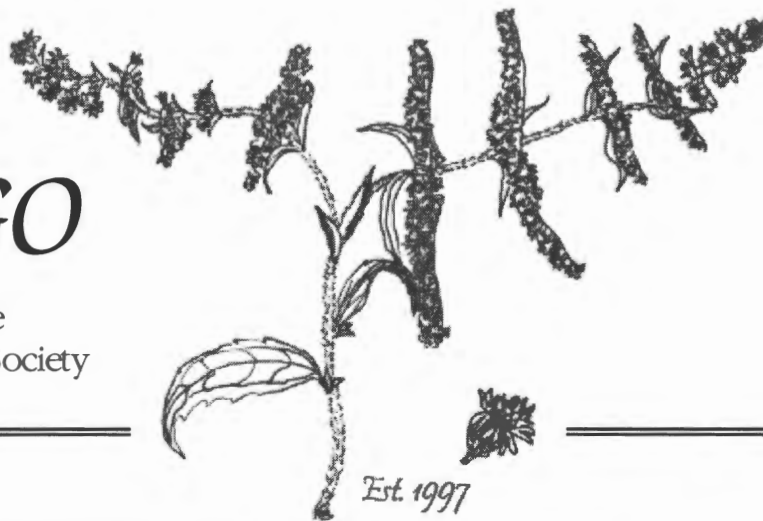


SOLIDAGO

The Newsletter of the
Finger Lakes Native Plant Society



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December 2007

Woodwardia virginica – Virginia Chain Fern

by Joe O'Rourke

This past July, I looked for and finally found a fern that I had tried to find for several years. While other ferns on my "To-Find" list have managed to elude me, this year I finally found the Virginia Chain Fern (*Woodwardia virginica*).

I did some research to find its home. I looked up voucher specimens in Cornell University's Bailey Hortorium and they almost all led to the same central New York location: a bog in Freeville, NY. I learned it is a locally rare species in the Cayuga Lake Basin but has earned a secure rating in both state and federal listings. The rating does not mean, however, that it is easy to find. Northern adder's tongue fern,

Ophioglossum

pusillum, also carries a "rare" rating in our area and is one that still remains on my "To-Find" list.

The day of my find, I was accompanied by two other Finger Lakes Native Plant Society members- Anna Stalter and Norm Trigoboff. We met at a pre-selected spot and carpoled to the site- that is, what we

all thought might be the site. We knew the bog was somewhere in Freeville and felt confident that it would be along the Fall Creek corridor. Fall Creek is host to numerous other wetlands as it wends its way along a southwesterly flow to Cayuga Lake. The fens at Lake Como and Malloryville are not distant neighbors. Taking our best guess, we entered the woods off one of Freeville's back roads.

Although much of the time we were lost, our destination was guided by hi-tech resources. Google

provided us with satellite images of the area, which we used in conjunction with our portable GPS devices, compasses, and topographic maps. Old maps and records showed we were in the area and the GPS receivers nailed our current location to within twenty feet, but the bog coordinates were not in the

historical record. We were helped in our search by another Finger Lakes Native Plant Society member who had visited the bog in the past. His description proved invaluable.

Believe it or not, a full four hours had passed before we found ourselves in the midst of what we

continued on page 7



Photo by Joe O'Rourke

Anna Stalter with (*Woodwardia virginica* –
Virginia chain fern) on our bog expedition.

New England Wild Flower Society Seeds

Join New England Wild Flower Society and get first choice of rare and wonderful native seeds. Purchase seeds and spores collected and prepared at the Society's Garden in the Woods in Framingham and Nasami Farm in Whately, MA. A member priority order period runs January 7-17, 2008, and sales open to the public January 18-March 15, 2008, while supplies last.

Orders are filled on a first-come basis. To ensure the best selection of trees, shrubs, perennials, ferns, and grasses, especially if you have your heart set on rare species, become a member of the Society and also enjoy up to fifty percent off the price of seeds. You can join online at www.newenglandwild.org. Your membership and purchases support the award-winning programs of America's oldest plant conservation organization, and members also receive discounts on nursery plant purchases, gifts, books, and classes, and free admission to Garden in the Woods throughout the season.

Name that plant contest

Jim Hodgins (of Toronto) and Susanne Lorbeer (of Ithaca) correctly named the *Polygala paucifolia* or gaywings.photo from the October 2007 issue of *Solidago*. Susanne went on to remind us that this plant also goes by the name fringed polygala and flowering wintergreen and is in the milkwort or Polygalaceae family. Susanne and Jim were the only two respondents to my quiz. Please let me know you are out there by taking a guess at this issues contest.

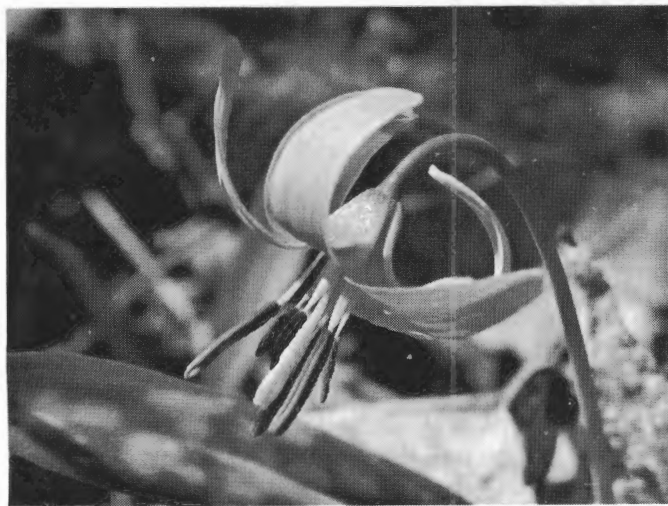


photo by David Werier

This issues name that plant quiz is pictured above. Please submit your answers to David Werier (email and address in box above)

THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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Charlotte Acharya: [redacted] at large
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Mark Inglis: [redacted] at large
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Bob Wesley: Outings and Education

Send all correspondence regarding the newsletter to:
David Werier, Editor, [redacted]

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

January 18th, 2007

In order to keep this newsletter lively, interesting, and informative we need your contributions. Please send your articles, stories, drawings, photos, trip reports, information on relevant upcoming events, letters to the editor, etc. to David Werier, editor (email and address noted in box above). The deadline for the next newsletter is Friday January 18th, 2007. Thanks for your help in making this newsletter possible.

