
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • January 1998

Next Meeting is January 12

The next meeting will be Monday, January 12, at 8:00 p.m., at the Kresge Theater at Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland)

The speaker will be member **Mary Lou Brown**, and her program is entitled "Pennsylvania Beauty – Wildflowers, Places, and Things".

Winter Jewels: The 1998 Orchid Exhibit

It's time again for the Orchid Show at Phipps Conservatory. This year the show will run four weeks instead of two, from January 17th to February 15th.

We will again purchase a few hundred new cattleyas to display in the show and will highlight the "ease" of growing orchids at home. Every weekend a different member of the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania will lecture on that very subject.

A list of speakers and times will be available in the Phipps Education Bulletin due out the first week of January. There will also be a special section of the exhibit on the vanilla orchid with many different varieties on display. Hope to see you all there!

For questions or comments, call Georgia Gray at (412) 622-6915, ext. 6604.

Georgia Gray, grower at Phipps Conservatory

"Wild Orchids of the Middle Atlantic States" - Book Available

Although this book was published in 1986, I never knew it existed until my daughter in Philadelphia sent me a copy.

It is "Wild Orchids of the Middle Atlantic States" by O. W. Gupton & F. C. Swope, published by the University of Tennessee Press. The area covered includes West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina—close enough to be of value to us in Western Pennsylvania.

Here is the scoop on it: Wild Orchids of the Middle Atlantic States. By O. W. Gupton & F. C. Swope. Enables easy identification of 52 species, arranged by color, each shown in its habitat in a color photo, with description in non-technical language on facing page, and an index of common and scientific names. Fully illustrated in color. 112 pages. Hard cover.

The book was published at \$16.95, but you can get it from Edward Hamilton, Bookseller, Falls Village, CT 06031 for just \$4.95. Add \$3.00 for shipping. The number for ordering is 136727.

Hey, that's \$3.00 per order, not per book. Members could combine orders and cut down on the shipping cost.

Robert F. Bahl

"Nature is what kept me on an even keel" – An interview with Esther Allen

The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in the November 2, 1997 edition of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette – North Edition.

Correspondent Gretchen McKay talked with member Esther Allen about her passion for the outdoors and how others might develop their interest in what nature has to offer.

"I can't think of a time when I haven't been involved in some shape or form with nature. I grew up on a 280-acre farm in southern Ohio, about 20 miles outside of the town of Gallipolis.

All of my brothers and sisters – there were 11 of us with me right in the middle – were expected to pitch in and help. We were in the fields alongside my parents by the time we were 6, hoeing, pulling out weeds and picking whatever vegetables were ready

I guess part of my love for the outdoors also could be chalked up to heredity. My mother was "Grandma" Emma Gatewood, the first woman ever to hike the length of the Appalachian Trail.

My mother was well into her 60s before she even started hiking. She read an article about the trail, which runs 2,050 miles from Georgia to Maine, in National Geographic, and thought it sounded like fun. So in 1955, when she was 67 and after a few preparatory hikes, she simply took off, wearing tennis shoes and carrying a denim sack. I can't say I was surprised, though. She was always very independent. She ended up hiking the trail two more times.

I've always turned to the outdoors for relaxation and inspiration when things got tough. When I was raising my two sons, for instance, I worked as a secretary in a law firm. Though I enjoyed the work, it could be extremely stressful. So as soon as I got home, I'd change into my jeans and run out the back door. Sometimes I'd take a hike, other times I simply enjoyed the scenery.

It didn't matter. No matter how uptight I'd been, five minutes into my walk I'd completely forget my troubles and instead become aware of the wonderful things around me. Nature is what kept me on an even keel

Yet it wasn't until 1973, when I was 55 and got my first camera, that I really started to develop a true interest in learning everything I could about the outdoors. I'd see something interesting on a hike, take a picture and go to the library to research what it was. Today, I have more than 20,000 slides of plants, birds, wildflowers, fungi and insects. I also started collecting books. By now, I probably have as good a variety of nature books today as the local library

About the same time I took up nature photography, I heard about the Wissahickon Nature Club from my sister, who was a member. I also discovered the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania. I still hike with them Saturday mornings throughout the summer. Then in the mid-1980s, I heard about a group of hikers who met once a week in North Park for morning walks through the woods.

What I like about these walks is that they're spontaneous and casual. Though we might go out to look for one thing – say, late blooming flowers – we delight in whatever catches our eye. That's the thing about nature – it isn't always structured. You have to learn to enjoy what you see when you see it.

