

On The Fringe

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NORTHEASTERN OHIO



Founding Chapter of
**THE OHIO NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY**

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1997 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Dr. George J. Wilder

Program Committee Chairman

It is advised that all participants bring a brown-bag lunch on all field trips and to all workshops. All please call the trip leader to let him or her know you will be coming. This is very important in case of any last minute changes which participants may need to know about. A trip leader and their phone number will be listed for each event. Please feel free to invite guests.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM -MEMBERS' SLIDE SHOW AT THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY LIBRARY (BEACHWOOD BRANCH). Members are invited to show color transparencies that they have prepared of plants or of other natural phenomena. Also, individual members are encouraged to attend, whether or not they are showing transparencies. Members planning to show transparencies should arrive with their transparencies correctly arranged within a carousel. If many people bring transparencies participants will each be limited to showing no more than 20 transparencies if few people attend there will be no preordained limit. The library will provide a slide projector and screen. DIRECTIONS: From 1-271, exit at Chagrin Boulevard. Travel west on Chagrin Blvd. for about one-half mile and then turn right (north) on Richmond Road. Travel about one mile on Richmond Road and then turn left on the westbound lane of Shaker Boulevard. Immediately turn right into the library parking lot. There is no need to call in advance for this event.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 9:00 AM to afternoon -IDENTIFICATION OF TREES AND SHRUBS IN WINTER AT THE DONALD W. MEYER NATURE CENTER AT BIG CREEK PARK (CHARDON, OHIO.) Judy Barnhart, Naturalist with the Geauga Park District, will lead this session. She will deliver a preliminary presentation indoors, pertaining to twig morphology and other relevant topics (bark, etc.). Then she will lead a hike outdoors, demonstrating how the preliminary information is applied for the purposes of plant identification. Considered, will be a beech-maple forest and diverse species, e.g., of *Acer* (maples), *Cornus* (dogwoods), *Fagus* (beech), *Hamamelis* (witch hazel), *Populus* (including big-toothed aspen and trembling aspen), *Prunus* (cherries), and *Quercus* (oaks). DIRECTIONS: From 1-90, exit at Rt. 44; travel south on Rt. 44 for about 2 miles to Clark Road. Turn left (east) on Clark Road and travel for about 1 mile. Turn right (south) on Robinson Road. Then go up the winding hill and continue for about 1 mile to the Park entrance (which is on the right) . Enter the Park and the "Y" in the road bear left

and enter the first parking lot at the right. Please telephone Judy in advance if you plan on coming to this program. Her work number is (216) 286-9504 and her home number is (216) 564-9151. Judy can loan a limited number of hand lenses to participants; however, bring along a hand lens if you have one.

WE HOPE TO HAVE A FIELD TRIP IN LATE MARCH ON THE GLACIAL GEOLOGY OF OHIO. Watch this space for details in the next issue of *On the Fringe*.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 10:00 AM - Afternoon - THE FLORA OF FOREST HILL PARK (CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO) - George Wilder, Professor of Biology at Cleveland State University, will lead this trip. Observed primarily (if not entirely) in winter condition will be numerous herbaceous species and woody species. Examples of highlights of the Park evident at this time of year are *Hieracium canadense* (Canada hawkweed) and *Quercus coccinea* (Scarlet oak). Forest Hill Park is one of the very few locations bordering Cleveland which still contains apparent remnants of original plant communities (and even these remnants are now threatened by Cleveland Heights' recent plans for development within the Park.) Please telephone George to make arrangements for this trip. His work number is (216) 687-2395 and home number is (216) 932-3351.

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 10:00 AM - Afternoon - WILDFLOWERS OF FURNACE RUN METROPARK (AKRON METROPARK DISTRICT). Tom Sampliner, President of our Society, will lead this trip. Within the Akron Metroparks, along Furnace Run Creek there exists a lovely wet bottomland rich in wildflowers, including many common species of Spring ephemerals. Likely to be observed are wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), two-leaved toothwort (*Dentaria diphylla*), cut-leaved toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*), squirrel-corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), Dutchman's-breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Harbinger of Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*), common blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), all of the common species of Trillium and about six different species of violets (*Viola*). DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of Route 21 and Route 82, head south on Route 21. Pass under I-77 and immediately turn right on right Road (this entails making an almost 180 degree turn). Follow right Road for about 1 mile to the Furnace Run Metropark parking lot. Park there. Please telephone Tom within one week of the trip. His phone number is (216) 371-4454.

