

Founded in 1997.
Logo art of Tall Goldenrod,
Solidago altissima,
by Nat Cleavitt, 2006.



Solidago

Newsletter of the
Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 17, No. 3

2016

September 2016

LOCAL FLORA

Treasures of the Wayside, A Nod to Ladies'-Tresses

by Robert Dirig



ONE OF THE DELIGHTS of late summer in the Finger Lakes Region is a wild orchid called *Spiranthes cernua*, the **NODDING LADIES'-TRESSES**. In late August and early September, vertical spikes of gracefully formed white flowers swirl in a spiral around the stalks. Often growing in company, they decorate roadside ditches, footpaths, pond margins, and damp meadows, and are always a joy to find.

My first sight of this beautiful plant was a 20-foot-long mass of them in a ditch along the road that took us to school every day, beginning in the first week of September. Each morning and afternoon, my sister, brothers, cousins, and I eagerly watched for them from the passing bus, until they turned brown later in the month.

[text continues →]

Nodding Ladies'-Tresses: Three at left, edging a footpath through a wet, calcareous meadow, 2 Sept. 2002, copyright © 2016 by Robert Dirig. Two below, along a path in a fen, 1 Sept. 2006, copyright © 2016 by Torben Russo. Both from Tompkins County, N.Y.





Design from
Spiranthes cernua

[Ladies'-Tresses, continued from page 1]

A few years later, we discovered several plants on the margin of a large pond, and more in a soggy meadow, on our home acres, where we watched the annual cycle. This was in the Catskills, where they were common.

I have not seen them as frequently in the Finger Lakes Region, where they seem to like limy situations along footpaths in fens and through wet meadows. Wiegand & Eames (1926) also found them on "distinctly calcareous soils" in the Cayuga Lake Basin, recording flowering as early as August 15th. The NYFA website lists nine *Spiranthes* species in New York, with six species (seven taxa) known in the Finger Lakes Region (see box at right). These orchids are pollinated by bees, including bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.).



References: Wiegand, K. M., & A. J. Eames. 1926. *Flora of the Cayuga Lake Basin, New York*, Vascular Plants. Cornell Univ. Agricultural Experiment Station Bull. 92:158.
NYFA website:
<http://newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/Results.aspx>

Thank You!

Because FLNPS essentially shuts down during the summer, little material was available for the September issue of *Solidago*. With the return of our autumn walks and monthly programs, I ask readers to contribute articles, essays, photos, poetry, and other items for the December issue (see suggestions on p. 3). I am very grateful for everything that readers share, and enjoy arranging the issues.

For **Volume 17, No. 3**, we thank **WRITERS** Robert Dirig, Julia Miller, Rosemarie Parker, Stan Scharf, Anna Stalter, Norm Trigoboff, David Werier, & Colleen Wolpert, whose contributions make this issue special. **ILLUSTRATIONS** were loaned by Torben Russo (p. 1, two, bottom right), Julia Miller (p. 2, right), David Werier (p. 4, left), Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, **Bugwood.org** (p. 5, top — more details there), Norm Trigoboff (p. 5, bottom); and Robert Dirig [p. 1 (three, left), p. 2 (left border), p. 3 (design), p. 4 (two right), & pp. 6-10]. **CALENDAR ITEMS** were organized by Rosemarie Parker & Anna Stalter. **LAYOUT & DESIGN** by the Editor; **PROOFREADING** by Rosemarie Parker; **PRINTING** by Gnomon Copy, Ithaca, N. Y.; and **MAILING** by Rosemarie Parker & Susanne Lorbeer. I especially appreciate **TECHNICAL ADVICE** and other feedback shared by John V. Freudenstein, Scott LaGreca, Carri Marschner, Torben Russo, David Werier, & Robert Wesley.

BEST WISHES to FLNPS members (and all others in our reading audience) for joyous revels with autumn wildflowers and colored leaves!

Robert Dirig

< editorofsolidago@gmail.com >

Spiranthes of the Finger Lakes Region

Spiranthes casei, var. *casei* (Case's Lady's-Tresses): Cortland Co.

Spiranthes cernua (Nodding Lady's-Tresses): Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Ontario, Tompkins, & Yates Cos.

