



THE BULLETIN OF THE

# Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

## March & April Meetings

*If the weather is inclement, a BSWP meeting will cancel if Carlow University cancels classes. To learn if that has happened, call the Carlow Weather Line at 412-578-6677.*

MARCH 9 MEETING. Dr. Tia-Lynn Ashman will present *The Secret Sex Life of Strawberries*. Although strawberries are often referred to as 'America's favorite fruit', few people realize that they may hold the answers to some of the most pressing questions in the evolutionary biology of plants. Specifically, how and why do separate sexes evolve? How do sex chromosomes evolve? How and when does sexual dimorphism arise? To unlock the answers to these and other questions, Dr. Tia-Lynn Ashman has been studying the ecology and genetics of a wild relative of the cultivated strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*, which is native to NW Pennsylvania. In this presentation she will draw on her work and that of others to describe how basic plant research can lead to advancements in our understanding of fundamental biological processes as well as contribute to breeding programs aimed at improving cultivated strawberries.

Dr. Tia-Lynn Ashman is a Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. She received her PhD from one

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APRIL 13 MEETING. Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas will present *Rooted In the Land*. Throughout history residents of the Appalachian Region have looked to the natural world to sustain them. Its vegetation has provided them nourishment, medicinal remedies, construction and aesthetic materials. So too have the mountains inspired legends and influenced worldview. Featuring historical as well as contemporary Appalachian folkways, this presentation discusses how the mountainous region has shaped the practices of those who inhabit it.

Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas is an Assistant Professor of Folklore and Sociology at Frostburg State University. She holds a Doctorate in Folklore and American Studies from Indiana University-Bloomington. Thomas offers courses on the Appalachian region including, but not limited to: Experiencing Appalachia, Folklore in Appalachia, and African Americans in Appalachia. She has also contributed to the university's development of a major in Ethnobotany and coordinates a Minor

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Meetings are held on Mondays at 7:15 p.m. at Kresge Theater, Carlow University, 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.

# March & April

*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.



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*Field Trip Chairperson:* Loree Speedy  
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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.

Registration for Botanical Society field trips is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy. Trips last 3 – 4 hours but one can leave at any time. For questions call the field trip leader, or Loree Speedy at 724-872-5232.

## Saturday, March 28, 1 p.m.

### Little Sewickley Creek in Herminie, Westmoreland County

**Leader:** Loree Speedy; mousemapper@verizon.net; 724-872-5232

**Directions:** Take the PA Turnpike to Exit 67 (Route 30/Irwin/Greensburg). Take the Route 30 East/Greensburg ramp. At the first stoplight on Route 30, turn right on Arona Rd., then another right after 0.5 mile. Travel this road 3.7 miles to a T. Turn right at the T. Continue 1 mile through a series of stop signs through the town of Herminie to a second T. Turn left, then turn right at the intersection with a Dairy Queen. Travel to the bottom of a hill; just before the highway bridge, park on the left side.

## Saturday, April 11, 1 p.m.

### Rock Point Nature Area near Ellwood City, Lawrence County

**Leader:** Joe Isaac; joeaisaac@aol.com; 724-964-8770

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 83/PA 528. Turn left onto PA 528 and travel a short distance to US 19. Turn right on US 19 and travel 3 miles to Zelenople. Turn left onto New Castle St./PA 288/PA 588. Continue onto PA 288, which bears to the right outside of Zelenople. Travel PA 288 about 7 miles to a Giant Eagle in the Ellwood City Plaza on the right.

**Notes:** Rock Point Park was an amusement park from 1885 to 1911. It has not been open to the public for 98 years and has been recently purchased by the Wild Waterways Conservancy and named the Rock Point Nature Area. According to the website [www.rockpoint-park.com](http://www.rockpoint-park.com), "In addition to the historical aspect, Rock Point Nature Area is a superb natural wilderness region with many acres of deep woods. The forest has reclaimed all but some small remains of the park, making the region one of the most picturesque natural hiking areas around. Many of the original trails are still accessible, and allow for easy walking."