Ode to Little Bluestem

by Rosemarie Parker

As one who resisted the praises from garden fashionistas and friends,
(Who needs to pull more grass from beds?)
(And it is only ever green or brown.)
I was ambivalent towards my few grass-like purchases.
(You're still on trial.)
But today, I look up from cutting soggy paeony leaves to see a fountain of flowing gold with glistening seeds in the sun - in perfect form for the coming winter.
And I realize I must be in love and wonder why did I wait so long.

Get Ready for the Annual Solstice Gathering December 18th!

It's time again to just relax as we share experiences and expertise. Please plan on attending and participating.

In honor of FLNPS' Tenth Anniversary Year, we will have a **Remembrances Board**. If you have photos or mementos of early meetings, walks, or events, please get them to Rosemarie Parker (532 Cayuga Hts. Rd. 14850) ahead of time or bring them to the meeting to put on the board. (Copies preferred, but originals are fine & will be returned.)

We will have a **Members slide show**, so all of you with photographs of native plants, natural areas and related subjects please make plans to share a few of your slides with us. David Werier [redacted] organizes this, so please notify him if you plan to participate.

Our annual **Seed Exchange** is part of the festivities. Krissy Faust [redacted] is in charge of this, so please get in touch with her if you have native plant seeds to offer and want a photo included on our board. Remember, you can take seeds to plant whether or not you bring any. Even if you have no more room in your garden, the gathering is the perfect time to decide what you want to grow for FLNPS to sell at the Spring Plant Sale - many species require a cold moist stratification period before they will germinate.

The plants we use to decorate the room for the gathering give us materials for an **Identify The Decorations "Quiz"**. This is always fun as well as educational, as we expect people to collaborate and you don't need to get all the answers right to qualify for the **Door Prize Drawings**. It's always fun to have some new and different species. Please notify Rosemarie Parker [redacted] if you want to bring plant material.

Every year, **Door Prizes** are donated by members. If you would like to contribute in this way please let Rosemarie Parker [redacted] know.

To keep up our energy during all these activities we ask people to bring some **Food With a Native Element** and a prize is awarded to the creator of the food voted favorite by the most participants. You can think "outside the box" here. Besides the all time popular blueberry, cranberry and apple dishes there are many possible ingredients from native plants like black walnuts, butternuts, maple syrup, elderberries, wild rice, mushrooms, quinoa, squash, peppers, corn, potatoes (Mesoamerican origin is OK). **This year we will have a separate prize for creative use of unusual or locally collected native & naturalized ingredients.** Maybe

you have found a way to use acorns??? Or garlic mustard???

Finally, we always need help with **Set Up** and **Clean Up** and Rosemarie Parker [redacted] is the person to contact if you want to volunteer for either.

See you there!!

Microstegium- Can a handful of volunteers eradicate it from Tompkins County?

by Charlotte Acharya

In October a handful of volunteers gathered to pull Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) from the Six Mile Creek Natural Area. As always, our intention was to remove all of the *Microstegium*. Being an annual plant, if it is removed before the plant sets seed, the population should dwindle as the seed bank is depleted. This was the fourth year that the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society has organized a pull and I was looking forward to seeing the results of this sustained effort.

Initially, most volunteers at the site concentrated on the areas where *Microstegium* had previously been removed. In those areas the plant, although widespread, was in low abundance; a sign that the control efforts were indeed paying off. However, when the larger area was surveyed it became clear that there were at least four other patches of *Microstegium* that had never been managed. In these patches the *Microstegium* formed dense stands and overtopped the native vegetation. Over 40 volunteer hours were spent hand pulling the *Microstegium* and many bags of plant material were hauled up and out of the site. However, because the invasion is bigger than we suspected we were not able to remove all of the *Microstegium* before it set seed.

This is the only known occurrence of *Microstegium* in Tompkins County and we are planning to bring out more volunteers next year to remove the infestation. Dates will be announced in this newsletter and on our website

(<http://www.fingerlakesnativeplantsociety.org/>) when they are scheduled. Additionally, we suspect there are more populations of this plant in the county. If you know of any populations of this sprawling grass with short, flat, lance-shaped leaves and off-center veins, please let us know (a full description can be found here: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/subject.cfm?sub=3051>). Finally, if you are in an area that has this plant, please wash your shoes thoroughly before going into another area. The seeds are very small and easily transported on the feet of nature lovers. Maybe that is how it got to Six Mile Creek in the first place.

NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH - DECEMBER

A new “plant of the month” is highlighted on FLNPS’ website (<http://www.fingerlakesnativeplantsociety.org>) every month (see web site for color photographs) and full catalogue of past entries.

Quercus—The Oaks

by Dan Segal

Quercus is a large genus of woody plants from the Northern Hemisphere, including up to 400 species of what are commonly known as ‘oaks’. In North America the oaks fall almost exclusively into one of two groups, the red oak group with bristles at the lobe tips and acorns maturing over two years; and the white oak group, with lobe tips lacking bristles and acorns maturing in one year. Oaks can be evergreen or deciduous. The evergreens come from warm and arid regions and their leaves are thick and leathery as an adaptation for drought. Most of the evergreen species also have prickles which are a defense against herbivory, and are especially important for evergreens because their leaves are that much more conspicuous to herbivores when other plants have lost all their foliage. Almost all oaks are trees, but in drier areas with shallow or poor soil, shrub oaks emerge from the rich gene pool that is *Quercus*. Aridity and poor soils tend to coax adaptation and expression, which can lead to isolation—three keys to speciation.

