
WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • June 2003

The Next Meeting is June 9

The next meeting will be Monday, June 9, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**, Carlow College, 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.

Charles and Martha Oliver will present "Dolly Sods." Come hear about this botanical wonder from local experts on hardy plants. Then join Charles and Martha the following Saturday, June 14, for a field trip to Dolly Sods (details inside under Field Trip Schedule).

Dolly Sods is an area of high elevation wind-swept plains on the Allegheny Plateau, with extensive flat rocky plains, upland bogs, beaver ponds, and sweeping vistas. The plant life and climate on this high plateau resemble that of northern Canada, and many species found here are near their southernmost range.

Charles and Martha Oliver are noted garden designers and plant breeders. They own and operate Primrose Path in Scottdale and specialize in plant introductions. Their nursery-propagated plants are propagated by tissue culture in a laboratory.

Mark your calendars for Monday, July 14, 2003. Last year, members of the Botanical Society voted to hold meetings in July and August. Esther Allen is scheduled to speak on Monday, July 14; August's meeting will take place on a Saturday field trip.

Researcher Requests the Locations of *Plantago virginica*

Liz Boyd is a graduate student studying Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Brown University. As part of her dissertation work, she is collecting plants from populations of *Plantago virginica* along a latitudinal gradient. She would like to know of any populations, or of likely locations of populations, in Pennsylvania. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania (Rhoads and Klein) indicates that there are populations scattered throughout the southern half of the state.

Plantago virginica has a mating system called cleistogamy, in which plants make two specialized flower types: a cleistogamous flower, which remains closed and obligately self-fertilizes, and a chasmogamous flower, which opens and can outcross. A survey of more than 400 herbarium specimens from collections at Harvard and the University of North Carolina showed a latitudinal pattern in the expression of cleistogamy in this species, such that populations of plants from lower latitudes have both cleistogamous and chasmogamous flowers, whereas plants from higher latitudes have almost exclusively cleistogamous flowers. Ms. Boyd has collected seeds from populations of *Plantago virginica* in North Carolina, and would like to also collect from populations in Pennsylvania and New England, in order to have samples from a broad swath of the latitudinal range. With these plants, she will use crossing experiments, common garden experiments, and quantitative genetic techniques to understand the genetic and environmental basis for the variation in the expression of the mating system.

If you can assist Ms. Boyd with the locations of *Plantago virginica*, contact her as follows:

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Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Scarlet Pimpernel

Scarlet Pimpernel is a helpful flower for observing weather changes. It opens from mid-morning until mid-afternoon only when atmospheric conditions are to its liking. This means bright sunlight and low humidity. Without these the flower is closed and inconspicuous. Its blooming time is from spring into late summer.

These characteristics are reflected in the common names Shepherd's Weather Glass and Poor-man's Weather Glass. They also inspired the name of the protagonist in a series of historical novels by Baroness Orczy. Chapter four of the first book, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, has this sentence: "The Scarlet Pimpernel, Mademoiselle, is the name of a humble English wayside flower, but it is also the name chosen to hide the identity of the best and bravest man in all the world."

Humble, in the sense of non-assertive, is an appropriate description of both the flower and the plant. The five-petaled flower is only $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter on a long, slender, peduncle from a leaf axil. The plant's sprawling, square, stems may reach one foot. The $\frac{3}{4}$ inch leaves are opposite, occasionally in a whorl of three.

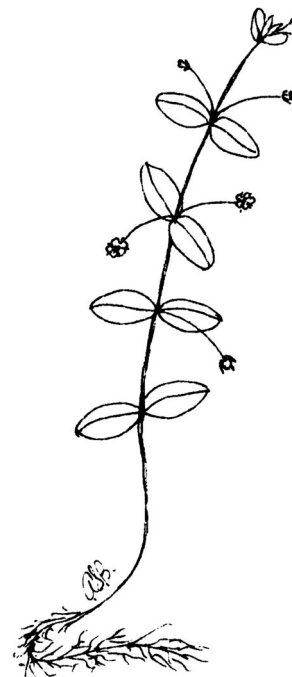
Scarlet Pimpernel, an annual, multiplies by seeds. It prefers sandy or gravelly soil along roadsides, walks, and other disturbed areas. Sometimes white, pink, or blue forms are seen. Flowers usually have a dark center. A blue form from Italy with larger flowers is used horticulturally.