# Field Trips

**Sunday, April 19, 9:30 a.m.**

## **Raccoon Creek Wildflower Reserve, Beaver County**

**Leader:** Shane Miller; newmiller\_78@hotmail.com; 412-475-3563

**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 miles 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.

**Sunday, April 26**

## **Enlow Fork Natural Area, Greene County**

**Times:** 10 a.m. for the first wildflower walk; an afternoon walk will be informally gathered.

**Contact Info:** Larry Helgerman; bobolink3@verizon.net

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, travel I-79 South toward Washington and head west on I-70 West. Exit I-70 at Exit 15 (Route 40/Chestnut St.) and turn right to head east toward Washington. At the second stop light, turn right onto Franklin Farms Rd. and travel 1 mile to a T intersection with PA 18. Turn right onto PA 18 and continue a little over 14 miles to its junction with PA 231. (Note: do not take PA 221 which joins PA 18 from the right and leaves PA 18 on the left). At the junction with PA 231 (East Finley Dr.), turn right and travel for 1.8 miles until PA 231 heads north (right) at a 3-way intersection. At this point, continue straight onto Enon Church Rd. and continue for a little over 4 miles to an intersection. At the intersection, continue straight across a bridge onto Walker Hill Rd. for 1.6 miles to a sharp right turn for the game lands (Smokey Row Rd.). Continue down Smokey Row Rd. to game land parking lots at the bottom of the hill.

**Notes:** The Enlow Fork Total Ecology Extravaganza is a multi-organizational event with multiple leaders in all fields. There will be birding at 8 a.m., wildflower walks at 10 a.m., and much more throughout the day. Picnicking is encouraged, but food will be available. Contact Larry Helgerman; bobolink3@verizon.net, if you can help or if you have questions.

## *Special Events*

### SEARCH FOR LICHENS

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*Mingo Creek Park, Saturday, March 7, 1 p.m.*

Learn about lichens with Bryan Dolney. Bring a small hand lens, as a limited number of them will be available for use. Dress for the outdoors and light hiking.

Reservations are requested for this free program; meet at Shelter 4. For reservations and directions, call Jeff Donahue at 724-228-6867.

### EARTH DAY AT FEC — April 18

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Celebrate Earth Day at Frick Environmental Center! This exciting family festival runs from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 18. Explore nature, enjoy local entertainment, learn ways to practice sustainable living, and much more.

BSWP member Mark Bowers will lead tree identification hikes in the park at 11:30 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. *Wildflowers of Pennsylvania* can be purchased at the BSWP table.

For more information or to volunteer to help FEC, call Patty Himes at 412-422-6538.

### ENLOW FORK TOTAL ECOLOGY EXTRAVAGANZA

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*Sunday, April 26— begins at 8 a.m.*

This annual multi-organizational event in Greene County features a wide variety of guided walks with leaders in all fields — birding, botany, butterflies, fish, snails, stream study and watershed conservation. Picnicking is encouraged. Buy food from vendors or bring your own. Proceeds from all purchased food goes to help sponsoring organizations.

See directions and Larry Helgerman's contact information at left in Field Trips section.

*Special Events continued on next page*

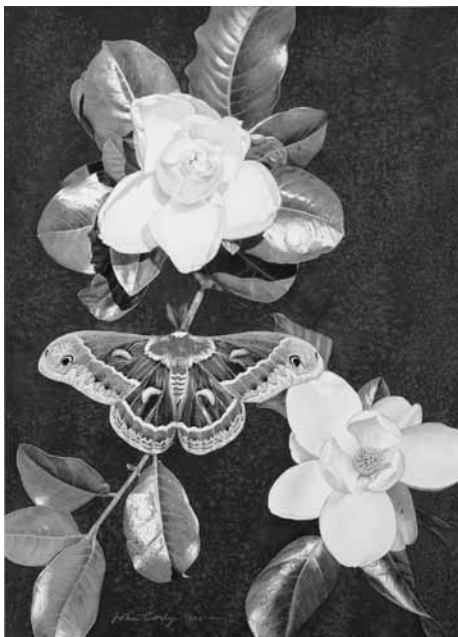
## WINGS OF PARADISE

### *Watercolors of Silkmoths by John Cody*

The Hunt Institute will exhibit 47 watercolors of silkmoths by John Cody, an acclaimed artist who is passionate about portraying the magnificent beauty of silkmoths and their associated plants with both artistry and accuracy. With these widely appealing watercolors, he hopes to increase awareness of their dwindling numbers and the need to conserve their natural habitats. Although the majority of silkmoths, which are members of the family Saturniidae, are found in the tropics, some species are found in North America and Europe.