ETYMOLOGY

The word “oak” will intrigue any etymologist because it is cognate in most languages of northern Europe going back to the recorded beginnings of those languages, but there is no common Indo-European root word for ‘oak’, suggesting the word itself developed in northern Europe, probably in response to the abundance of oaks there. Examples of roots are ‘ac’ in Old English; ‘ek’ in Middle Low German; and ‘eik’ in Dutch and Old Norwegian. Etymology also links a few seemingly unrelated words: oak and acorn, acre, corn,

cornel, kernel, etc. Britton and Brown (1970) suggest that the name *Quercus* is of Celtic origin and conveys the meaning “beautiful tree”. I have not found other explanations of the name ‘*Quercus*’.

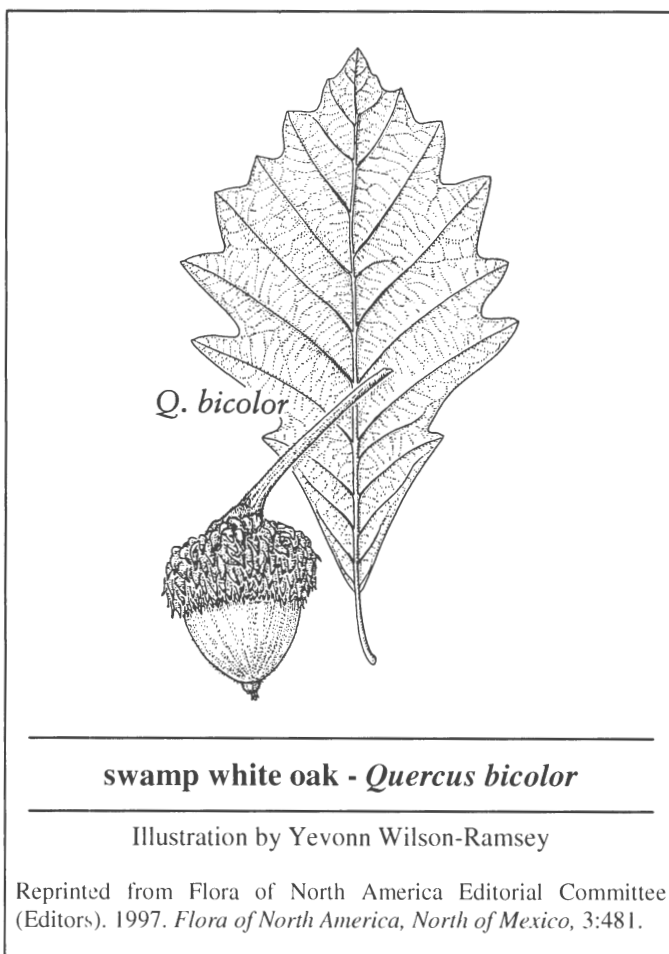
HYBRIDIZATION

Botanists and naturalists often point out that oaks hybridize promiscuously. Within their respective groups (red and white), the oaks frequently spawn cryptic offspring with leaves not fitting neatly into a known species, and in many cases, with leaves representative of more than one species found on the same tree. Confused, frustrated, or accommodating plant people usually settle for referring hybrid oaks to a group that could safely include them. Other characters used to identify oaks are buds, bark, acorn cups or caps, and, to some degree, habitat.

HABITATS

Oaks inhabit most terrestrial

environments within their range — wetlands, prairies, grasslands, uplands, woodlands, the coastal zone, mountain forest, outcrops, and fertile bottomlands. The genus offers a classic view of species diversity over a wide range of habitat types. Consider other genera—some exhibit a similar pattern of exploiting nearly every habitat type in their range (for example *Carya* (hickories)) while others are faithful to a single habitat and have not evolved species to colonize those other habitats (for example *Platanus* (sycamore)).



PROPAGATION

Oaks are easily grown from acorns (or ach cornels). Most acorns in the white oak group will sprout a radicle in the cool fall rainy period when the seed enjoys prolonged contact with soil and rich leaf litter. The radicle can grow as long as a foot in fall and early winter, but there is no shoot growth until spring. By contrast, the red oak group acorns maintain a more strict dormancy and won't sprout radicles in fall. They require cool moist stratification over the winter period before they germinate in spring. In containers or pots, acorns quickly reach the bottom almost regardless of depth, and begin circling, which is not ideal. Roots of even the youngest oak seedlings can be pruned or pinched to promote branching and lateral growth. This kind of root management stirs debate regarding the fundamental nature of tap-rooted species. However, in nature, even most tap-rooted trees probably run into obstacles such as bedrock, other tree roots, etc., that stimulate root branching and encourage something other than a tap root. Shifting young oaks into larger pots, or planting them directly out, after a few months in a container, is wise, as the longer they live in a crowded pot the slower they grow, and the longer it takes for them to 'release' or resume healthy, vigorous and rapid growth after planting out.

SPECIES EASILY SEEN HERE

Quercus rubra, northern red oak—Stately, large upland oak sometimes straying into moist lowland soils with good drainage, but most commonly found in rich or mesic woods. Keep in mind upland doesn't have to mean dry, but rather suggests off the valley floors and out of the bottomlands where moisture collects. Some upland woods harbor very moist soils and, consequently, moisture-loving plants. The bark of *Quercus rubra* is deeply furrowed or fissured with rosy highlights.