Even in the dead of winter, when there's a foot of snow on the ground, there's something interesting to see. Maybe it's a distinctive piece of tree bark, or icicles, or an insect cocoon.

I've learned enough over the years that I now teach a course in wildflower identification at the Community College of Allegheny County's North Campus. I take my students on hikes to look for different flowers. I also train guides for the Little Sewickley Creek Nature Trail, and make presentations to the Wissahickon Nature Club every few weeks.

One of the most enjoyable things I do, however, is talk with schoolchildren in the classroom and out in the woods. Depending on the season, I might help them identify various plants or talk about insects, or point out indications of animals – droppings or a nest – or even see the animals. For the most part, kids are really excited to be outside, even if they don't necessarily want to ask questions. They haven't learned to be intimidated by the environment yet, the way grownups sometimes are.

Maybe that's because a lot of adults haven't been properly introduced to the outdoors, and so they are scared to try. Perhaps people just don't know where to start. I always say, it's as simple as going out in your backyard and observing what's around you.

Nature, after all, is the most basic thing there is. And everything in it is a miracle, from the tiniest insect to the tallest tree. Likewise, the more you learn about nature, the more fascinating it becomes, and the more you want to continue exploring.

Besides, the exercise is good for your health, and it's all free. Who could ask for a better bargain than that?"

Gretchen McKay

Please Remit Your 1998 Membership Dues

Annual dues for the Botanical Society are \$5.00 for an individual, and \$8.00 for a family. Students can join at half-rate.

Bring your dues to the meeting, or mail your name, your address, your phone number (optional) and a check payable to "Botanical Society of W PA".

Mail your check to our Treasurer: Walter Gardill, PO Box 226, Grosick Road, Ingomar, PA 15127

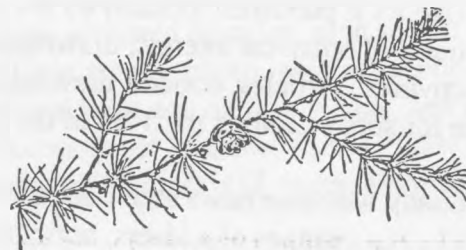
The Bruce Beckons

Several members of the Botanical Society are planning a vacation/field trip to the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario Canada on the last week of June 1998 (June 20th through June 27th). We are inviting interested members to attend.

Each day, we plan to visit one of the Bruce's botanically interesting sites... Dorcas Bay, Flowerpot Island, Walker's Woods, Oliphant Fen, Petrel Point. These trips guarantee many interesting plants and beautiful natural areas. Many of the Bruce's orchids will be blooming.

We will stay at the Red Bay Lodge in rustic cabins. Hotel room lodging at Red Bay is also available, and some may want to camp at nearby campgrounds.

The Red Bay Lodge offers a "meals included" plan – hearty breakfast, bag lunch, and a delicious evening meal, as well as evening snacks. If you are interested, see us at the winter Botanical Society meetings or call George Bercik at (412) 655-4701 or Loree Speedy at (412) 521-9425.



Tamarack – *Larix laricina*

Visit the Botanical Society's Homepage

The Home Page for the Botanical Society is steadily evolving.

The address is
<http://ansel.his.duq.edu/~speedy/b1.html>

If you have photos, or articles, or suggestions, contact Scott Speedy at (412)-639-3517 or e-mail him at <speedy8515@duq3.cc.duq.edu>.

Support the Wild Resource Conservation Fund

The Pennsylvania Wild Resource Conservation Fund is the principal state agency that supports research and protection efforts for the state's native wild plants and nongame animals. The Fund conducts field research, inventories of rare species, education programs, and reintroduction programs for extirpated species.

The Fund is financed entirely by public contributions, either through voluntary checkoffs on the state income tax return form, purchases of Wild Resource license plates, or direct donations

The Fund is facing a critical financial situation. Revenue from voluntary checkoffs on the tax return is expected to decrease as competing checkoffs increasingly appear on the state's tax return. Revenue from license plates is also expected to decrease.

Please consider making a donation to the Fund. Send your contribution, payable to Wild Resource Conservation Fund, to WRCF, POB 8764, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8764.

Currently, the Fund does not receive money from the state's general fund. You may want to contact your state legislators. Depending upon your political preferences, you could request an increase in fees on waste hauled to Pennsylvania landfills, levies from users who engage in wildlife activities, or an allocation of assets from the state's general fund.

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.

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