



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

# Solidago

Newsletter of the  
Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 23, No. 4



December 2022

## EXCURSIONS

# 2022 Seed Walk Report

by Rosemarie Parker

The **FLNPS annual seed walk** was held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> after a two-year hiatus, led by **KRISSY BOYS** and **ROBERT WESLEY** of Cornell Botanic Gardens. Participants on this walk collect summer- and fall-blooming species for both the FLNPS seed exchange and the Cornell Botanic Gardens Natural Areas propagation program. In the process of collection, participants learn to identify dead and dying plants, and how to properly collect and store various types of seeds. This year we had a “full house” and had to limit participants, a pleasant change from some prior years.

Many thanks to **P&C FRESH** (East Hill Plaza) for providing paper bags for collecting and storing seeds. They have been a good supporter of this effort. (All dry seeds need to stay in paper for at least a week to thoroughly dry prior to cleaning and storing in glass jars.) We were in an area which had been logged within the last decade. The trees and shrubs were small, and most had no seeds, so we focused on herbaceous plants. It was too early for several species that we have collected on most prior walks, *e.g.* New England Aster (*Symphytotrichum novae-angliae*), even though the walk was delayed a week. We made a very nice collection of early asters and goldenrods, several sedges and grasses, *Penstemon digitalis*, *Aralia racemosa* (stored moist in plastic), and a few oddities like the annual *Polygala sanguinea* (Blood Milkwort). We found all three “everlastings” — Pearly (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), Clammy (*Pseudognaphalium macounii*), and Sweet (*Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium*). Also a few *Gentiana clausa*, present only because the area excluded deer with a high barrier of logging “slash” (treetops and small limbs). Participants went home with seeds for their own propagation, and the Botanic Gardens Natural Areas vehicle had a trunk full of bags of seed!



Photo by  
Krissy Boys

THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY STEERING COMMITTEE

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David Werier: Newsletter Editor Emeritus



Please Contribute to *Solidago*

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS THAT FEATURE WILD PLANTS OF THE FINGER LAKES REGION OF NEW YORK AND NEARBY. 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 LOCAL FLORA (plant lists or details of species from specific 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, meetings, workshops, and nurseries), LETTERS (commentaries and letters to the editor), ESSAYS (on botanical themes), VERSE (haiku, limericks, 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 and returned). We also can always use FILLERS (very short notes, small images, cartoons) for the last few inches of a column.

[Solidago is composed in Microsoft PowerPoint.]

Solidago

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 23, No. 4

December 2022

Published quarterly at Ithaca, New York, USA.

FLNPS (founded in 1997) is dedicated to the promotion of our native flora. We sponsor talks, walks, and other activities related to conservation of native plants and their habitats. Solidago is published as a colorful online version, and a B&W paper version that is mailed. The online format is posted 3 months after publication. Please see www.flnps.org for details of membership, past Solidago issues, and updates about our programs.



Partridge Berry (Mitchella repens), Zurich Bog, 6 June 2001.

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\*Please send Solidago

contributions & correspondence to Robert Dirig, Editor, at editorofsolidago@gmail.com

Deadline for the March 2023 issue is February 15th!



## Plant Trivia

See answers  
on page 5.

by Norm Trigoboff

1. *What do these have in common:* red osier dogwood, sumac spp., red raspberry, pussy toes spp., common mullein, skullcap spp., St. Johnswort, coltsfoot, mugwort, mint spp., uva-ursi, jimson weed, tobacco, and corn?

2. *One of the next statements is true. Which one?*

A. Some turtles eat turtle grass, sometimes manatees eat manatee grass; and some philosophers smoke grass.

B. Boats moored to red mangrove roots may ride out hurricanes about as well as boats tied to docks.

C. The Red Sea gets its name from red algae.

D. Estonia has the highest percent of forested land of European countries.

3. *Today, only about 5 percent of Ethiopia is forested, yet over a thousand Ethiopian old growth forests exist. These are:*

A. protected by Loraxes.

B. around Orthodox Christian churches.

C. at prehistoric burial grounds that are still honored.

D. in sand fly- and mosquito-infested swamps

E. on rugged mountain tops and ridges.

4. *The Eastern Native Tree Society (now the Native Tree Society) formed in 1996. The members called themselves ENTs. Why might this be funny?*

5. *Two of these are false? Which two?*

A. Cacao beans, used as money by the Aztec empire of Mesoamerica (1300-1500), were widely counterfeited.

B. Estonian double oaks often replace a lost leaf with a pair of leaves.

C. The patron saint of ecology lived almost 1000 years ago — at the same time as the patron saint of TV.

D. Sandbox tree, an evergreen in the spurge family, gets its nickname — dynamite tree — from its exploding seed pods.

E. Cornelian cherry, a common street tree on the Cornell campus, in Ithaca and in other cities, was developed at Cornell's field station in Estonia.