Spiranthes lacera, var. *gracilis* (Southern Slender Lady's-Tresses): Tompkins Co.

Spiranthes lacera, var. *lacera* (Northern Slender Lady's-Tresses): Chemung & Ontario Cos.

Spiranthes lucida (Shining Lady's-Tresses): Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Tompkins, & Yates Cos. [See Julia Miller's photo of this species in *Solidago* 16(4), page 6, Dec. 2015].

Spiranthes ochroleuca (Yellow Lady's-Tresses): Cortland, Livingston, & Onondaga Cos.

Spiranthes romanzoffiana (Hooded Lady's-Tresses): Cortland, Onondaga, Seneca, & Tompkins Cos.

Another Helpful Reference: Nelson, T., & E. Lamont. 2012. *Orchids of New England & New York*. Kollath+Stensaas Publishing, Duluth, Minn., pp. 128-143.

LETTER

[Please see additional Letters on page 4.]

Dear Robert,

Attached is a photo of Great Laurel (*Rhododendron maximum*) with a bumble bee (*Bombus* sp.), found at Lower Treman State Park in Ithaca, N.Y.* I was out walking with my boyfriend, who enjoys plants, but is not into botanizing. I was looking at some other plant, when he said that he saw a flowering bush. I thought he had mistaken a flowering vine for a bush, but to my surprise, it was a Great Laurel! I had never seen one in flower, so I was very excited. I took the photo on 26 June 2016.

Thanks!

Julia Miller

Ithaca, N.Y.

email of 8 September 2016



*Although a native plant, Great Laurel is not known to occur naturally at Treman. It was probably planted there.



Solidago

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To receive a colored version when *Solidago* is published, please ask Arie Tal to join our e-mail distribution list. Each colored version will also be posted on our website (www.flnps.org) after the next issue is produced.



Design from Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) leaves, rendered in bark of the Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)

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THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY STEERING COMMITTEE

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Please Contribute to Solidago

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS THAT FEATURE WILD PLANTS OF THE FINGER LAKES REGION OF N.Y. We include cryptogams (bryophytes, lichens, fungi, and algae) as "flora," and recognize that green plants provide habitats and substrates for these and many animals, especially insects. We are interested in zoological associations as long as plants are an integral part of the story.

We can use a wide spectrum of material in a variety of writing styles. Our regular columns include the NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST (identifying a mystery plant from images), LOCAL FLORA (plant lists from special sites), OUTINGS (reports of FLNPS-sponsored excursions), and PLANT PROFILES (on specific local plants). We also occasionally publish APPRECIATIONS (memorials to local botanists and naturalists), REVIEWS (of books, talks, workshops, nurseries), LETTERS (commentaries and letters to the editor), ESSAYS (on botanical themes), VERSE (haiku, sonnets, and poems of less formal structure), ART (botanical illustrations, plant designs, pencil sketches, decorations), and PHOTOGRAPHS (stand-alone images, photo essays, and full-page composite plates, or originals that can be scanned & returned). We also can always use FILLERS (very short notes, small images, cartoons) for the last few inches of a column.

Colored images in the online version will be converted into black and white before printing paper copies for mailing.



Please send *Solidago* contributions & correspondence to Robert Dirig, Editor, at editorofsolidago@gmail.com

Deadline for the December 2016 issue is November 15th!

Name That Plant Contest

The photo from last issue's NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST [*Solidago* 17(2), page 5] was of **HAIRY SOLOMON'S-SEAL** (*Polygonatum pubescens*). Hairy Solomon's-Seal is one of a few vegetatively similar species that grow in the mesic forests of central New York. Some of the other similar-looking species include False Solomon's-Seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*), Wild Oats (*Uvularia sessilifolia*), and Rose Twisted Stalk (*Streptopus lanceolatus*). While these species are not all closely related to each other, they have converged on a similar morphology of alternate elliptic leaves on a simple or few-branched stem. Thanks to all who entered the contest, and congratulations to the winners:

**Betsy Darlington, Bob Dirig, Hal Gardner,
and Susanne Lorbeer**



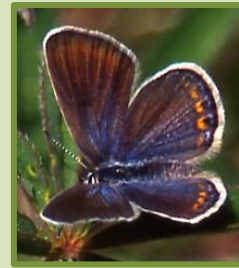
THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY PLANT IS SHOWN ABOVE. It is an aquatic plant with small but showy yellow flowers. *Hints and suggestions are often provided to contest participants who try. Common and/or scientific names are acceptable. More than one guess is allowed.* Please submit your answers to

DAVID WERIER (Nakita@lightlink.com).