GARDENING THOSE WASTE AREAS

Part II of II

by Tom Sampliner

Their overall impact will amaze you and your guests. Too bad these are believed to be extirpated here in Ohio. Once established, a colony can be trampled on and neglected yet continue to put on a great annual show from flower into late fall when the prominent red fruits are striking against the dark green foliage. If you have a rock wall that you would like something to climb on and are willing to provide some sandy soil, you should be able to get this ground cover going. For those near the water that offers

sandy beach or rocky borders, here is an attractive ground cover. If your soil is high clay content like mine, alter your soil by cutting it with addition of coarse sands.

A natural companion for the bearberry would be one of the cinquefoils. In particular, the one commonly called silverweed (*Potentilla arserina*). In Ohio it is anything but common, being on the state heritage list. We have developed so much of this plant's natural habitat, sandy beaches, that it only exists in the few protected pockets.

This prostrate member of the rose family spreads via long runners. Stems of pinnate leaves sharply toothed arise from the runners as do the 5 part yellow flowers which are around 1 inch wide. The leaves underneath are a silvery, gray-green which give expression to the plant's common name. It is most handsome in natural habitat when white to tan color sand forms a backdrop for green upper leaf surfaces which intermingle with the silver undersides both brightly lit by the deep yellow color of the florets. When you find these plants in the few remaining pockets of beach and old lake ridges in the lower Great Lakes, they certainly stand out. I suppose if you have an open sunny area similar to a beach but without sand, you could always "order out" tonight and acquire the necessary sand.

If you can provide or improvise what really is a barrens or local version of an arid desert, there are some more beach plants that would make you the talk of the neighborhood gardeners. The next plant I recommend would be a member of the bluebell family called harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*). These little guys range from 6 to 20 inches tall, have alternate very narrow leaves of the stem, while the heart shaped basal leaves are normally gone by flowering time. Flowers are bell shaped, sky blue, individually stalked flowers that seem to forever dance in the wind. You will find them most charming. For so delicate a flower, they are surprisingly tough as they withstand the winters of Labrador and Newfoundland as well as Alaska.

A taller plant, 6-18 inches high, of sandy beaches and barrens is hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*). This member of the borage family tends to form nice clusters of around one dozen separate stalks gray in color from the fine hairs on leaves and stem. Sitting atop each stalk will be a cluster of 5 petalled tubular flower lobes flared out ' wide open. They are bright beacons of yellow. Even prior to flowering, the pubescence of each scape makes an impressive showing.

Since we have clearly moved into mid summer bloomers, a prairie origin plant that can bake all day in the sun and take as much abuse and neglect as you wish, would be one of the coneflower members of the Composite family, Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia serotina*). Composite flowers have two separate types of florets together in what appears to the layperson as one flower head. The yellow strap shaped petals are actually individual ray flowers. Very close inspection will divulge the reproductive parts. The petal-like ray flowers form a circle around a central disc. Inside the disc receptacle are tightly packed tubular or linear florets crowded into a head. • In this species the rays are yellow while the central disc is almost black. Leaves are alternate, toothed and very rough in texture. In a good year, these can attain chest height. Even in the heavy clay soils of eastern suburb yards such as mine, these plants thrive. They form dense colonies, so dense little else can penetrate. If you plant these composites, they will come; no not baseball fans, but pollinators by the hundreds. One trouble with this species is that they are so tough and adventive, that they spread into cracks in driveways and patios and invite themselves into gardens where you did not place them.

Another of the coneflower group originating as a prairie composite native is the exceptionally beautiful purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). The purple rays are broader than the previous species and both disc and flower size are the larger.

Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is a shrub to small tree size plant that grows on bluffs and stream embankments as well as woodland edges throughout eastern North America. With a natural selection for edges, this seems a prime candidate for waste and underused areas of your yard in a variety of habitat situations.

