

Wildflowers

THE BULLETIN OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF W. PA.

APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 13, 8:00 P.M. at the Mellon Bank Auditorium 5th Ave. and Craig Street, Oakland.

Emily Johnson will give the program. "Reading Nature - Wildflowers, Trees, and Mushrooms."

10 — FRIDAY, FEB. 13, 1981 — NEWS RECORD



Esther Allen of Ross
...drying native herbs

Her 'natural' interest spurs study of herbs

By FRAN WEBER
Staff Writer

Esther Allen, president of Wissahickon Nature Club, calls herself an enthusiastic, but amateur, naturalist.

"I am interested in nature and try to do something in the area that would be different, that people can learn from."

This has led her into study and research of herbs. "When you say herbs, you think of medicinal plants. The main definition of an herb is a flowering plant with no woody stem." Allen prefers the Indian definition, "an herb is any plant with a use."

"People are becoming more interested in plants for medicine and food today. People laughed at herbs when medicine came up with synthetic drugs." Allen says after people realized the harm of some drugs, like thalidomide, "A re-learning started into the use of natural medicine."

Using herbs requires care, according to Allen. "It isn't anything for people to use without making a study of it. Definitely there are many things used medically that are poison. Actually there is no line between poison and medicine, it is the extent of use."

Allen says after people hear a talk about herbs they often re-

spond, "Why, I have all those things in my yard." An example of a common backyard herb, Allen says, is sweet flag. "It's a plant that looks a good bit like iris. It has sweet, perfumy flowers that used to be strewn on the floors, sweet rush. The root of it can be candied, to help indigestion. It has a nice flavor."

A suggested headache remedy is a tea brewed from columbine seeds. Thistles, Allen says, are supposed to have fever-reducing properties.

Indians thought eating an early spring leaf of poison ivy would give immunity to the rash. Allen says she doesn't recommend this. However, the watery juice from the stalk of jewelweed is "excellent for relieving rash and itching."

Ginseng, she says, has been gathered until it is rare. "The roots are harvested and exported to the Orient. It takes five years for a root to be large enough to dig."

Herbs appeal to her conservationist instincts. "Just about every part of a plant can be used, root, stem, leaf. The flowers from the sweet everlasting were once stuffed into pillows for people with consumption."

AUDUBON PROGRAMS WITH PAUL WIEGMAN

Paul Wiegman will present "Rare and Endangered Wild Plants in Pennsylvania" at Butler Memorial Library, 218 N. McKean St., on Monday, April 20 at 7:30 P.M. and also at the University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg Campus, on Wednesday, April 29 at 8 P.M. The Audubon Society invites the public to these programs. (Tim Manka)

APRIL, 1981

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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Meeting time 1:30 P.M. unless otherwise specified.

April 11 - Raccoon Park Wildflower Preserve

Esther Allen, Leader.

Meet at the parking lot. The Wildflower Preserve is north of U. S. Rte. 30 and west of the bridge over Raccoon Creek. Snow trillium and harbinger of spring will be the chief attractions.

April 18

No field trip scheduled. Enjoy a blessed Easter.

April 25 - Fombell

J. S. Brown, Leader.

At Zelienople, turn west on Rte. 258. After crossing the creek, bear left on 588. Meet at the first crossroad two or three miles from the beginning of Rte. 588. Some industrial buildings are at this crossroad. The white trout lily, as well as the yellow, and mertensia should be in bloom.

May 2 - Wolf Creek

Howard McIlvried, Leader.

Leave I-79 North at the Slippery Rock exit, and drive toward Slippery Rock on Rte. 108 for a mile or so. Meet at the Dairy Store parking lot. Last year we made a list of the plant life of this area west of the creek near Howard's property. We need the spring plant life on the east side of the creek. There is an abundance of the large white trillium here.

May 9 - Enelow Creek

Bill Kinney, Leader.

Drive south on I-79, then west on I-70 toward Wheeling. Leave I-70 at the #1 exit, West Alexander. Cross over I-70 and meet at the gas station on the left.

This is an all-day program, emphasizing birds in the morning, with the Audubon Society, and plants in the afternoon. For those who are interested only in plants, leave I-70 at the #2 exit at Claysville. Turn east on Rte. 40 for a mile or so, then south on Rte. 231. Do not stay on 231, which goes to East Finley, but bear right at the Y and continue to West Finley. Turn left at the end of the road; continue a few miles, down along winding grade (wonderful for bicycles), which crosses the Enelow (or Enslow) fork at the bottom of the hill, the dividing line of Washington and Greene counties. The morning group will be eating their lunch here.

We should find blue-eyed-Mary and delphinium in bloom.

For the morning, meet at 9:00 A.M., and for the afternoon at 1:30 P.M. (J. S. Brown)

LET THEM EAT BREAD

Tim Manka, our Vice-President, was hospitalized for two weeks for a hemorrhoid operation. That explains why there was no cake at the March meeting.