile north to the intersection of PA 89 and US 6, where we will meet at a drive-in theater at the northeast intersection. If the detour is finished, after taking turn out of Union City, continue on US 6 north to the intersection of PA 89 and US 6.

**Notes:** This trip requires wading through the bog's moat for a short period, perhaps in water up to 2 feet deep, using shrubs and roots for balance. Old tennis shoes or waders are recommended. Plan on getting wet.

Titus Bog was purchased by the Botanical Society and the Presque Isle Audubon Society in 1968. In 1978, this cranberry-sphagnum bog received the designation of National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

## Sunday, July 31, 2 p.m.

### Trees of the Wildflower Reserve, Raccoon Creek State Park Beaver County

**Contact Info:** 724-899-3611

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take the Parkway West (I-279 south/US 22-30) to the Airport Expressway (PA 60). Continue past the Airport exit to Exit 7/Clinton. At the end of the ramp, turn left and continue 1.1 mile to US 30. Turn right onto US 30 and drive 4.7 miles to the entrance for the Wildflower Reserve, on the right, just over a hill. Meet in the parking lot.

**Notes:** Though flowers often steal the show, the Wildflower Reserve of Raccoon Creek State Park is also home to many of Pennsylvania's tree species. Trees can tell a tale and on this guided hike participants will learn not only how to identify trees but also tales associated with the folklore and history of the parks many tree species. We will join the park naturalists for an interpretive hike.

# Field Trips

**Sunday, August 14, 10 a.m.**

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## **Roaring Run Natural Area, Westmoreland County**

**Leader:** Loree Speedy

**Contact Info:** 724-518-6022 cell; 724-872-5232 home  
mousemapper@verizon.net

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take the PA Turnpike to Exit 91/Donnegal. Turn east (left) on PA 31. Travel about 2 miles and turn south (right) on PA 381 at Sarnelli's Market. Travel about 1 mile to an intersection in Champion, and turn left onto County Line Road. Continue about 2 miles to the trailhead parking for Roaring Run Trail on the left.

**Notes:** On the west slope of Laurel Ridge, this natural area is an example of a complete forested mountain watershed. We will look for Buffalo Nut and Angelica. Prepare for hiking four to five miles (at a moderate botanical pace) and crossing streams.

**Saturday, August 27, 9 a.m.**

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## **Catfish Pond, Deadman's Hollow, Allegheny County**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-376 (Parkway East) to Exit 78A (Forest Hills/ US 30). Travel US 30 west about 7 miles to PA 48. Turn right (south) on PA 48 and travel 6 miles to the Boston Bridge. Cross the Boston Bridge and continue a little over two miles to make a sharp right onto Lovedale Road. Travel Lovedale Road about 0.3 mile, then turn right onto Liberty Way for 3 miles to Scene Ridge Road. Turn right and continue a short distance to the entrance for Catfish Pond, across from River Ridge Road. Continue to the Catfish pond parking area.

Alternatively, take PA 51 south to the Elizabeth bridge over the Monongahela River. Continue about 3.5 miles to PA 48 (near Round Hill Park). Turn left (north) on PA 48, and follow it for 4.7 miles to make a left onto Lovedale Road.

**Notes:** Catfish Pond is an alternate access to the Dead Man's Hollow area preserved by the Allegheny Land Trust. Cool Spirit Trail is an easy walk with great views of Catfish Pond and a waterfall.

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## **Esther Allen** *Continued from Front Cover*

She met her husband Dave Allen at a college in Ohio and moved with him to the North Hills area of Pittsburgh, where she raised two sons, David and Nelson. Esther was a legal secretary and office manager, serving as a family breadwinner at a time when women were expected to stay at home and keep house.