The common name for this plant is indeed that of old apothecary store fame. Most modern drug or pharmacies still carry the modern synthesized version. It is well to remember the historical origin of a substance that had greater importance in earlier times. Such memory may also encourage us to preserve our botanical heritage. Perhaps one can consider witch hazel as having been put out to pasture in a retirement well earned after having served so long.

The plant can reach up to 5 meters in height. Branches are glabrous to sparsely pubescent. Leaves are obovate to suborbicular, wavy toothed margins, obliquely rounded to subcordate at the bases and 5 to 7 veins per leaf. Flowers appear in fall on short pedicels supporting yellow, stringy, four-petaled flowers to decorate many of the leaf axils.

Bloom time in our area extends deep into the fall, often well the first several minor frosts, In fact, so late does the flowering last that it often becomes the last flower one sees for the year. The petals are so thin and stringy that they resemble yellow spiders that seem so *a propos* as nature's contribution to a spooky Halloween. Perhaps the flower shape contributed to the common name in some fashion. The off center leaf bases are quite distinctive. From a leaf on the ground, even one blown some distance from the tree, op as a pretty good confirmation of identification.

Another interesting plant just about as tough as they come is feverfew, (*Chrysanthemum parthenum*). This composite blooms during summer into late fall even past a minor frost or two. Short white rays numbering from 10 to 20 surround the central disc of a color I shall call earthly yellow. Flower heads appear at the tops of a corymb pattern. The very fern-like appearance of the leaves, which are alternate, is due to their bipinnate division with each being very compact and ovate in overall shape. This presents an effect of being compact and bushy. Escape from cultivation long ago has established this perennial as a common member of the roadside and waste areas. This should make it prime candidate for any difficult area of your property.

Their appearance isn't that cultivated mounded over pattern typical of the commonly used borders such as impatiens which seem to be so popular these days. Frankly, I prefer the less orderly appearance.

Their toughness is a distinct advantage over such as the impatiens since they don't wilt the first dry spell and can tolerate far greater extremes in temperature, water level or frequency and soil content. I have seen this plant spring back to life from compost piles, municipal wood chip mounds and the like. In addition, herbal lore is kind to this plant that apparently offers medicinal and other uses.

GRAND SABLE FALLS & DUNES
A FAVORITE PLACE
by Tom Sampliner

Spring comes late to the shores of Lake Superior. However, when it does, it brings an impressive display of flowers including my favorites, the orchids.

In that regard, one of my most favorite places is the Grand Sable Falls and Dunes area of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Nestled along the south shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's vast upper peninsula, this rugged land offers spectacular scenery, bird migration, and the major subject of this article, wild orchids.

The forest are chiefly coniferous, leading a fragrance throughout and the all too brief location. Into the forest, you can find the northern leafy green (*Platanthera huronensis*). Getting your attention like a beacon of light will be the occasional fairy slipper (*Calypso bulbosa*). You must put out of your mind such companions as gay wings (*Polygala paucifolia*) and *Streptopus roseus* and *Viola canadensis* to pick out the orchids. Perhaps you too have noticed how really good botanist can tune out all but the shape, color and other variables of whatever they are looking for amidst the assortment of flora growing at any one location.

If you like visual puzzles, try to locate the perfectly camouflaged spires of long bracted orchids (*Oeloglossum viride*) hiding in the deep forest along with the previously mentioned northern leafy green orchids. Once every great while, someone, including myself will come upon those orchid stalks delineating the perfect letter "C" for florets: this being hooker's orchid, (*Platanthera hookeri*). There is something about this northern boreal denizen that intrigues me: it's one of my favorites. Perhaps my fancy is partly due to the presumed extirpated status here in my home state of Ohio. Following the trail from roadside just north of the lake into the open area of the dunes, you will soon come to what must be the motherlode for ram's head orchids (*Plantanthera arietinum*). Here there will be hundreds and in good years thousands to choose from. There will be the occasional two-headed stalk, clusters of a half dozen or more blooming scapes, and all sorts of combinations to select from.

