

# The Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio



## Ann Ellen Kroening Malmquist Founding President Gentian Award for 2015

Tonight we wish to honor Ann Malmquist, founder of the Ohio Native Plant Society and of our Northeastern Ohio chapter and an unflinching champion of the natural environment.

When she was a young child her father took her on extended vacations to the Minnesota wilderness and taught her to love and respect the land and the stars. In later years this evolved into a life-long crusade to protect the environment from the depredations of commercial development, logging, and mineral exploitation. Her zeal to keep well-drillers conforming to regulations is legendary. At one point she drove her car down railroad tracks to check for infractions and was obliged to retrace her route in uncomfortable haste.

Ann was active in the Audubon Society and with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. She was head of the Women's Committee at the museum for years and turned her skills as an organizer and hostess to the annual Ark in the Park Christmas fundraiser. Her connections to CMNH earned the Native Plant Society a wonderful venue for our annual dinners in the Dinosaur Hall.

Ann's lasting contribution to preserving and conserving our native plants is by establishing the Ohio Native Plant Society. For years she tirelessly travelled Ohio, generating enthusiasm and a commitment to forming organizations dedicated to recognizing the importance of native plants and protecting them. By 1988 there were eight chapters of the Society. Each chapter was free to follow its own needs and interests. The Northeastern chapter has concentrated on naturalist-led field trips to nature preserves, parks, and private lands that are not generally open to the public, along with programs focused on enlarging skills in plant identification.

The Native Plant Society was conceived at the First Annual Wildflower Symposium at the Holden Arboretum in May, 1982. On September 30, 1982, nine people convened at Holden to form the Society. At this meeting, as in subsequent activities of the Society for many years, Ann Malmquist was the prime mover and guide. For many years Ann oversaw the whole organization, from soliciting memberships to calling anyone who failed to renew his membership or failed to respond to the Annual Dinner invitation in a timely fashion. She nurtured the official publication, *On The Fringe*, which has appeared regularly for 32 years, with continuing high scholarly standards. It remains in the current holdings of a dozen professional libraries. She had monthly programs and field trips, traveling throughout Ohio and as far as the Bruce Peninsula in Canada and the Atlantic shore of Rhode Island.

One of Ann's lasting actions is the establishment of *Trillium grandiflorum* as the Ohio State Wildflower. This required the co-operation of legislators and the collaboration of the Ohio Division of Natural Resources Department of Natural Areas and Preserves. Guy Denny and Dick Moseley were instrumental in achieving her goal. Ann was always punctilious in acknowledging everyone who helped her in her projects.

During her lifetime Ann would not let us recognize her many contributions to forwarding the cause of preserving native plants. A successful outcome of her efforts was sufficient reward. However, I would like to mention a few of her accomplishments.

- She created an endowment fund dedicated to supporting outside projects that reflect the mission of the Native Plant Society. Each year a \$500 grant is made at the Annual Dinner, following a competitive application process.
- She raised \$1,500 to support the beginnings of a wildflower garden at the Holden Arboretum. She also provided labor and expertise for the establishment of a wildflower garden at what was then the Cleveland Garden Center, now the Botanical Garden, and at the Chagrin Falls Public Library.
- One of her early projects was the establishment of a population of the endangered Royal Catchfly, *Silene regia*, at the Holden Arboretum. She raised money and supported staff in locating a population to transplant and nurture until it flourished independently.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to remember Ann's unwavering commitment to preservation and conservation of the natural environment and native plants. Her foresight and ambitions are the reason we gather this evening and when

we join together for outings in nature and on environmental causes. We will continue to work together to honor and appreciate her life's work, efforts, and energies, moving forward to further and apply our society's mission with the same gusto and zeal as surely Ann would.

The plaque has a picture of a fringed gentian and says:

Gentian Award  
For Dedication to the Native Plants of Ohio  
Ann K. Malmquist  
2015

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Jane McCullam, Membership Chair and dear friend of Ann, gave this introduction at the Annual Meeting on November 14, 2015, before Kathy Hanratty, President of the Society, presented Ann's children with the Gentian Award.