F. You can get stoned on Rhododendron honey.

6. *Name the odd man out:* American tamarack, bald cypress, Chinese swamp cypress, dawn redwood, European larch, Japanese larch, Lebanese cedar.

7. *Big oaks and many other trees have leaves that vary from smaller and more lobed to larger and less lobed. How do these leaf features relate to a leaf's position on the tree?*

8. *The great Roman poet Virgil wrote: Crescent illae crescentis amores. It refers to letters carved in a tree. What does it mean?*

9. *Name the odd man out:* hackberry, hemlock, hemp, or hops?

10. *Some species of pine, such as Korean pine, bear nuts large enough to be worth picking for human food. Name a very different evergreen tree that bears edible fruit you can buy more-or-less fresh at big food stores in Ithaca.* Hint: Your grocer and the U. S. Supreme Court would call it a vegetable.

## FLNPS CALENDAR, 2022 - 2023

We welcome members and guests to our new season of presentations and other programs!

\***Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday):** The annual

★ **FLNPS Solstice Celebration** ★

See details on our website.

**Looking ahead to 2023**, the following events have been scheduled:

\***Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>:** Our annual ★ **"Members' Night"** ★ will feature a medley of presenters on various botanical topics (tentative, with details to follow).

\***Please save these dates for winter & spring 2023: Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>, Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>, April 18<sup>th</sup>, & May 16<sup>th</sup>**

\**FLNPS evening Talks, the Solstice Celebration, and Members' Night begin on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. at the Cornell Botanic Gardens' Nevin Welcome Center, 124 Comstock Knoll Drive, at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. Please check our website ([flnps.org](http://flnps.org)) for a map, confirmations, updates, other details, and any additional programs that may be scheduled.*



## Thank You!

FOR THIS ISSUE, we thank **writers** Linda Blossom, Peter Fraissinet, Rosemarie Parker, Robert Wesley, Norm Trigoboff, & David Werier; and **photographers** Krissy Boys (p. 1), Robert Dirig (pp. 2, 3 [art], & 6), Ken Hull (p. 7), David Werier (p. 4), & Robert Wesley (p. 8). **Layout & design** by the Editor; **proofreading** by Rosemarie Parker; and **printing** by Gnomon Copy. Anna Stalter emailed copies, Pat Curran mailed paper copies, & Rosemarie posted to the web; Audrey Bowe, Anna, & Rosemarie organized calendar items.

Please check our website ([flnps.org](http://flnps.org)) regularly for announcements and details of our events. Thanks to our Steering Committee (p. 2) and all of our members for supporting FLNPS through another challenging year. We are very happy to have resumed in-person programs!

**Best Wishes to everyone in our reading audience for joyous Holidays and outdoor revels with the winter flora!**

— Robert Dirig



## NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST

The photo from last issue's [*Solidago* 23(3), p. 7] NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST was of **Oakdrops (*Conopholis americana*)**. Oakdrops, which is parasitic on oaks in the red oak group, is one of the few completely parasitic plants that occur in New York. While native to eastern North America, there are also disjunct populations in central and southern Mexico. A long used common name for this plant is Squawroot. The term "squaw" is considered by many to be a derogatory word for Native Americans, so I prefer to use the vernacular name Oakdrops, which I first noticed in my friend and colleague Art Gilman's *New Flora of Vermont*. I find Oakdrops to be a wonderful name, and it matches Beechdrops (*Epifagus virginiana*), a parasite of Beech trees. If the name Oakdrops takes off, perhaps it will become a true common name (*i.e.*, one that is used by the commons). Thanks to all who entered the contest, and congratulations to contest winners: **Bob Dirig, Susanne Lorbeer, Rosemarie Parker, and Charlie Smith.**

***THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY PLANT IS SHOWN BELOW.***



Additional hints and suggestions are often provided to contest participants who try. Common and/or scientific names are acceptable, and more than one guess is allowed. Please submit your answer to **David Werier** at

*The photographs were taken in New York by David Werier on May 19, 2019 in Tompkins Co. (background basal rosette), July 21, 2022 in Tompkins Co. (stem with leaves and lower right flowering head), and August 4, 2021 in Tioga Co. (upper right flowering head).*



## Answers to Plant Trivia by Norm Trigoboff

1. Parts of these plants are smoked (for medicine, psychotropic recreation, or to change the flavor of other smokes).

2. **A.** is true. **B.** is false. Boats moored to mangrove roots have a much better chance to survive hurricanes. **C.** is false. The blue alga, *Trichodesmium erythraeum*, sometimes blooms, dies, and turns the water reddish-brown. (See: *The Seaside Naturalist* by D. A. Coulombe, 1984.) **D.** is false. Finland wins with 73 percent. Trivia: With Covid waning now, Finland has gone from the recommended 2 meter rule back to their old 4 meter rule.

3. **B.** is true for sure. The others might also be true.

4. In *The Lord of the Rings* (and other books) by J. R. R. Tolkien, *Ents* are part tree and part human. Perhaps the name was inspired by George Ent, a British anatomist and friend of William Harvey, who showed the Royal Society fossils of trees. BTW, my initials, *NT*, may be pronounced *ent*.

[Ideas for questions 3 & 4 were scumped from *Treepedia: A Brief Compendium of Arboreal Lore*, by Joan Maloof, 2021. Also see: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20190520-the-sacred-forests-of-northern-ethiopia> and [http://www.nativetreesociety.org/entstrees/ents\\_main.htm](http://www.nativetreesociety.org/entstrees/ents_main.htm)]

5. **A.** True. The fakes included clay cacao beans and empty pods filled with clay. Today, about 5 million tons of cocoa beans are processed in the world each year. Much of this might be real cocoa beans. [See: <https://chocolateclass.wordpress.com/2019/03/15/deceptive-chocolate-tracing-counterfeit-cacao-culture-from-aztec-currency-to-modern-production/>]

**B.** False. I dreamed this up while smoking Estonian sumac. **C.** True. In 1979, Pope John Paul II named St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) the patron saint “of those who promote ecology.” St. Clare of Assisi, the patron saint of eye disorders, good weather and TV, lived at the same time. [See: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/why-francis-assisi-patron-saint-ecology> and <https://uscatholic.org/articles/201209/st-francis-patron-of-ecology/>]

**D.** True. And its sap has been used to make teargas.

**E.** False. Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*) is a dogwood native to the old world. It bears bright red edible fruit. *Cornelian* refers to the red color.

**F.** True. In the foothills of the Himalayas and the Kackar Mountains by the Black Sea, a species of *Rhododendron* makes grayanotoxin, a strong neurotoxin. Honey from these flowers—Mad Honey—may cause hallucinations. Still, it is a traditional cure for many ailments. Trivia: grayanotoxin takes its name from a species of *Leucothoe* named for Asa Gray, the brains behind *Gray’s Manual*. [See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/11/high-on-mad-honey-intoxicated-brown-bear-cub-rescued-in-turkey>]

6. These conifers drop their leaves each winter, except for Lebanese cedar (which has a habit of looking sick and coughing up leaves every few years). Several Lebanese cedars grow on the Cornell campus. A Chinese swamp cypress keeps its feet wet near the boat dock at the Ithaca Farmer’s Market.

7. The smaller, more lobed leaves generally grow higher on the tree.

8. The usual translation is: *As these letters grow so may our love*. I might be less romantic than Virgil. To me it means: *Our love, which defaces trees, is pretty small and will stay pretty small, get more obscure and promote various kinds of rot*.

9. Hemlock may refer to the big evergreen tree, or the big carrot-like weed that killed Socrates. Both differ from the other three, which are in the Cannabaceae family.