I can never forget the first time I visited the site probably some 10 years ago. It was a cold, windy day with brief intervals between drizzles and even downpours. I was excited to see the place I had heard so much about. I had not given much thought to insect pests. I must have thought rain and wind would keep those obnoxious mosquitoes and black flies down to a minimum. My friend and I trekked into where the ladyslippers were. We removed heavy full length packs, took out camera bodies, set up tripods, affixed lenses, cable releases and were set to get down for some serious shooting. Unfortunately, when you sprawl flat on the ground to line up your shots, you meet the bugs at their most prominent level. Hordes of the pests swarmed all over. You could not see through the viewfinder to shoot. The call of mammal blood must have echoed through the park because we must have attracted most the little pests. One layer of clothes was not enough. A hasty retreat to the car was made. Every article of clothing was layered on. Gloves, hats, scarves and double layers of socks to cover and recover every millimeter of skin were employed against the onslaught. We looked like polar explorers. The little pest even got into the lenses. Only modest time was spent under those

conditions. The next day a front pushed on through, weather cleared, and the bugs were at tolerable levels. I have never had such a rough time with the insects as this first visit.

Back to the orchids. Size of florets and heights of stalks varied considerably. Despite the huge population of orchids, no white one were observed.

For the photographers, note that these orchids arise from the same colorful ground cover described earlier. Do not fail to also record some habitat shots that depict those conditions; you will regret such omission.

Whether I am photographing the orchids, other wildflowers, mushrooms or small sections of the interesting forest floor, I use the same equipment. I employ a Minolta X-700 body atop a heavy Bogen tripod with oversized ball head. My macro lens is a Tamron 90 mm. which I extend to get life size images by mounting a 2X teleconverter at the rear. My working distance has therefore doubled to 180 mm. On shaky ground this is beneficial. It also allows better compositions. A cable release will prevent body shake from moving the camera during stopped down longer exposures. It is generally agreed that at speeds slower than 1/30 second a tripod and the cable release are necessary protection against image blur. Unfortunately, these days many cameras do not offer depth of preview buttons. Fortunately, my Minoltas do. It is very important to make sure that when stopped down you have taken precaution to bring into sharp focus from front to back of your subject. Without previewing the depth at your selected "f" stop you are just guessing. The technique is to hyperfocalize so that the closest part of your subject to you is sharp then stop down and press the preview and see if sharpness extends to the farthest point in the subject away from you. If the day is windy, I may not get any shots. If I had flash equipment I could, by my pack is so full and heavy now I can't add anymore equipment. Maybe I should travel with a porter. I take only color slides. My film of choice is generally either Fuji 50 or 100 with an occasional Kodachrome 64 or whatever slow speed film is available, I do not use pro anything. I especially stay away from Velvia which I hate with a passion. The earlier mentioned slow speed less grainy films at whichever I can find at the most reasonable price is good enough. Velvia with it's oversaturation of color is garish and not natural. I will debate this with any professional out there. It is not nature. Just because magazine editors like the vibrant color does not make it a true representation.

ON THE ETHICS OF OBSERVING **by Tom Samptner**

At the risk of equally offending my botanically and ornithologically interested acquaintances, I offer these observations on observers.

Since most of us are plant oriented first, let us first take a whack at the methods of all too many so called, "birders".

The following personal observation was made during the most recent spring migration. The scene was the western or lowermost of the Shaker Lakes. It was during the hours of the early Sunday morning birdwalks. That morning I had already positioned myself at the stone bridge alongside the waterfall at the western border of the lake. The trees were literally dripping with warblers that quickly moved from branch to branch.

Then, I saw him. He was elegantly dressed up in his Sunday best breeding plumage. A sora rail (*Porsana Carolina*) waddled and ran amidst the leaf litter looking for a tasty meal. I was cursing myself for having failed to bother to bring my camera and equipment. It was all the more poignant as this handsome bird was often no more than an extended tripod length from me.

Though excited, I moved not, itched not, and even sneezed not — though the urge during this allergy season was present. I scarcely breathed for fear I would create fear in this striking visitor; then the damn birders arrived — en masse not less. They swarmed over the ground, fanning out like some army out on maneuvers as if to cut off all possible escape for their quarry. They literally chased the poor creature all over that portion of the lake shoreline. With high caliber binoculars aimed and firing, I was sure someone had probably called for an air strike to make sure the rail could not escape. Perhaps the goal was to assure each participant that they had adequate time to both observe and compare the guide book literature and depiction with what they had seen.