After her retirement, Esther dedicated her life to the study of natural history. She joined the Botanical Society in 1975 and was made an honorary member in 2006. Field trips with Esther taught us to slow down, to look and to treasure the flowers, on bike trails, hiking trails, lakesides and meadows. In the words of birder and limericist Jack Solomon:

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## **CELEBRATION OF A LIFE WELL-LIVED FOR LEE TOSH**

Botanical Society member Lee Tosh passed away last October, 2010. Per Lee's wishes, her family and friends are having a celebration of Lee's life on Saturday, July 16 at Lee's Summer Hummer Place on Lake Stony Creek, Shanksville, PA. Lee was famous for her generosity on field trips, with a backseat full of treats and amazing dishes. The Botanical Society often traipsed through the woods behind her cabin for Hobblebush and Mountain Phlox.

The celebration begins at 4 p.m. At 7 p.m. there will be a slide show and musical tribute to Lee. Bring your own comfortable lawn chair, but also bring your own memories, stories, pictures, Lee-made items, or Lee-inspired snack or food item to share with others.

Her daughter Teepa writes "Mom asked that stories be told, rather than eulogies read. She also asked for everyone to plan to have some fun and to laugh as they remember her. Since she often made items that may be visual reminders or representations, please feel free to bring any special items along to share in a display, or talk about. All of us have some of these special things. I suspect when they are all together, it will form quite an amazing patchwork of love, friendship, and magical moments."

Please contact Teepa Snow at teepas@posapproach.com for more information about directions, parking, and options to stay overnight. Those without e-mail can contact Loree at 724-872-5232 for a flyer with more information.

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*There's a wondrous naturalist named Esther,  
And at botany no one can best 'er,  
In height she is small,  
But her knowledge is tall,  
For the Spirit of Nature has blessed 'er.*

Members of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania are fortunate to have learned and experienced the natural world with such a gifted and charming woman.

# The Blazing Star in Western Pennsylvania

by Otto E. Jennings, excerpted from *BSWP Trillia*, Volume 7, 1921–23, published in October 1923

On the way up to Slippery Rock Normal School, August 12, 1922, an unusual and most beautiful sight was a field of the blazing star (*Lacinaria spicata*) in full bloom. The erect spikes, up to four feet or more in height, were covered with the striking red-purple flowers and, towering above the grass and accompanying herbaceous plants, made a striking display. The species has a wide range — from Massachusetts, Ontario, and South Dakota south to the Gulf States — and is generally stated as occurring in low grounds or moist soil.

In my experience this plant is an inhabitant of sandy well-drained soils. Near Sandusky, Ohio, it is at home on the sands of the Cedar Point peninsula and occurs in a number of counties in northwestern Ohio, where it is probably associated with the sandy soils of different stages of the glacial history of Lake Erie or along the drainage outlets. The Champaign, Clark, and Hocking county occurrences of the species, farther south in Ohio, also suggest an association with sandy deposits and outwash plains in



Blazing Star, now known as *Liatris spicata*

or near the terminal moraine.

The species has thus far been found in but one station in Western Pennsylvania and that is on the practically flat sandy valley of Big Run, about a half a mile east and north of “Stone House” and about 414 miles southeast of Slippery Rock. This flat sandy level has been cut into by the present stream, which has formed a shallow narrow valley in it, but there is a considerable area of the region hereabouts which is at about the same level (1180–1200 ft. alt.), and, as it lies just to the southeast of the terminal moraine, the appearances suggest that we are dealing here with soils formed by outwash from the front of the glacial ice. This hypothesis would explain the sandy nature of the soil, the relatively large area of land at this same level along the various valleys of the region and also the present known occurrences of *Lacinaria spicata* in Western Pennsylvania and in the three counties where it has been reported in south-central Ohio. Further occurrences of this plant should be expected along the terminal moraine in eastern Ohio and northwestern Pennsylvania.

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## Barbara Schomer Honored

Barbara Schomer was recently honored with the publication of a formal description of *Calopadia schomerae* by Frederick (Rick) and Jean Seavey. In “*Calopadia schomerae* (*Pilocarpaceae*), a New Lichen from Everglades National Park,” published in *Opuscula Philolichenum*, the Seaveys write:

“ETYMOLOGY – The new species is dedicated to our close friend and colleague Barbara Schomer, an intrepid cave explorer, traveler and educator, for her many unselfish contributions to the study of the natural world including lichenology.”