The photograph was taken by David Werier on
23 July 2016 in Oswego County, N.Y.



LETTERS



female
Karner Blue

Hey Bob,

Blue I was not, when reading the latest issue of Solidago [17(2), June 2016]. It was another colorful delight! I am so proud for you and all the contributors that it is getting the recognition it deserves.

Colleen Wolpert

Apalachin, N.Y.

email of 18 June 2016



Eastern
Red Cedar

Dear Bob,

For many years, I've been in awe of several big, derelict tree carcasses, embedded, some deeply, in the beach along the southern end and eastern shore of Cayuga Lake (to two miles north of the East Shore Drive exit off Rt. 13 for "Stewart Park" in Ithaca, N.Y.).

I believe these objects — driftwood — to be the remains of ancient Eastern Red Cedars (Juniperus virginiana) that have fallen from the cliffs above into the lake over time.

Mature trees are usually 40-50 ft. (12-15 m) tall, and 12-24 in. (30-61 cm) in dbh. On good sites, trees may reach 120 ft. (37 m) in height and 48 in. (122 cm) in dbh. See this website for further information on this tree:

https://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/silvics_manual/Volume_1/juniperus/virginiana.htm.

Cordially yours,

Stan Scharf

Ithaca, N.Y.

Email of 14 August 2016



[Please see
another
Letter on
Page 2.]

Japanese Stilt Grass

Image 5501118, Leslie J.

Mehrhoff, University of
Connecticut, Bugwood.org.
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org/licenses/by/3.0/us/).[Slightly cropped from
original.]

Invasive Stilt Grass at Six Mile Creek: Volunteers Needed

by Anna M. Stalter

JAPANESE STILT GRASS [*Microstegium vimineum* (Trin.) Camus], an invasive annual grass, has long been problematic in southeastern New York, and was first reported from the *Six Mile Creek Natural Area at Ithaca*, Tompkins County, in 2004. Now known from at least three other locations in Ithaca, as well as at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Cayuga County, the species is presumably spreading throughout central and western parts of the state. Every September since 2005, volunteers from the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Cornell University, and the Ithaca community have gathered to pull Stilt Grass from an area near the second reservoir at Six Mile Creek. At least 40 person-hours were expended in 2010, and again in 2011, when a Cornell horticulture class joined the effort. Also in 2011, a weekend pull attracted eight more community and FLNPS volunteers, in an attempt to remove every plant in the vicinity. Unfortunately, we did not get it all, and since then, control efforts have been limited and sporadic. Recent reports of Stilt Grass in the area of the Wildflower Preserve have prompted *another large-scale effort in 2016*. Work days are scheduled for September 10 and September 17, and *volunteers are needed!* This weed is easy to pull, and we'll provide identification assistance, gloves, and refreshments! *On September 10*, we'll focus on the newest infestation near the entrance to the Wildflower Preserve off Giles St. *On September 17*, we'll re-visit the area around the second reservoir (steep descent and ascent, to and from the site), focusing on the upslope areas where Stilt Grass *threatens the habitat of two state-listed rare sedges and one rare grass*. Groups will convene at **9:00 a.m. and work until noon**. Please join the Friends of Six Mile Creek to help eradicate this invasive grass from our natural areas! **Contact Brittany** [redacted] for more information.



Another Plant Puzzle

by Norm Trigoboff

I found these
common plants in
Dryden, Tompkins
County, N.Y.



See answer on page 10.

LOCAL
FLORA

A Shagbark's Year



SHAGBARK HICKORY (*Carya ovata*) is a solid, often brawny tree, with strong wood, vigorous buds, and tough curling slabs of armor on its dark trunk. Its large compound leaves cast a summer shadow that shelters the area around it.

I made the acquaintance of a Shagbark on the north shore of Beebe Lake on the Cornell University campus, and photographed it through the seasons. Here it is on the threshold of autumn (1), and with full fall color (2). The next page shows its progress throughout the year.