Quercus velutina, black oak—Another large and stately upland oak that may be considered a little more coarse than *Q. rubra*, this species can grow as tall as the other upland oak species. It's also common in woods where soil is coarse and well drained but can be found on fairly rich sites. Leaves are as variable as any of the oaks we see in the east, ranging in breadth, length, depth of lobes and even thickness. *Q. velutina* is commonly suggested as a parent in hybrid oaks.

Quercus coccinea, scarlet oak—This species exhibits stricter fidelity to sandy or rocky sharply drained soils than the first two. Scarlet oak is found on gorge rims, in rock, on outcrops and in areas that have burned or are fire-prone. An often distinguishing leaf character is the deeply rounded inter-lobe in the lower

half of the leaf. Sometimes our understanding of a species increases when we see it in another region occupying a habitat that's scarce in our area. This oak is a good example, being abundant in the New Jersey pine barrens where sandy soils dominate. Knowing that habitat helps to understand why scarlet oak occurs where it does in our area. A good place to see scarlet oak is at South Hill.

Quercus montana, chestnut oak—This prince of an oak grows in upland woods, on gorge rims, and on lake cliffs. With maturity the bark forms furrows so deep and blocky as to suggest cork oak (*Quercus suber* of the Mediterranean region). Chestnut oak also has long and blunt-lobed leaves similar to the swamp white oak (see below). A good place to see chestnut oak is at Thatcher's Pinnacles.

Quercus alba, white oak—One of America's classic trees because the canopy takes a rounded form as it ages, with branches sometimes reaching the ground. The bark of white oak is flaky-shreddy in middle age but sometimes with the oldest trees, you have to look pretty high up into the canopy to find this character. Found in upland woods or more open upland woodlands. Somewhat of a generalist but Wiegand and Eames (1926) suggest it is more tolerant of clay than most oaks.

Quercus bicolor, swamp white oak—A wetland oak to complement our more common upland species. Swamp white oak will grow in soils that are saturated for extended periods of time and will not be found upland, especially the higher and drier you go. Further south, in the mid-Atlantic states, there is a much greater diversity of wetland oak species—pin oak, water oak, willow oak, etc. Here in the northeast and in the Finger Lakes in particular, *Quercus bicolor* is our main wetland species. South Hill is a good place to see swamp white oak.

There are other species of oak you may see locally (*Quercus muhlenbergii* for example), and some of the above may be elusive at first. But even here into the late fall there are still oaks holding their russet foliage which makes them easy to spot.

References cited:

- Britton, N.L. and A. Brown. 1970. *An Illustrated Flora of The Northern United States and Canada*. A republication of the 2nd revised ed. as published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1913 under the title *An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States, Canada, and the British Possessions*. Dover Publications, New York, NY, USA.
- Wiegand, K. and A. Eames. 1926. *The Flora of The Cayuga Lake Basin*. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA.

Tully Lake and *Campanula aparinoides* (Marsh Bellwort)

by Susanne Lorbeer

On September 19, I went out botanizing with Carolyn Yeager, Joe O'Rourke, Norm Trigoboff, and Melanie

Kozlowski. We went to Tully Lake. I rode with Carolyn in her red canoe, Melanie had her kayak, while Joe and Norm had an aluminum canoe. We explored the undeveloped shorelines and an island in the lake.

Melanie found a small whitish flower with a rough but weak, trailing stem that none of us recognized, so I took it home to key out with *The Flora of the Cayuga Lake Basin* by Wiegand and Eames. Then I checked it out in other sources, both books and on the Internet. It was *Campanula aparinoides*, also called marsh bellwort or

bedstraw bellflower. The specific epithet, *aparinoides*, means "resembling *aparine*" and, indeed, the stem was similar to that of *Gallium aparine* or rough bedstraw, so I could understand that. The flower was like a tiny bell, with the petals united at the base, and then flaring outward in lobes. While the petals appeared white at first glance, a closer observation revealed veins of a

pale bluish color contrasting with the white. The long, weak stems had lines of downward pointing short, stiff white hairs. These stiff hairs served well to hold the stems to the fabric of my sleeve, and the length of the stem reached from my wrist to my shoulder. It probably was even longer than that, as the piece I had