Barbara has been a member of the Botanical Society since 2004, and served as Secretary through 2008. After a career of teaching English literature, Barbara decided to further pursue her interest in nature. An avid caver, these fascinating organisms that she encountered on her caving expeditions and other outdoor adventures amazed her. Since lichens are viable all year around they are an excellent subject for the retiree. Barbara first read a small British book on lichens by Purvis. She then graduated to

*Lichens of North America* by Irwin Brodo and Sylvia and Stephen Sharnoff. Her study did not remain casual; soon she was diving headlong into the complex world of lichenology. She took a number of classes in lichenology at the Humboldt Field Research Institute in Maine, including two classes taught by one of the masters, Irwin “Ernie” Brodo.

To encourage others to see more than splotches on trees and rocks, Barbara and her husband Bru created a presentation called “Learning About Lichens”, using photographs to document and help identify lichens. With friend Esther Allen, Barbara also led the Society on a number of early spring lichen field trips.

On her latest trip to Humboldt Field Institute, she met the Seaveys and learned of their project to inventory the lichens of Everglades National

# The North Park Arboretum

## A GEM IN THE ROUGH

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by Dianne Machesney

“What arboretum at North Park? I’ve been all over the park dozens of times and I have never seen a sign for an arboretum!”

And you would be correct. There are no signs — but an arboretum does exist.

Across the street from the Penn State Master Gardener’s demo garden on Wildwood Road there exists a now little-known site. It was planted in 1941 as a Federal Works Progress Administration project. It is 25 acres and originally contained 3,900 trees and shrubs, including many exotic species from China and Japan.

Unfortunately, the area has become overgrown. You can still find many of the trees if you brave the multiflora rose and barberry bushes. Some think that the star species is the Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*). It grows 60–75 feet high, has good fall color and a spicy fragrance.

Other trees of interest are the Yellow Buckeye, Ohio Buckeye, Black Ash, Oakleaf Mountain Ash, European Larch, Weeping Spruce, Serviceberry, White Ash, Silver Maple, Chinese Juniper, Flowering Dogwood, Osage Orange, Chinese Elm, Hackberry, Eastern Red Cedar and Weeping Beech.

In 1996 Duquesne Light Company funded a revitalization project at the arboretum, marking the trees with numbered disks and creating a map with the corresponding common names. Unfortunately the County has not maintained the area with annual mowing and tree trimming so the area is again very overgrown.

Of immediate interest is an area near the entrance that has a wild population of Closed Gentians and Pale Green Orchids. Both of these plants prefer a meadow-like setting and are starting to get choked out by

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Park. The Seaveys invited her to join them, so Barbara and Bru spent January to March of 2010 living at the Everglades and working as park volunteers to help the Seaveys, also volunteers, collect, identify, and catalog hundreds of lichen specimens. This involved about five or six days of lab work for every day in the field collecting. Barbara hopes to return to the Everglades next winter and continue this project.

*Calopadia schomerae* was discovered at the Everglades National Park in Florida. It was found in shaded humid hammock forests in a foliicolous form (i.e., growing on living leaves). It was also found in pond apple (*Annona glabra*) swamps and along margins of dry road beds as a corticolous specimen (i.e., growing on bark). Stereoscopic and light microscope techniques, as well as chemical analysis, were required to fully understand and describe the new species.

Note that the original name of the lichen as accepted by the first two reviewers was “*schomeri*”; however, the publisher insisted that it be changed to “*schomerae*” which is the feminine form. You can learn more about the lichen, and access the article, at [http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Calopadia\\_schomerae](http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Calopadia_schomerae).

the invasive shrubs. With your help we can salvage this area of the arboretum. The Botanical Society of Western PA in conjunction with the Penn State Master Gardeners, and hopefully, some local garden clubs, are planning a “Save the Gentians” Day on Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m.–noon.