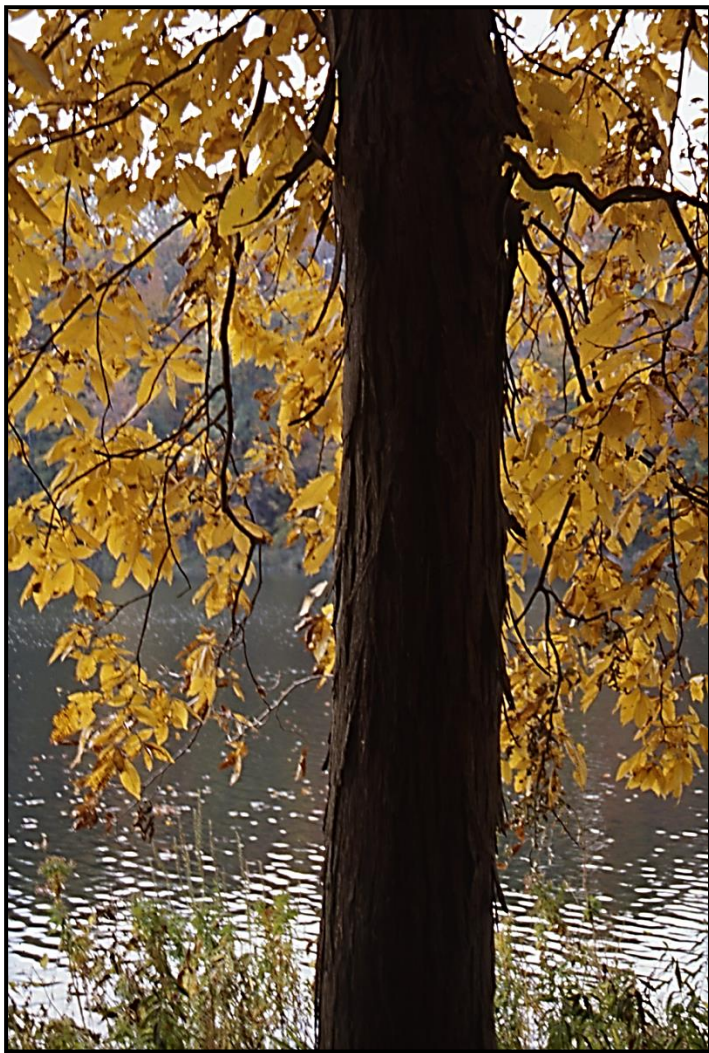


1

(1) Early October 2001. (2) 14 October 1996.

Photos copyright © 2016 by Robert Dirig

2



4

A
Shagbark
through
the
Seasons

6

3

(3) 16 October
1996.

(4) 14 January
1997.

(5) 17 May 1997.

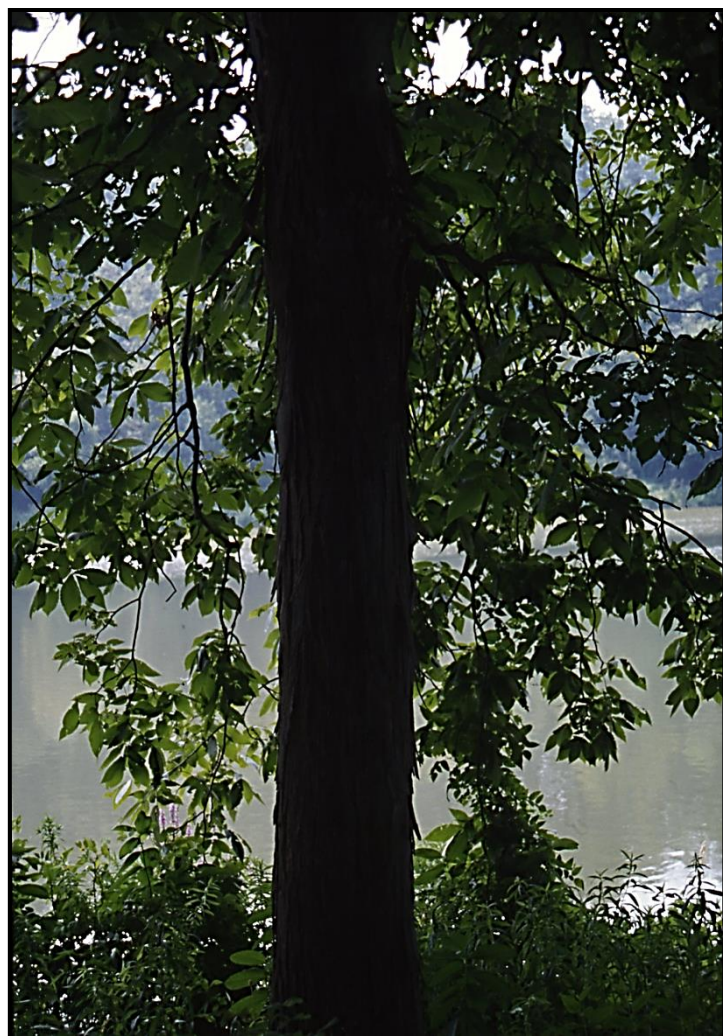
(6) 15 August
1996.