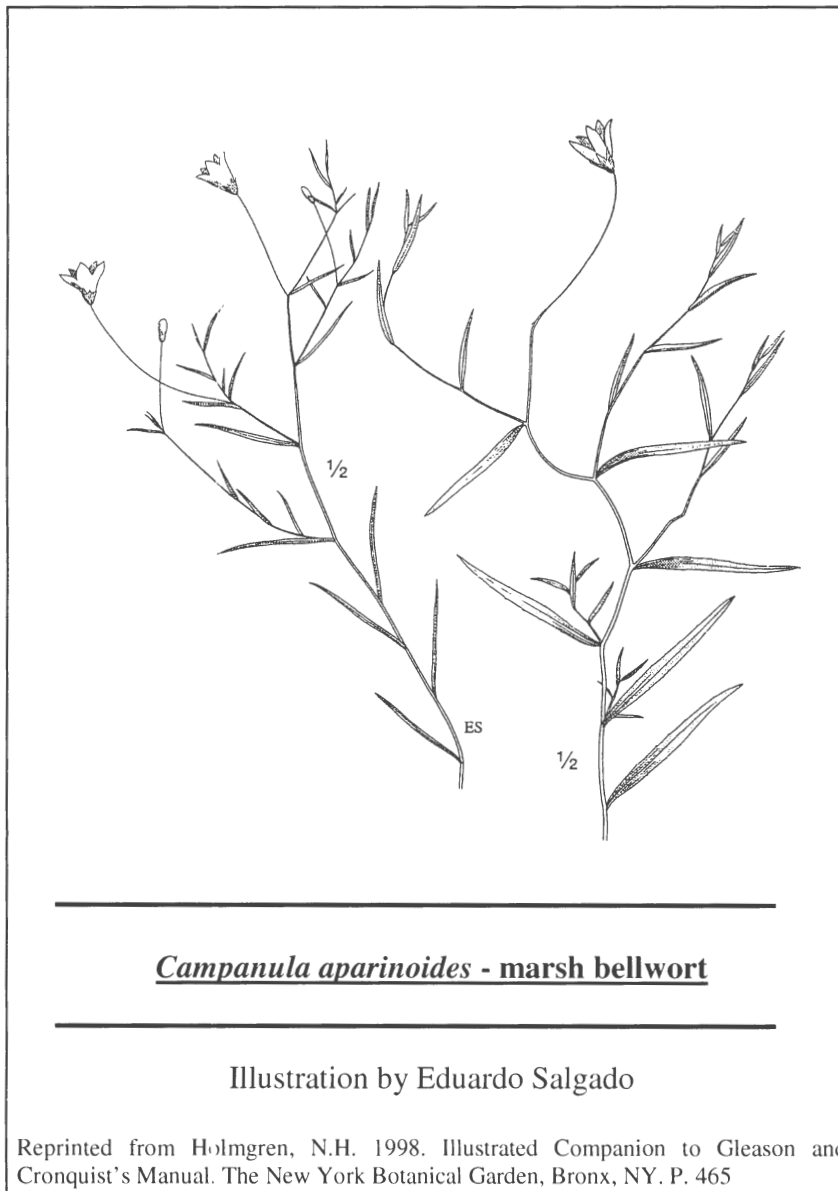
was broken from the rest of the plant. The leaves were very small, and linear, reminding me of the stem leaves of another bellflower, *Campanula rotundifolia*, harebell. I've seen harebell on the walls of gorges. Its lower basal leaves are round, as reflected in its species name.

Being on the water, in a canoe, provided me with a whole new perspective and access to habitats I have not had much opportunity to explore. Being with like-minded friends made the whole experience especially fun.

Some websites that show *Campanula aparinoides* include:

(<http://www.ct-botanical-society.org>),
(<http://www.delawarewildflowers.org>), and
(<http://www.plants.usda.gov>).

Below is a species list from our trip to Tully Lake.



***Campanula aparinoides* - marsh bellwort**

Illustration by Eduardo Salgado

Reprinted from Holmgren, N.H. 1998. Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. P. 465

Botanical Name

Acer rubrum

Alnus incana

Bidens cernua

Common Name

red maple

speckled alder, swamp alder

nodding bur-marigold, nodding beggartick (rays)

Notes

on shore

edge

edge

Botanical Name	Common Name	Notes
<i>Bidens frondosa</i>	devil's beggartick	edge
<i>Campanula aparinoides</i>	marsh bellflower, bedstraw bellflower	edge
<i>Chelone glabra</i>	turtlehead	in bloom
<i>Cornus</i> sp.	dogwood (shrub), fruit-bluish and white	edge fruit
<i>Decodon verticillatus</i>	swamp loose-strife, water willow	edge
<i>Epilobium</i> sp.	willow herb (small flower)	edge
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	white ash	on shore
<i>Heteranthera dubia</i>	water stargrass (seen in Dryden Lake)	not found
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	winterberry -lvs shiny on top, edges toothed	fruit
<i>Lemna minor</i>	duckweed	floating
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife	edge
<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	wild mint	edge
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	garden forget-me-not	edge
<i>Myrica gale</i>	sweet gale	shrub, edge
<i>Myriophyllum</i> sp.	water mil-foil	submerged
<i>Nuphar variegata</i>	spatterdock, bullhead lily	shallow water
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	fragrant waterlily...both white and pink	shallow water
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	Sensitive Fern, Bead Fern-I'm not sure it was this.	fern
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Royal Fern	fern, edge
<i>Persicaria hydropiperoides</i> (syn.		
<i>Polygonum hydropiperoides</i>)	water pepper	edge
<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	pickerel weed	shallow water
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	northern red oak	on shore
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	common arrowhead	shallow water
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	common elderberry	edge
<i>Scirpus</i> sp.	bulrush	shallow water
<i>Selaginella</i> sp.	spikemoss, a fern ally	on tussocks
<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	gray goldenrod	dry area
<i>Sparganium angustifolium</i>	bur reed	shallow water
<i>Symphyotrichum lateriflorum</i>		
(syn. <i>Aster lateriflorus</i>)	calico aster	on shore
<i>Taxus canadensis</i> (native)	Canadian yew	on shore
<i>Thelypteris palustris</i>	marsh fern	fern, edge
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	eastern hemlock	edge
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	broadleaf cat-tail	shallow water
<i>Vaccinium</i> sp.	tall blueberry?	edge
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	southern arrowwood	edge
<i>Vitis riparia</i>	riverbank grape	on shore
<i>Wolffia</i> sp.	watermeal	floating

Woodwardia virginica – Virginia Chain Fern

continued from page 1

hoped was the home of *W. virginica*. The description of the bog that we were given kept us going. We were told that it was a shrub bog with lots of highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), and that the ferns were "...at the western end, and not in the *Vaccinium*." After four hours of exploration it was tough to determine east from

west. Foremost in our minds was this... "are we in the correct bog or another wetland along Fall Creek?" The going was very tough. We were in the midst of *Vaccinium corymbosum*, cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), and interrupted fern (*O. claytoniana*). Leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) and Labrador tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*) grew abundantly and provided further clues that we were in a bog. Hummocks, covered with *Sphagnum* spp. and surrounded by foot-deep water, provided us with

welcome footholds. Beneath the water was at least a foot of mud. The day was hot, biting insects abundant, and every mis-step required a struggle to free a foot, hopefully with boot still attached, out of the muck. We decided we all had enough. "Let's leave" one of us said. We headed west, out of the bog, thinking this was the shortest exit to our car.