More details will follow. Meanwhile, please save the date to “Save the Gentians”.

*Editor’s note: Meg Scanlon, park naturalist, Dianne and Loree Speedy walked this area a couple of months ago with Esther Allen while she tagged the trees and shrubs that should be spared. The effort to preserve this area was first spearheaded by Esther almost 20 years ago. Anything we can do to improve conditions for the native plants, including the gentians, unique arboretum trees and shrubs would surely be a fine tribute to her memory.*

## WINGFIELD PINES OPPORTUNITIES

**Wednesday July 13, 5 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

### **Invasive Plant Removal**

Learn about invasive plants that grow in the Pittsburgh area, see how they affect the ecosystems in which they grow and learn tricks to prevent their spread. Help Allegheny Land Trust reduce the presence of Purple Loosestrife in the southern portion of Wingfield Pines.

**Thursday, July 21 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.**

### **Wingfield Pines Tour**

Observe and identify native flora and fauna of Wingfield Pines, and how the passive water treatment system works to make Chartiers Creek a healthier place to live.

**Sunday, August 7, 4 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

### **Help build a trail at Wingfield**

Allegheny Land Trust needs your help to build a trail in Wingfield Pines Conservation Area, Upper Saint Clair. Removal of debris and brush, trimming back small shrubs and trees and tamping down the soil on the new trail are planned, as well as any necessary maintenance on existing trails, and placement of signs throughout Wingfield Pines if time and supplies permit.

All are welcome! If interested contact Max Vietmeier at [mav5069@psu.edu](mailto:mav5069@psu.edu) or Allegheny Land Trust at 412-741-2750.



*Wildflowers*

July–August 2011

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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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; [mhaywood@carlow.edu](mailto:mhaywood@carlow.edu)

In the months leading up to the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of BSWP, we wish to place copies of *Wildflowers of Pennsylvania*, BSWP's labor of love, co-authored by Dr. Mary Joy Haywood and Phyllis Monk, in libraries in every one of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. We seek book donors. For the purchase price of a book (see above), a special book plate inside the book cover will display your name, if you wish, and a notation of your donation in honor of BSWP's 125<sup>th</sup>. To donate books, contact Dr. Haywood (contact information is inside front cover). Book donation information will also be on [www.botsocwpa.org](http://www.botsocwpa.org).

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

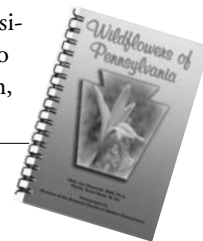
### **BSWP Celebrates 125 Years of Botanizing on Saturday, October 8**

Members, please plan to come to our anniversary luncheon! We will gather at a Pittsburgh restaurant to mark the beginning of this special anniversary year. Our guest speaker will be Dr. James Bissell of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

More details will follow on the invitation you will receive by mail. The latest information will also be posted on the Calendar page, [www.botsocwpa.org/calendar.php](http://www.botsocwpa.org/calendar.php), as it becomes available.

## **EMERALD VIEW PARK TRAIL TOUR**

**Sunday, July 10 • 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.**



In January 2010 the Master Trail Plan for Pittsburgh's newest regional park was completed. Since then Mount Washington Community Development Corporation has been inundated with questions about the proposed trails on Mount Washington. Explore the Park's existing and proposed trails to discover how the Trail Plan will encourage regional conservation while simultaneously stimulating economic development.

RSVP (required) to Ilyssa Manspeizer via email or call 412-481-3220 x 204. Please indicate if you will be coming for the entire hike or specific legs. Go to [www.mwcdc.org/projects/trailtour.htm](http://www.mwcdc.org/projects/trailtour.htm) for a tour schedule.

Details of BSWP field trips are located on our website on easily viewable and printable pages! [www.botsocwpa.org/calendar.php](http://www.botsocwpa.org/calendar.php)