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5



RAMBLES AFIELD

Strolling for Ferns: A FLNPS "Ramble"

by Rosemarie Parker

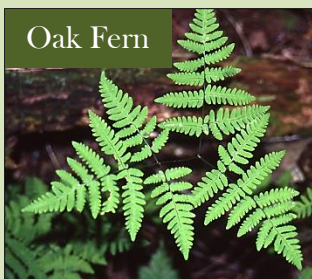


Long Beech Fern



Maidenhair Spleenwort

Images from the Finger Lakes Region and Catskills. Copyright © 2016 by Robert Dirig



Oak Fern

LAST SPRING the FLNPS Steering Committee discussed a misperception on the part of many members that in order to be a walk leader, one has to be a near-taxonomist, or at least a botanist. Not true! And we wondered if more people would volunteer if the event were advertised as more of a "Ramble" than a "Plant Walk." The goal is to be out in a neat place (chosen by the Ramble organizer), where everyone will contribute to identify at least some of the plants seen. **Audrey Bowe** graciously signed up as the first "Rambler."

We went to one of Audrey's favorite places, **Fillmore Glen**, on August 6th 2016, with a goal to see as many fern species as we could. We found sixteen! It was an absolutely wonderful day, cool under the trees. We walked up the gorge trail, and back down the rim trail. A few ferns that have been seen there before were not seen on this trip, but we found *lots* of **Walking Fern** and **Long Beech Fern** (aka "Mustache Fern," per Audrey). The only **Ostrich Fern** was clearly planted as an ornamental, but we counted it anyway. The Spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*) was in full bloom, and very prolific. The woods along the gorge trail are very rich — full of Hepatica (*Anemone* sp.), Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), Meadow-Rues (*Thalictrum* spp.), and ferns. If you haven't been to Fillmore Glen recently, consider going soon. The swimming area and entry area are repaired and open. It was hard to tell that there was a drought in process, if you just looked at the gorge trail.

The list of ferns we saw is below; a list of everything *else* we saw is on the FLNPS website (www.flnps.org). Thanks to **Susanne Lorbeer** for keeping the plant list, and to **Audrey**, **Anna Stalter**, and **Mike Hough** for identifying puzzling plants.

If you have a favorite plant location, but are not confident about plant IDs, please use the crowd-ID method. Offer to lead a "Ramble" by contacting Anna Stalter (see box, page 3).



Walking Fern



Maidenhair Fern

FERNS seen at Fillmore Glen, August 6th 2016

- Adiantum pedatum* (Maidenhair Fern)
- Asplenium rhizophyllum* (Walking Fern)
- Asplenium trichomanes* (Maidenhair Spleenwort)
- Athyrium angustum* (Northern Lady Fern)
- Cystopteris bulbifera* (Bulblet Fern)
- Dennstaedtia punctilobula* (Hay-scented Fern)
- Deparia acrostichoides* (Silvery Spleenwort)
- Dryopteris intermedia* (Fancy Wood Fern)
- Dryopteris marginalis* (Marginal Wood Fern)
- Gymnocarpium dryopteris* (Oak Fern)
- Matteuccia struthiopteris* (Ostrich Fern) [cultivated]
- Onoclea sensibilis* (Sensitive Fern)
- Phegopteris connectilis* (Long Beech Fern)
- Polypodium virginianum* (Virginia Polypody, Rockcap Fern)
- Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas Fern)
- Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken Fern)

POET'S
CORNER

Sylvan Anthem

by Robert Dirig

O Birchen Dryad, spread thy arms o'er me.
Embrace me with the comfort of thy soul.
Let Wind caress thy verdant canopy,
while I commune beneath thee on thy knoll.

