
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • September 1997

Next Meeting is September 8

The first meeting for the 1997-1998 year will be Monday, September 8, at 8:00 P.M., at the Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland).

The speaker will be Dr. Douglas Jolley, of Flatwoods, WV. Dr. Jolley is an expert on the rhododendrons of Appalachia; he has photographed every rhododendron in the Appalachian area. His program is entitled "Ericaceae of Appalachia".

Is the Boy Scout Merit Badge Gone?

Our friends at the North Carolina Botanical Garden have alerted us that the Boy Scouts of America has **discontinued** the Botany Merit Badge. The reason given is "insufficient interest".

The powers-that-be say that they would reconsider re-instating the Botany Badge if they receive letters from professional organizations and individuals throughout the country.

I have already written such a letter on behalf of the Botanical Society of W. Pa. Now I ask, beg, plead with each member of our Society to write an individual letter.

I make no suggestions as to what you should say in your letter. We don't want a lot of cookie-cutter messages. Write it from your heart. Tell the committee just how you feel about getting our young people involved in botany.

Your letter should be addressed to:

Attn: Mr. John Dalrymple
Advancement Committee
Boy Scouts of America
Post Office 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

The next meeting of the badge committee is in October, so your letter should arrive by **September 15.**

Write it now. You know what happens when you put it off.

Robert F. Bahl

More on the Mystery Plant

Luc Berger reports that the thornless Hawthorn, brought by Scott Shriver to the June meeting, and identified as *Craetaegus viridis*, is growing in Schenley Park. Look for it at the corner of Bartlett Street and Serpentine Drive.

WV DNR will host a "Wild Foods" Weekend

Those interested in using or appreciating wild plants as food and medicine should consider attending the Nature Wonder Wild Foods Weekend at North Bend State Park in Cairo, West Virginia, on September 19-21, 1997.

For information, please call Emily Fleming of the WV Division of Natural Resources, at (304) 558-3370, or Edylene Wood at (304) 428-9590.

Field Trip Schedule

Saturday

September 13, 1997- North Park,
Allegheny County
Leader: Luc Berger
Time: 1:00 p.m.

Directions: From Pittsburgh, cross the Allegheny River and take Route 28 toward Etna and Route 8. Travel Route 8 north for about seven miles to Wildwood Road. (There is a Boston Market restaurant at the intersection). Make a left onto Wildwood Road. Follow Wildwood Road for about 3 miles to the park. Park just before the intersection of Wildwood Road and Babcock Boulevard, just after you pass a Tasty Freeze restaurant on the right.

Expectations: The arboretum is being renovated. In a wetland by the arboretum, we may see closed gentian, asters, monkey flower and pale green orchid. Then, we will go to the very beautiful pond and wetland near the nature center, which has frogs and muskrats, oleaster, prairie rose, and wetland plants.

Saturday

September 20, 1997 -Scott Shalaway's Home
Marshall County, WV
Leader: Scott Shalaway
Time: 1:00 p.m.

Directions: Take I-79 south to the Waynesburg exit. Take Route 21 west about 25 miles. At the WV/PA state line, Route 21 becomes WV 891; continue another 2 or 3 miles to a stop sign at US 250. Turn left, travel south on US250 about 4 miles to Cameron. Follow US250 through town. You will pass the high school as you leave town. About 4 miles south of Cameron, turn right off of US250, just past a white church on the left. Travel 0.7 miles and turn right at a large white house. Continue another 1.7 miles to the Shalaways. It is a large white house with a "wildlife sanctuary" sign at the bottom of the drive.

Naturalist Scott Shalaway has generously invited us to explore the woods and fields for fall bloomers in the rural West Virginia panhandle.

Saturday

September 27, 1997 -Sewickley Heights
Borough Park
Allegheny County
Leader: Chris Knoll
Time: 1:00

Directions: From I-79, take the Mt. Nebo exit. At the end of the exit ramp, make a left onto Blackburn Road. After travelling roughly 1 ½ to 2 miles, make a right onto Fern Hollow Road. Travel about a mile; the entrance to the park is on the right and is marked by a brown sign. We will meet at the top of the hill.

We will join park naturalist Chris Knoll on a wildflower walk through the park. We will also look for insects, so bring your insect jar!

Update: Native Plant Nursery Project at Beechwood Farms

As lovers of the outdoors, we're all interested in enjoying the many special and sometimes secret places that contain the botanical treasures of our area. I was reminded of this last weekend when I joined the Botanical Society on their field trip to Chalk Hill Bog. At first it seemed like a very ordinary state game lands, and I was at least enjoying renewing acquaintances with Society members. Hiking, first on a jeep road, then on a flagged trace through the woods, things began to get interesting and quite unexpectedly we entered a beautiful and serene "hanging bog". I enjoyed both the unusual plants and good company.