In conjunction with *Wings of Paradise: Watercolors of Silkmoths by John Cody*, 26 March–30 June, the Hunt Institute will hold its annual Open House on 14–15 June. There will be two talks and displays, one on the life and work of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), whose work included beautifully illustrated folios on the insects of Surinam, and another highlighting women botanical illustrators over four centuries. The Hunt will also have a guided gallery tour of the exhibition by the assistant curator of art, tours of departments and reading room, and opportunities to meet one-on-one with staff. A schedule of events will be available soon online: <http://huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu>.

The exhibition will be on display on the 5th floor of the Hunt Library at Carnegie Mellon University, open to the public and free of charge. For information, contact the Hunt Institute at 412-268-2434.



## Enjoy Your Wildflowers

### HARBINGER-OF-SPRING by Anne S. Bahl

In late winter this small plant, shown at right, may reach nine inches, and is a welcome sight in Pennsylvania. It is one of the earliest plants to bloom, usually when the only shade is from the bare branches of trees and shrubs. The flowers are a gentle reminder that Winter is retreating and Spring is on its way. One meaning of harbinger is something that foreshadows what is to come.

Harbinger-of-spring is rare in the world. It is native to southern Ontario, Canada, and to the eastern United States from Minnesota south to Arkansas, excluding New England, eastern New York, and the lowland coastal areas. The habitat it prefers is in upland and open-wooded forests, fields, floodplains, seeps, and thickets that are rich and deciduous.

The flower cluster is an umbel similar to, but smaller than that of its relative, Queen Anne's Lace. Umbel is from the Latin *umbella*, meaning shadow, sunshade, and umbrella. *Umbella* is also the root for the classical family name, *Umbelliferae*. The updated family name is *Apiaceae*.

The botanical name of the plant is *Erigenia bulbosa*. In some sources, *Erigenia* is Greek for born in spring. In Timothy Coffey's *History and Folklore of North American Wildflowers*, *Erigenia* is another name for Aurora (Aurora, the Roman goddess of the Dawn, is equivalent to the Greek Eos). *Bulbosa* refers to the small round tuber from which the plant grows.

The quarter-inch flowers are white. They have five stamens with prominent reddish-brown anthers. The contrast of the anthers with the petals suggested another common name, Pepper-and-salt.

Usually there is only one leaf. It is ternate (divided three times), with a fern-like appearance. A leaf-like bract is at the base of each umbel ray. The flowers frequently open before the leaves mature.

Harbinger-of-spring is the only species in its genus. However, its family is large and is the source of food, flavorings, herbs, and spices; also gum resins, medicines, and perfumes. Examples are: carrot, celery, parsnip, anise, dill, parsley, asafetida, galbanum, and poison hemlock.

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Above: *Cecropia Moth*, *Hyalophora cecropia*, watercolor by John Cody, 1992.

Opposite page: Anne S. Bahl illustration

# Other Special Events

## PENNSYLVANIA RARE PLANT FORUM

The Pennsylvania Rare Plant Forum will be held Saturday, 4 April at Bald Eagle State Park, 149 Main Park Road, Howard, PA ([www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/baldeagle.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/baldeagle.aspx)). This is an excellent opportunity to connect and work with other botanists, amateur and professional, who share your interest in the flora of Pennsylvania.

All people interested in the conservation of Pennsylvania's native flora are encouraged to attend. In addition to discussing proposed changes to the list of Plants Of Special Concern In Pennsylvania (POSCIP), presentations are also scheduled.

If you would like to give a presentation on recent work you have done related to the conservation of the flora of our region, contact Steve Grund at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy at 412-586-2350 or at [sgrund@paconserve.org](mailto:sgrund@paconserve.org). Three presentations are already on the agenda.