10. Avocado. Olives, also from evergreens, reach our stores only after processing.

## FLNPS.org Tips — Gardening vs. Default View

by Rosemarie Parker

Did you know that there is gardening-specific information about plants that does not show up on the default species page of our website? As an example, if you look at **Hawthorns (*Crataegus spp.*)** by searching the species or common name in either the Google search (top of page) or the Plant search (toward the bottom of the Home page & side of species pages) you would see:

**Common Name(s):** hawthorn

**Type:** Native Shrubs, Trees

**Moisture:** Dry [or] Moist

**Light:** Sun [or] Part Sun

[and a series of characteristics] Well-drained, Showy fruit, Recommended for gardening, Used in traditional 19th century gardens

[Followed by a few sentences:] Numerous hard-to-distinguish species are found in our area, frequently in old orchards and old fields. Many are native to the state, but not all. All hawthorns have small clusters of white (some pink) flowers in spring, followed by small fruits (similar to rose hips or small crab apples) and thorns. Find a good key. Just for fun, look at the introduction to the *Crataegus* species on *Go Botany*.

If you look at the table of “Native Plants of Garden Interest” under the *Plants & Places* tab and scroll to *Crataegus* sp., you will find the flowering season, any restricting soil types (rocky, sandy, humus-rich) or strong pH preferences. And a short note just for gardeners. In this case it is “Thorns! Wildlife value. Numerous hard-to-distinguish species in our area. Avoid the introduced species if you can.” For other species the comments range from “may refuse to bloom or bulb split into scales,” “Can take standing water,” “Requires two different clones to fruit,” or “Deer love it.”

So, if your reason for looking up a species is for garden use, you may want to see what is in the gardening tables – one for native plants, and one for naturalized.





### PROPAGATION

#### Comparing Sands for Seed Cover

by Linda Blossom

When Prairie Moon came out with a fine sand for the stratification of small seeds, I was interested. I had read that William Cullina used it, especially for small seeds that needed light. Prairie Moon said that the sand was light in color so that the seeds could be seen. The price, however, was one cup (which is a pound) for \$10, so I ordered one pound to take a look at the mesh size. Meanwhile, I went to Home Depot to find the sand that is added to paint for texture, and bought a container of it. This sand, by Zinsser, is 2 cups to the pound, and further checking with Zinsser explained the difference by the inclusion of pumice. Putting the two side-by-side, the mesh is equivalent, and the Zinsser is lighter in color. My plan had been to sprinkle the sand over the stratifying soil, and then sprinkle on the seeds, and cover as needed with more sand. The covering of the seeds for those that need light is what was in Cullina's books. The price comparison is 1 cup for \$10, or 2 cups for \$5, and shipping is included in both. I ordered a case of six through Home Depot, and if you are a Veteran, you can get a 10% discount after signing up.



British Soldiers Lichen (*Cladonia cristatella*), Albany Pine Bush, 28 April 2000

### Volunteer Opportunities at Cornell's Herbarium

by Peter Fraissinet, Assistant Curator (BH)

Cornell University has maintained at least one herbarium since about 1869, and today the Liberty Hyde Bailey Hortorium Herbarium (BH) is approaching a million specimens in its collection. This didn't happen by itself!

Since the earliest days, collections like this have relied on faculty, staff, students, and volunteers to maintain and prepare plant specimens, and to add value to the collection through photographing and databasing them. Work done at BH will last for centuries to come, and it gives some satisfaction to feel one is a part of that.

We've had several dedicated volunteers work remotely during the pandemic, and we are starting to welcome them back on-site, now that things are somewhat better. But we could use a few more folks with an interest in plants and museum curation, and with a couple of hours to spare on a weekly basis. The camaraderie of working with other volunteers and the curatorial staff might also be an appealing prospect!

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please give us a shout at [herbarium@cornell.edu](mailto:herbarium@cornell.edu), or even come up for a visit during business hours, M-F. We're on the fourth floor of the Mann Library building (handy to many TCAT bus routes). Peter or Anna will be happy to give you a tour and talk about the sort of activities that best fit your skills and interests.

By way of introduction, you might also check out this recent *YouTube* post by Summer Rayne Oakes (of the PlantOneOnMe channel), being an in-depth and entertaining virtual tour of our herbarium with Associate Curator Anna Stalter:

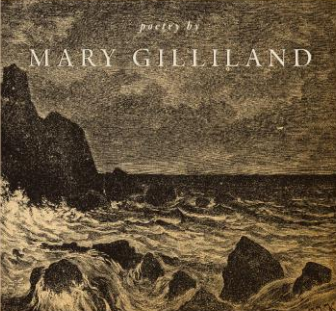
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKTYQhAS8Jg&t=9s>

Congratulations to MARY GILLILAND!