Thy secret feet are rooted in the Earth;
from Moss and rich, dark loam thy white skirt lifts.
Sun's light to thy shy face a smile gives birth.
Thy love shines in thy leaves, sweet emerald gifts.

I reach my hand to stroke thy silken dress,
wove in dark bands of warp and snowy woof,
with here and there a rent of tenderness
unrolling in my hand, affection's proof.

To most, thou are a pretty White Birch tree,
but art a sweet, souled friend, beloved to me.



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Finger Lakes Native Plant Society



Talks & Walks Autumn 2016

The Canopy of Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)

September 21 — Wednesday — 7:00 p.m. *Flora of the St. Lawrence Region*, a *talk* by ANNE JOHNSON at the Unitarian Church Annex on E. Buffalo St. in Ithaca, N.Y.*

Anne is a lifelong botanist, a recipient of the New York Flora Association's "New York Native Plant Conservationist Award." With Nancy C. Eldblom, she wrote a well received book on *Plants of St. Lawrence County, An Annotated Checklist of Vascular Flora*. St Lawrence County, northeast of Watertown, N.Y., has wonderful flora, but the plants had not been well studied previously. Come to hear about their efforts to collect data for the checklist, and some of the special plants found (and not found) in the process.

October 19 — Wednesday — 7:00 p.m. *Preserving the Albany Pine Bush Flora*, a *talk* by JESSE HOFFMAN, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Botanist, at the Unitarian Church Annex.* Please check flnps.org for details.

Coming Talks from November 2016 to May 2017:

November 16: TIM TOLAN, *A Native Green Roof at SUNY-ESF*.

December 21: *Annual FLNPS Solstice Celebration*.

January 18: *Members' Night* [tentative].

February 15: ARIEH TAL, *Native Plant Gardens*
[a tentative topic, date may be moved].

March 15: Monthly meeting [speaker to be determined].

April 19: ANTONIO DiTOMMASO, *Milkweed or Swallowwort?*

May 17: CHARLES R. SMITH, *Blue Ridge Mountains: Ecology of Roan Mountain*.



September 24 — Saturday — 10:00 a.m., *Abbott Loop Ramble*, a *walk* led by TORBEN RUSSO.

Torben will guide us on this trail at Danby State Forest. Everyone will help identify everything we see. A moderate walk with slopes, ca. 3 miles total, with some really great flora and a mid-way view! Meet at CCE† at 10:00 a.m. to carpool, or at the Michigan Hollow Road parking area at 10:30. Bring snacks and drinks if you wish.

October 15 or 16 — Saturday or Sunday — *Annual Seed Walk*, led by KRISSY BOYS (final date and location to be determined; please watch our website).

If you would like to present a talk, lead a walk or "Ramble," or present another kind of program for us, please contact Rosemarie at info@flnps.org

Answer to

Another Plant Puzzle

(from page 5):

Norm's photos show long racemes of **Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)** berries, which ripen in autumn.

Announcement

Garden Work Day – FLNPS created the native garden at the Finger Lakes Land Trust headquarters in downtown Ithaca. In order to help maintain this very visible native garden, I hope to get a few people together for a couple of hours for fall and spring cleanups. If you would be interested in helping (if the dates and times work for you), please let me know so I can contact you with plans.

— Rosemarie (info@flnps.org)

*Talks are held at the Unitarian Church Annex (enter on East Buffalo St.) in Ithaca, N.Y. An elevator is available.

†Most walks begin at the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension Center (CCE) at 615 Willow Ave. in Ithaca, N.Y. We are still developing our programs for the year. Please watch our website (www.flnps.org) for details and updates.