Since starting the Native Plant Nursery Project at Beechwood two years ago, I've been endlessly surprised and enriched by the plants

and also intrigued by peoples' reactions to them. They evoke very strong feelings.

I fondly recall an 85 year old retired school teacher who just had to tell me about a roadside display of spring larkspur near Zelionople that she was worried about. She followed it up with a map and photos and we were able to collect some seed there. There seems to be a unique empathy felt towards these plants that we've tried to respect at the nursery.

What we do is try to grow a wide range of native herbaceous plants (we have over 100 in production) from seed locally. We've worked with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to develop guidelines for responsible seed collecting and, increasingly, our seed is coming from our own stock plants. This method can be frustratingly slow (we're one of only a handful to use this genepool approach), but it insures that plants are adapted to our region. The end result of the process is plants, but also the idea that these plants are spectacular and worth knowing about.

We're using these plants on schoolgrounds and even at the Pittsburgh Zoo where they are the stars of the "Northern Temperate Forest" exhibit at the new Kid's Kingdom. Sales have surpassed expectations, exceeding \$7000. Hopefully these plants will serve to kindle interest in seeing and preserving the wild areas where they occur

Unlocking the secrets of how plants like Blue-eyed Mary work is a fascinating one, and growing these plants in your own landscape allows you the luxury of daily contact with them.

Our nursery is run entirely by volunteers and has been helped greatly by Society members Jeanne Poremski and Esther Allen. If you'd like to learn more about volunteer opportunities, you can contact me through Beechwood at 963-6100. Also, we're conducting a **plant sale** there on Saturday, **September 20, from 9 AM till 1 PM**. Among the plants ready for sale for

the first time will be bottle gentian, tasselrye, and nodding wild onion.

John Totten

Natural Medicines from the Rainforest

On Thursday, **September 25 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM** in the **Carnegie Museum of Natural History Lecture Hall**, come hear internationally known naturopath and botanist, Dr. Rosita Arvigo. She will present a slide lecture on natural medicines that can be found in the rainforest.

Dr. Arvigo was instrumental in the establishment of Terra Nova, a national park in Belize that is devoted to the preservation of medicinal plants. She is the founder and director of Belize's Ix Chel Tropical Reserve where tourists and scientists learn about native medicinal plants and is also the co-author of *Rainforest Remedies: One Hundred Healing Herbs of Belize*. Her efforts to rescue rainforest plants that provide medicines were highlighted last year by Diane Sawyer on Prime Time Live.

This lecture is cosponsored by Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Phipps Conservatory, Chatham College and the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Latin American Studies. Cost is \$2 for members and students, \$5 for nonmembers. To pre-register or for more information, call 622-6915, ext. 6925.

Highlights of Chalk Hill Bog

Observed on the August 9 field trip to Chalk Hill Bog, Fayette County:

Yellow Bartonias - *Bartonia virginica*
Slender Yellow-eyed Grass - *Xyris torta*
Cross-leaved Milkwort - *Polygala cruciata*
Thread-leaved Sundew - *Drosera filiformis*
(This northern species, transplanted here, is not native to our area)

Bog Clubmoss - *Lycopodiella inundata*
Hickey's Tree Club Moss - *Lycopodium hickeyi*

WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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WILDFLOWERS is published monthly by the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

We welcome short articles of botanical interest, drawings, letters to the editor, and notices of botanical events and group activities. Articles, notices, drawings, etc. should be sent to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 17th of the previous month. Material on computer diskette is welcome, call to discuss file format.

We especially welcome news about our members! Please call or write the editor, or Bob Bahl at 921-1797.

Changes of address - Notify the editor at the above address or phone number

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information

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. Our members include both amateurs and professionals. Annual dues are: Individual - \$5.00, and Family - \$8.00. 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, 5837 Nicholson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 8 PM sharp, at Trinity Hall or Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome. An informative program follows the business meeting.

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Field Trip Information

Everyone is welcome on field trips, amateurs, professionals, non-members, and anyone who is curious about the natural world.

- ◇ Trips are not canceled due to rain or cold.
- ◇ Dress for the weather. Comfortable shoes, water-proof boots, all-weather gear are suggested, water bottles, sunhats, and rainwear are strongly recommended.
- ◇ Trips usually last three, sometimes four, hours. You can depart earlier if you like.

Field trips are often at a leisurely pace, but may require some hiking and traveling through wet and muddy areas. If you have any questions about the nature of a trip, feel free to contact the trip leader or Loree Speedy at 521-9425.