I'll always remember Anna's shout, "I found it". Her tone was so calm that I wrote it off as a joke. But, when I approached her, she had a grin on her face and in front of her was the fern. It looked much like the surrounding cinnamon and interrupted ferns, but the black (actually dark purplish-brown) stipe made it unique. True to the literature, they were growing in several inches of water. The patch was small, maybe six feet by twelve feet. We looked about and found only one other patch- this one smaller, about eight by ten.

Woodwardia virginica is a large fern, standing nearly four feet tall. Its leaf blades are monomorphic- nearly 50 cm long and 30 cm wide. Each frond is pinnate-pinnatifid. Unlike some of our other large ferns, such as those in the genus *Osmunda*, that grow in vase-shaped clusters, *W. virginica* has tough, creeping, deeply subterranean rhizomes, causing the plants to grow in scattered rows. Perhaps the most striking feature can be seen by examining the sori, on the undersides of fertile pinnae. Here they form double rows of oblong clusters running along each side of the midrib, giving the genus the common name "chain fern".

After taking several photos and feeling relatively confident we had seen all the ferns that were there, we left the bog. Only a few feet away were dry woods that took a steep climb up a hill towards the road. Ten minutes later we were back to the car. If only we had known the location when we started it would have taken us ten minutes to get there instead of four hours!

Review: David Werier's talk,
"Biodiversity...Lessons from Reznicek's
Sedge...."

by Rosemarie Parker (with comments from other listeners)

If you missed the October meeting, you missed an intriguing talk. Three distinct phases were blended into a single theme on the values of biodiversity, and how one can relish the differences in even easily overlooked species.

We were treated first to a slide show of flowers, mosses, grasses, lichens, and fungi – all blending well with the hypnotic music of Jennifer Berezan and friends singing "praises for the world". It certainly got us all appreciating the beauty around us.

"...(We) really enjoyed David's talk. The opening slides with music were beautiful. Could he make a DVD with the music and enclose a list of plants with it, so you could follow along and see what some of them were? I think it would sell, and I'm sure I'm not the only one."

"The slide show was great. Of course, he took all of the pictures with his new digital camera! ...David (was asked if he) would be willing to lend the slideshow so others could show it...."

"... a friend ... (a) botanist from Israel said it was "first-rate"...."

Those of us who tend to get analytical about everything (thus trying to identify the species in close-ups) wished for captions on the images, and maybe some time David will get around to doing that. But everyone was peaceful and ready to listen when David began the second portion of his talk – about how he discovered a new sedge.

In 2002 David was involved in a survey in the Hudson Highlands, a rich area with more open woods than we have around Ithaca. (The images were lovely.) There were sedges covering the woodland floor in many places- including *Carex pensylvanica*, *C. nigromarginata* (a rare sedge), and *C. umbellata*. The latter are members of "the difficult section" *Acrocystis*. The next year he returned looking for more of the *C. nigromarginata*. While there he collected what appeared to be, the related and widespread parasol sedge, *C. umbellata*. But upon closer investigation, there were some differences in the bloom stalks, and the more he looked the more differences he saw. Bottom line: sedge expert Anton (Tony) Reznicek confirmed it

as a new species, and David named it in Tony's honor - *Carex reznicekii* Werier.

By studying specimens from herbaria with collections from the mid-Atlantic states, David was able to find many more specimens of *C. reznicekii* that had been mis-identified as the similar *C. umbellata* or *C. nigromarginata*. This newly described species was all over – in RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, MD, VA, KY, TN, NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, MO, and AK – from an original identification in one NY county. One interesting point David made is that so many botanists had walked right by this sedge, even collected it, and not noticed the differences. The “window” for noticing the difference in appearance is very small; and most experts assumed it was the common parasol sedge. So if even sedge experts didn't notice the differences in habitat, ecological niche, timing, etc., certainly most other folks didn't notice either. If Reznicek's sedge had gone extinct 10 years ago “no one would have known, or probably cared.”

“David's enthusiasm for different sedges was so catching - even I could see how small, mostly green, grassy clumps could be 'sweet'.”

And thus the segue into the third portion of David's theme – starting with plants of rich fens and other localized ecosystems. Everyone knows that extensive buildings and parking lots reduce biodiversity. Even very subtle changes, such as creating a lovely pond out of a fen in your backyard, can eliminate interesting and rare species. David mentioned a globally rare plant, an annual, that only grows on the shores of large lakes and tidally influenced rivers. Recreational use of the Oneida Lake shore has reduced one of the few populations in the world of this species to only 12 individuals, yet this population really can't be protected as it is on such a small spot of land in the midst of heavily trafficked, popular shoreline. And it has to start from seed every year!

David encouraged us to recognize the beauty in all species, even those invasive ones we love to hate. Most of us love fawns, even though we know that deer populations are out of whack. Porcelain berry is stunning, but chokes out everything around it. Agriculture can be seen as a lovely view and sometimes benefits grassland birds, or it can be seen as a permanent clearcut. David's message was to work on the problem without vilifying the species or activity.

“His talk was also a great way to get people interested in biodiversity, and his enthusiasm for sedges was contagious, though they're not showy plants. And the ending was good, too, leaving people with something to think about.”

Impressions from the Panel Discussion, 20 November 2007

--quotes collected by Rosemarie Parker from various attendees & participants

FLNPS last had a roundtable discussion in 1998, and while it was fun, it was sparsely attended. This year, our panel discussion was well attended, and from comments I solicited as people left, it was also well received. So for those of you who missed it, and those who wondered how others felt about it, here is a collection of quotes (lightly edited for clarity but not content). If anyone has additional comments, positive or negative, I would love to hear them – they will be useful if/when we do this again.

I thought it was a great panel discussion, far exceeding my expectations. The panel participants represented an excellent variety of backgrounds, interests, and areas of expertise. The format allowed for a wide variety of topics to be raised.