Scarlet Pimpernel originated in Europe, and is now cosmopolitan in temperate climates. In Pennsylvania it is more prevalent in the southeast quarter.

Pimpernel may be a corruption of the Latin *bipennula*, two-winged little plant. The word's passage through many languages led eventually to the early modern English, *Pympernel*. The botanical name is *Anagallis arvensis*. *Anagallis*, Greek, has several translations: *ana*, again and *agallein*, to delight in, referring to the movement of the flowers; to laugh, because the plant was used to treat melancholy; unpretentious, for its general appearance. *Arvensis*, Latin, means arable land, fields. The family is *Primulaceae* from the Latin *primulus*, the very first, because some species bloom very early.

Scarlet Pimpernel was used for numerous complaints including gout, toothache, snakebite, and for removing splinters. Leaves may irritate skin.

Anne S. Bahl



Anagallis arvensis – Scarlet Pimpernel by Anne S. Bahl

Hunt Institute Presents American Botanical Prints Of Two Centuries

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation presents "American Botanical Prints of Two Centuries" from April 27 to July 31, 2003. The exhibition includes a sampling of nearly two centuries of American printed plant images, from utilitarian to creative.

The 19th century in America was one of practical botanical printmaking. From the lowliest school textbook to the grandest exploration report, images of plants were required as illustrative extensions to the text and ranged in size from tiny text figures to large folio plates. Various printmaking processes were employed that required the manual skills of artists, engravers, lithographers, colorists, etc. By the end of the century, photography and photo-mechanical processes had been developed that entirely eliminated the need for hand-worked printmaking methods in the production of utilitarian botanical illustrations.

The 20th century saw artists indulging in printmaking purely for art's sake, and the flower and plant portrait provided a rewarding inspiration for many.

The exhibition will be on display on the fifth floor of the Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-noon and 1 p.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.-4 p.m. (except July 4 and 6). The exhibition is open to the public free of charge. For further information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434.

Field Trip Schedule

Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Trips are not canceled due to rain. Wear shoes that can get wet. Water and sun protection are recommended for mid-summer trips. For

questions, call the trip leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232.

Saturday, June 14, 2003

Dolly Sods Natural Area, Tucker Co., WV

Time: 10 a.m.

**Leaders: Charles & Martha Oliver
(724) 887-6756**

Directions: Routes 51 & 40, or I-79 & I-68 are suggested ways to reach the intersection of Routes 40, 219 south and I-68 in Keyzers Ridge, Maryland. From this point, take Route 219 south to Thomas WV. In Thomas, take Route 32 to Davis. Continue on Route 32, about 9-10 miles south of Davis, turn right into Canaan Valley Resort (a well-marked resort of Canaan Valley State Park). We will meet in the lobby.

Canaan Valley is approximately 140 miles from Pittsburgh; allow ample time for traveling. The Dolly Sods Area ranges in elevation from 2500 to 4700 feet above sea level. Cold temperatures and fog can occur anytime of the year. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear!

For information on accommodations in the Davis, WV, area, call 1-800-CALL WVA. Camping is available at Blackwater and Canaan Valley State Parks.

Saturday, June 21, 2003

Chalk Hill Bog, Fayette County

Time: 1 p.m.

Leader: Loree Speedy (724) 872-5232

Directions: From Uniontown, take Route 40 east. In the village of Chalk Hill (which about 2 miles from the Summit Hotel), turn left onto Chalk Hill-Ohiopyle Road. (You will see signs for Ohiopyle and Kentuck Knob on the right, just before this turn-off.) Shortly after this turn-off, you will reach a Y in the road; bear left.

After crossing an arm of Deer Lake, take the first left turn onto Greenbriar Road. Travel about a mile; you will enter State Game Lands. Park at the State Game Lands 51 parking lot about 2/10 of a mile farther on the right.

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – June 2003

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WILDFLOWERS is published monthly 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 above address. Deadline for submissions is the 23th of the previous month.

The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information

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. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 for family. 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, 279 Orr Road, West Newton, PA 15089. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:15 p.m. sharp, at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome to the informative program and business meeting.

Wildflowers of Pennsylvania – Ordering Information – 400 pages of text and 612 color photographs

Wildflowers of Pennsylvania can be purchased for \$20.00 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, to Dr. Haywood at the address below. If you order by mail, add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3.00 for two, \$4.00 for three, \$4.50 for four. Send your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D., 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165 (412) 578-6175; mjhaywood@carlow.edu