WINNER OF THE CODHILL PRESS PAULINE UCHMANOWICZ POETRY AWARD

## The DEVIL'S FOOLS

poems by MARY GILLILAND



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Partridge Berry (*Mitchella repens*), Catskills, 10 June 1997



## APPRECIATION

## KENNETH HULL

by Rosemarie Parker



**Ken** at Members' Night, Jan. 2019\*



**Calypso Orchid** (*Calypso bulbosa*, var. *americana*)



**Indian Paintbrush**  
(*Castilleja coccinea*)



**Common Fringed Gentian**  
(*Gentianopsis crinita*)

\*Photo of Ken by Rick Lightbody

Long-standing FLNPS member **Ken Hull** passed away on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2022 at age 80. Sixteen years ago, he presented his first FLNPS talk ("Wild Orchids of New York State") on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 2006. Ken was an avid photographer of unusual plants, and he was willing to travel quite a distance to find them. Fortunately for FLNPS members, Ken loved sharing his finds. He was always ready with a photo essay, a poem, an offer to lead a foray. Despite increasing difficulties with getting around, he continued to participate, even leading a walk to Oakley Corners State Forest last June.

Over the years, Ken led walks searching for grape ferns, for the white form of Great Blue Lobelia, and just to see what could be found. He told stories about his finds at Members' Nights (lots of orchids, fields of eastern *Castilleja*, Canadian border guards, etc.) His enthusiasm was catching, and his good mood never failed. I recall when he took a photo of walk participants at Jam Pond (still occasionally on our home page), and he started to sink into the floating bog. "The camera!" He was unconcerned about the hip-high wet pants, just happy that he had handed off his camera before worrying about extracting himself.

Recent contributions to *Solidago* are listed below, and five of his photographs are shown on the margins—a sampling of his contributions to FLNPS. He will be missed.

KEN'S SOLIDAGO CONTRIBUTIONS

Calico Aster: **14(4):11**

Northern Neighbors, Portraits of Plants That Are Rare in New York: **20(4):5-6**

Observing Urban Plants, Ebony Spleenwort: **21(3-4):4**

Winterberry: **21(1):9**

Marsh St. John's Wort: **22(1):6**

Marsh Cinquefoil: **22(2):8**

Fringed Gentians: **22(3):1, 4**

Yellow Mandarin: **23(2):1**

The Grace of Lace: **23(3):10**

[and eight more between 2009-2016]

Ken has been a regular supporter of *Solidago* for many years. His poems and images have been a delight. He was a kind and gentle man who valued connections to people in our Society. I cherish his memory.

— *Robert Dirig*



**Ken Hull** afield at Upper Treman State Park near Ithaca, N.Y., August 4<sup>th</sup> 2018



**Yellow Mandarin**  
(*Prosartes lanuginosa*)



**Winterberry**  
(*Ilex verticillata*)



LOCAL FLORA

# Autumn Glories

by Robert Wesley



## Hairy Pinesap or Red Pinesap

(*Hypopitys  
lanuginosa*)

This lovely red mycoheterotrophic plant was formerly placed in the genus *Monotropa* with Indian Pipe or Ghost Plant. It consistently blooms later than the Yellow Pinesap (*Hypopitys monotropa*), typically in August or September.

## Puttyroot Orchid or Adam and Eve (*Aplectrum hyemale*)

These very distinctive evergreen leaves come up in the fall and persist over winter, making this a good time of year to look for it. Now a really rare plant in N.Y., it once was more common and widespread. For instance, it formerly occurred in Sapsucker Woods near Ithaca. It may not be as rare as we think — it was recently discovered to be numerous in old-growth forests in western N.Y., where it had not been previously documented. See this site for detailed information:

[https://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2015/12/20/fall-leaves-of-the-putty-root-orchid?fbclid=IwAR3hPZLdjlEmd2f2ml3qmDx4jFkoKICuDQrN84QcKgF\\_Q1GqRPS-9OqRWvg](https://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2015/12/20/fall-leaves-of-the-putty-root-orchid?fbclid=IwAR3hPZLdjlEmd2f2ml3qmDx4jFkoKICuDQrN84QcKgF_Q1GqRPS-9OqRWvg)