I found the discussion about the directions modern horticulture is taking, and its lack of support for native species plantings, to be particularly interesting.

I also found it eye-opening about how diligent we need to be to prevent the spread of earthworms into non-infected areas. The public's ideas about earthworms clearly need to be changed 180 degrees.

I didn't realize the degree to which modern horticulture is turning away from the use of locally native species.

The discussion worked well.... The panel leader did a great job in preparing questions to direct the panel's discussions and did an excellent job allowing the audience to interject their own questions and opinions without circumventing the overall purpose of the panel.

Thanks to everyone involved for putting this together. You will be getting my membership application and fee shortly in the mail.

I found the whole thing interesting. I like how Vicki tied everything together, worms, deer, invasive plants. I had not heard a talk where they were all addressed simultaneously.

I learned a lot about the big nursery trade and decreasing diversity among horticultural crops.

I definitely think we should do this again sometime. One other member came up to me and said we should do it every year.

I was pleasantly surprised by how many Cornell faculty came to the event which I don't usually see there.

I liked the short presentations more than I thought I would. I like that we touched upon pressing issues of the day like climate change and population growth...I think the way the population growth question was handled was excellent.

(interesting & new) the difference between North American and European plants' association with mycorrhizae.

I liked Dan's talk about the homogenization of plants that nurseries carry and that they are almost exclusively cultivars. It reminds me of the book "Omnivore's Dilemma" which talks about how our food supply is becoming more and more restricted to just a few species or hybrids.

(I learned from) Peter Marks (that) we've lost 40 of 1200 local native species since the time of the European "Invasion" ... Further on this, David's perspective (we lost a lot) vs Peter's (I thought this is a small number)....

The cause and effect between decline of native plants and our non-native earthworms (was new to me). Also, that ...2/3 of Arnot Forest has no earthworms and Shindagin is also relatively earthworm free.

I enjoyed this program very much and hated to see it end so I'd vote to do it again and maybe have it longer (3 hours with a break after 1 1/2 hrs).... last night's format was good- David's intro, brief slide shows, David's questions, panel response, passing around food and earthworms -- all interspersed by audience participation. I think it worked and, BTW, I think David did an excellent job moderating.

(Interesting & new to me:) acid rain and the link to calcium and sugar maple decline; the whole relationship to non-native worms and our flora (I knew the worms weren't native and knew they were changing soil conditions but had not seen studies linking that to real floristic data).

One of the things that I liked about the evening was that there was the inclination by those involved to go into detail, for example the question of 'non-native' versus

'invasive' earthworms. I liked that those small details did not get glossed over. I think the surface was barely scratched though; it could have been twice as long and I would have still been interested.

I thought the panel was just about to get more into the overpopulation issue and David smoothly brought it back to biodiversity issues - I do think the two are closely related....I think overpopulation is a big part of all global problems, yet ...how can you broach that subject in a brief discussion? But I also liked Vicki's answer, that consumption and habits are the problem more than #s of people ... "there's over population and over consumption" - Vicki Nuzzo - "two related, but different, issues."

David did a nice job! The panel discussion went very well. I hated to see it end as the audience really got into the discussions.

I thought the panel discussion was great; wish it had gone on longer.

The comment that personally interested me the most was from Peter Marks, I think. It was about how he had no way to prove that the continued existence of any particular species is overwhelmingly compelling, specifically. We can dislike the idea of a species going extinct for broad philosophical reasons, but can't prove that its loss will effect us in any specific way. I'm upset about this. I wish that there was some way to convince folks who don't care, that there are compelling, specific, and personal reasons for them to care. But, since I've heard someone with credibility state this, I will not try to come up with those reasons myself. Maybe I can move on and try to figure out other ways to be convincing.

I hear on the local level from folks (Danby Town meetings) who think that land is worthless if it is not farmed or logged. For them, to leave land "fallow" is a waste and it offends their sense of order. I'd like to try to start addressing that ignorance, but of course, when politics start entering the picture it gets even more complicated. Still, I think we have to try to influence land use so that 'wild' is important, just like 'income' is important. I would clearly like to see a continuation of this discussion.

Guided Mushroom Walk With Dr. Timothy Baroni

by Melanie Kozlowski

On Sept. 15, 2007, a faithful and zealous handful of our society's members met along Bald Hill Rd in Danby on a cool and cloudy autumn afternoon. The walk was lead by Dr. Timothy Baroni, a mycologist from SUNY-Cortland.

After a brief introduction, the group headed south along an abandoned road through the woods. About 1/3 of a mile from the road, Dr. Baroni had the group spread out throughout a sloped old growth area and down to where a stream meandered through the woods. Members were instructed on the proper way to harvest mushrooms and were given wax-paper bags in which to put specimens. As more and more mushrooms were gathered and brought to Dr. Baroni for identification, participants became excited about the search at hand. As we slowly progressed through the woods, Dr. Baroni's basket filled up with numerous types of mushrooms.

During the walk, Dr. Baroni specified which mushrooms were edible and which were poisonous. He

explained the difference between gilled mushrooms and boletes, which are mushrooms with tubular pores instead of gills. After trudging back up to the road, all the gathered mushrooms were spread out upon some large pieces of cardboard. Dr. Baroni grouped mushrooms according to family as well as pointed out which species were edible and how to prepare them.



photo by Joe O'Rourke

Though numerous species were collected, a few are worthy of noting. Familiar mushrooms included *Ganoderma applanatum* or artist's conk and *Trametes versicolor* or fan-shaped turkey tail. Both of these species grow on snags (standing dead trees) in the forest. *Scutellinia scutellata* or eyelash cup is a brilliant red cup or saucer-shaped fungi and it can be found growing on moist, rotting logs, in wooded areas. *Ganoderma*

tsugae or hemlock varnish shelf is another fan-shaped mushroom that grows on rotting eastern hemlock trees. It is shiny brownish-red and can grow to be quite large. *Mycena leaiana* or orange mycena is currently being researched for its strong anti-bacterial properties. *Polyporus betulinus* or birch polypore can be used as tinder to start a fire during wet weather.