No matter what the goal was, these observers might just as well have asked the rail to pose for a mug shot and to be feather printed for police records. The atmosphere was to that effect. Frightened out of his wits, the rail took off after having crisscrossed a hundred yards for a net gain of ten. Why that dirty bird valued his freedom more than he valued adding to someone's list.

No leader stepped forward to control this motley crew. None of the birders bothered to look down at what they might be trampling either, in their haste to gain the best vantage point. Wildflowers and mushrooms alike fell prey to the marauding horde. After the bird flew the proverbial coup, the overheard conversation was commentary on how well or not each had seen the poor creature. Nobody so much as offered a comment in passing as to whether human activity had stressed a fellow resident of the planet. As I walked back to my car, head hung in shock and disbelief as to what I have just observed, I contemplated the role of man in this world. Is it man's role to use and abuse this planet along with all other life forms thereon? Are we any better because of our powers than simpler forms of life? Well, at least if the day's observations ever come up, I can always retort, I Sora Rail.

An orchid is always a special find. Quite often, they are heritage list plants. Therefore, one would hope that observers would exercise due care in walking and lying down to look or photograph.

I have been privileged to visit a population of *Dactylorhiza* orchids at Tilt Cove, Newfoundland. This population has probably existed since the early 1900's, being first observed and reported in 1989, SUSAN J. MEADES (1994). The species seems currently to most approximate Europe's Leopard marsh orchid, (*Dactylhoriza majalis* ssp. *praetermissa*) as set forth by Bateman & Denholm (1983). These beautiful pastel colored, spotted (hence the common name) orchids most commonly show off a bright pink color. The all white flowered specimens are much the minority. Home is an alkaline seep fen, which overlays slag from an old copper and nickel mine long ago played out. The site is covered with relics from this industrial past. The exposed rock is an outstanding garden of the most robust and attractive moonworts (*Botrychium lunaria*) I have ever encountered.

Back to the orchids, some 600 individuals were counted in 1994. In July of 1996 the population declined to fewer than 100. Granted some of the decline was due to a lack

of snow cover during portions of the winter of 1995-96; however, it is clear that decline was also due to the loving trappings by interested visitors. The message to my botanically interested readership should be clear and beyond debate. This was typed on a Sunday, so I am entitled to preach.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE
CENTER FOR PLANT CONSERVATION
by Stephen G Biever**

The Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) recently completed a variety of publications which are now being offered to the public at an introductory discount. To place an order, please contact Robin Bruce at (314) 577-9450 or bruce@mobot.org.

Plants in Peril is an activity guide to exploring biodiversity and rare native plant conservation for middle school educators. The 24-page booklet includes background information, illustrations of rare native plants, and several activities to introduce middle school students to plant conservation issues in our country. Price \$2.00 (regularly \$3.00).

The 1996 Plant Conservation Directory is a directory of names, addresses, phones and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of botanical, conservation, and scientific organizations nationwide. It assist with plant conservation questions on state, regional, and national levels and accurately reflects current rare plant legislation. Price \$16.50 (regularly \$18.00).

Restoring Diversity is a timely book which examines and expands on issues set forth at a 1993 national conference sponsored by the Center for Plant Conservation. Topics include the strategic and legal context for rare plant restoration, the biology of restoration, use and misuse of mitigation in rare plant conservation, and case studies from across the United States. The book unifies concepts in the field of restoration, fills significant technical policy gaps, and provides operational tools for successful restoration. Cloth \$35.95 (regularly \$39.95); Paper \$24.75 (regularly \$27.50).

The Guide to Educational Resources on Rare Native Plant Conservation in the United States is a 72-page resource guide that profiles the educational efforts of CPC's Participating Institutions as well as organizations outside the CPC network, with an emphasis on the five CPC priority regions: Hawaii, California, Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Price \$2.00 (regularly \$3.00).

The CPC is the only national organization in the United State dedicated exclusively to the conservation of U.S. native plants. Founded in 1984, CPC operates a national program of off-site (ex situ) plant conservation, research and education through a network of gardens at Participating Institutions. The CPC national office is headquartered at the Missouri Botanical Garden, P.O. Box 299, St. Louis, Missouri 63166-0299.

1997 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE
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