Chris Hardy, Millersville University, is getting ready to launch the *Wiki Plant Atlas*. He will introduce us to the interface and explain how it will be useful to us, as well as how we can help populate it with records.

Eric Burkhart, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, Penn State, will present results of his studies on *Panax quinquefolius* that were not covered in his presentation last year, as well as outlining and soliciting help for his current WRCF study, *American ginseng* (*Panax quinquefolius* L.), *goldenseal* (*Hydrastis canadensis* L.) and *American bugbane* (*Actaea podocarpa* DC., = *Cimicifuga americana* Michx.) in *Pennsylvania: habitat, geography, chemistry, and commerce*.

Chris Tracey, Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP), Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, will present his talk *Beyond Environmental Review: Conservation Planning at PNHP*.

For detailed information about the Forum and suggested overnight accommodations, contact Steve Grund.

## SPRING PLANT FESTIVAL

May 2nd, 9–1 p.m.

Join the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society for a day of festivities on the grounds of the 150-year-old Rhone homestead, with many old trees, landscaped gardens and outdoor sculpture. Many vendors of native plants, fine perennials, herbs and organically grown vegetable starts, and original artwork will be present! The self guided "Tree Walk" will be available to visitors as well as the maze and labyrinth gardens. Light refreshments will be available. There will be a Silent Auction of very special garden items. Please, no dogs.

Go to [www.honeymeade-usa.org/directions.htm](http://www.honeymeade-usa.org/directions.htm) for a map and directions.

## WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

The 48th annual Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls State Park near Davis, WV takes place May 7–10. This wonderful event offers a variety of outings to many great areas. Each year approximately 300 people attend. Speakers, interesting programs, and exhibits will be featured throughout the evenings. All outings have flower and bird leaders.

Deadline for all reservations is April 24. Contact Vickie Hash at 304-558-2754 to learn more.

## NATIVE PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE

The 17th annual Native Plants in the Landscape Conference will be held June 4–6 at Millersville University in Lancaster County. Highlighted speakers include landscape architect W. Gary Smith, University of Delaware professors Doug Tallamy and Dr. John Frett, Rick Lewandowski of The Mt. Cuba Center, and Roger Tia Koide of Penn State University.

A popular display and plant sale area features native plants, books and artwork. Go to [www.millersvillenativeplants.org](http://www.millersvillenativeplants.org). A downloadable conference brochure will be available there March 2.

Harbinger-of-spring



*Wildflowers*

March– April 2009

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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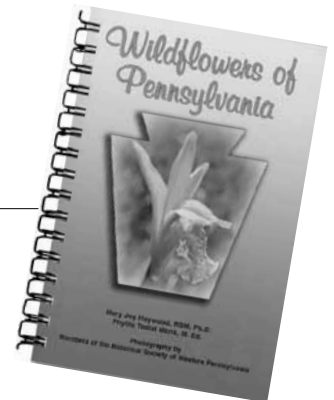
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**Wildflowers of Pennsylvania** (400 pages, 612 color photos) can be purchased for \$20 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3/two, \$4/three, \$4.50/four. Forward your check, made payable

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; haywoodmj@carlow.edu



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*March 9 Meeting, continued from front cover*

of the premier institutions of higher learning, the University of California at Davis. She and her research team, which includes many undergraduate students, have been studying plant evolutionary ecology for nearly 20 years. Her work aims to understand patterns in plant reproductive traits including floral scent, floral longevity, and mating systems. Recently she has begun an international collaboration to better understand how biodiversity affects global patterns of pollination sufficiency, with special reference to endemic species in biodiversity hotspots.

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*April 13 Meeting, continued from front cover*

in Cultural Anthropology. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Thomas oversees Folklore and Folklife Programming at FSU — documenting the traditional art and folklife of Western Maryland and the Allegheny Highlands, and developing public programming featuring that material including: the development of Mountain City Traditional Arts, an annual FSU Appalachian Festival, public performances, and short radio programs on 91.9 WFWM — FSU's NPR affiliate.