Rain Gardens, a neat idea for a new mixed bed!

by Rosemarie Parker

This October I investigated a "rain garden" at the Lansing Village Office, displayed as part of an Ithaca Green Building Alliance tour in Tompkins county. Sharon Anderson, the Cayuga Watershed Network steward, talked about the advantages of planting a garden bed with a bit of forethought to slow the rush of rain water into streams and drains. By slowing the runoff for an hour, a significant portion of the salts, oils, and metals that run off streets and buildings are deposited in the soil, rather than the streams. So the rain garden bed is designed with enough area below-grade to hold about an hour's worth of steady (not torrential) rain. The water runs out after that point, and the area drains and dries over the next

day or two – not long enough to be a source of mosquitoes!

To my view, the garden was an interestingly different way of thinking about placement of a mixed perennial bed (so it catches the main drainage routes). Plants are chosen for their ability to take short-term flooding as well as dry conditions between rains. A number of native flowers, grasses and shrubs fit this bill, and are used in combination with popular garden perennials in the Lansing bed. Of course, just plopping a bed in the middle of your erosion problem isn't the same as a true rain garden; there is much more to it. But the Watershed Network gives periodic training, and a good description of rain garden design is available at <http://cayugalake.org/resources/raingarden.php> (and links within). A nice image of the Lansing garden can be seen at <http://cayugalake.org/newsletter/fall/Fall07.pdf>.

FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

December 18 - Tuesday - 7 pm - Tenth Anniversary Solstice gathering

The hottest event in town. Don't miss one of the most exciting and fun gatherings in Ithaca. See page 3 for more details

January 17 - Thursday - 7 pm - Gathering Moss: Lessons from the small and green - by Robin Kimmerer

This talk is an invitation to stop and look more closely, to explore and learn from the elegantly simple lives of mosses. Mosses play ecological roles that belie their small stature and intertwine with the lives of countless other beings. The talk brings to life the natural history and cultural relationships of mosses as a powerful metaphor for ways of living in the world.

February 21 - Thursday - 7 pm - Budbreak, a local phenology project - by David Weinstein

Climate change is bringing warmer temperatures to this region. These changes are undoubtedly already accelerating the timing of the spring opening of flower buds and leaves, the summer growth of fruits, and potentially delaying the autumn coloring and drop of leaves, events called "plant phenology". These shifts in timing could greatly affect the local survival of many native plant populations by disrupting their needed synchronicity with pollinating insects. The range of these plant populations may be rapidly advancing northward.

Associated with a national effort, a network of citizen scientists is being established in central New York to observe the timing of flowering, leaf development, fruiting, and leaf drop in populations of common native trees and herbaceous species. By monitoring these events, we will be better able to detect the first signs of variations and/or problems caused by climate change. The local effort is called Project BudBreak.

March 20 - Thursday - Biogeography and horticulture - comparison of coastal plain vs. interior floras - by Dan Segal

Comparing floristic elements of the mid-Atlantic coastal plain and our interior Finger Lakes highlights what these two regions have in common and where they diverge. Some plants exhibit strict fidelity to one or the other-outer coastal plain sands or richer forest soils-while others find their way into both floristic regions. Some plant species behave generally, and grow across a range of habitats and communities, while others colonize a specific habitat or community wherever it occurs, within a geographic range. We'll look at some plant communities, plant species, and some basic biogeography and distribution, and try to relate these two floristic zones that seem so different at first.

April 17 - Thursday - 7 pm - The Nature Conservancy's Deer Lick Preserve in Zoar Valley by David Griffin

Zoar valley features a hemlock-hardwood forest with some of the largest trees in the northeast and has more than 600 acres of old-growth forest. It has a 400 foot gorge and of the 14 gorge systems draining into Lake Erie, Zoar is the least altered from its natural state. The remote and rugged character of the area has inhibited access over the years which, has protected its trees from logging. Within Deer Lick is a good example of a rich mesophytic forest and accompanying flora. There are several hiking trails open to the public.

May 15 - Thursday - 7 pm To be announced

All presentations are from 7-8:30 pm at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building, 615 Willow Ave. and are free and open to the public.

WALKS AND OUTINGS

January 19 - Saturday - 1 pm - Conifer Walk. Join Ed Cope of the Bailey Hortorium for a closer look at Cornell Plantations' conifer collections. Meet at CCE at 1 pm to carpool. For more information call Anna [REDACTED]

February 23 - Saturday - 1 pm - Winter Woodland Walk - Led by Anna Stalter. Learn to identify our native trees in winter using bark and twig characteristics. Meet at CCE at 1 pm to carpool. Bring a 10x hand lens if you have one. For more information call Anna [REDACTED]

March 15 - Saturday - 1 pm - Lichen outing - Led by David Werier [REDACTED] Have fun with lichens! These often overlooked and exquisitely beautiful organisms will be the focus of this walk. We will learn lichen morphology and identification. The going will be slow so please wear extra layers. Waterproof boots (rubber boots will do) are also required and expect to go over difficult terrain. Please bring a 10x hand lens if you have one.

Unless otherwise noted, trips begin and end in the parking lot at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), located just off Willow Ave. in Ithaca. Field trips are free and open to the public. Participants are encouraged to join FLNPS. Participants are also asked to stay on trails and not to pick any plants without the trip leader's consent. **For more information** call the trip leader at the number provided, Anna Stalter at [REDACTED] or Susanne Lorbeer at [REDACTED]