

# Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

APRIL 2015



Trout Lily  
*Erythronium americanum*

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## From the President's Desk

*March is leaving us like a lion, cold and windy. I went to plant some winter aconite bulbs that my husband dug up from the farm where he works, and the soil here at home was still frozen. I couldn't make a dent even jumping on the shovel! I really am enjoying this slow start to spring; getting more done inside! Even with an onion snow of 7 inches we had a full house for our March meeting and guest speaker, Miles Arnott, from Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. His emphasis on preserving the flora will aid in the increase of the wildlife and insects that we also enjoy viewing. A joint effort in fern propagation may inspire an even broader range of ferns at Bowman's Hill.*

*There are many symposiums and workshops that you can attend to become more knowledgeable in ferns and wildflowers. There is Native Plants in the Landscape at Millersville University June 4-6, and the New England Botanical Club Conference June 5-7, a CAPS program in Ohio June 17-19. If you are planning to attend and would like to represent DVFWs at one of these events, please give me a call.*

*DVFWs has been busy and we are blessed with many great helpers. The Flower Show committee had a gang buster display this year in spite of the snowy and icy week. With the great discussion we had at our March meeting on our future displays, we will continue our involvement with the Philadelphia Flower Show. Our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration plans are underway for October 24, 2015, at Williamson Catering in Horsham. Look for the invitation this summer. The Field Trip Schedule is listed with many opportunities to venture outside. Enjoy the activities that our club promotes and organizes, but please remember that it was many members who took the effort to make it happen. Maybe you too could contribute in some way to our programs. There may be an area near where you live that we could make into a wonderful field trip*

*Looking forward to seeing you and many wildflowers on the trails.*

*Karen Mohn*

## ***“The Natives Are Restless” ~ Flower Show 2015***

The following introduction to our exhibit was displayed on site during the show:

*Native plants have grown in our local environment for thousands of years and are quite happy living in this area. Because they are native, they are more adapted to local weather and will generally flourish where non-natives may not.*

*Native plants, once they are established, usually require less care and maintenance.*

*Native plants also improve the quality of life for birds, bees, butterflies and other wildlife.*

*Native ferns planted in your garden give you a personal connection with the plants growing in the fields and woods of our region.*

*Make this the year when you invite the natives into your back yard. They may be restless, but they settle in and shouldn't be feared.*

Based on the positive feed-back we heard, our presentation was well-received by the Flower Show visitors. We had plenty of opportunity to interact with the visitors, pass out membership flyers, and promote planned activities. As a committee we were very pleased with the results and grateful to all who helped to produce and staff the event.



We were also gratified by the awards our exhibit received this year. First, you should know that PHS has changed the award structure and they now present a gold, silver, and bronze medal based on the point score to each exhibit category. The Fern Society received both the PHS Gold Medal for the category of Plant Societies and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society Gold Medal. The MHS Medal is given to *“The Plant Society Exhibit Demonstrating the Best Use of Design”*. We should note that this is the third successive year in which we received the MHS award.



Traditionally, in this report, I commend the members of the Flower Show Committee for their fine work and high standards in producing this event, and so, in alphabetical order I'll cite those, without whom the Show would not be possible (please hold your applause until the end as we recognize the following members, *drum-roll with cymbals, please*).

For the highest standards of excellence *in artistic direction and final results*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to John Albright.

For *consistently providing a plethora of plant material, without which there would be no exhibit*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Bill Bondinell.

For *ensuring that our exhibit is always staffed to welcome and engage visitors, so that our organization would continue to grow*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Clara Bondinell.

For *correcting, verifying, and vetting our official plant nomenclature so that PHS can be sure that we really do know our ferns*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Janet Novak.

For *his sustained, practical support and intimate knowledge of pteridology*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Jack Schieber. Jack and Rose Marie are faithful veterans. They have more years of service on our committee than any of us.

For *reviewing all invoices with due diligence and paying the bills on time*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Alice-Blake Simonson.

For *her continual encouragement and energetic source of creative ideas*, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Janice Tomer.

For her willingness to provide quality assistance and support wherever and whenever it is needed, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Janet Whitefield.

For his excellence in translating the chairman's sketchy ideas into life-sized replicas that fit together as well as the Hubble Space Telescope, the DVFWS Oscar goes to Tom Whitefield.

I would also note that outstanding theater productions usually have a "cast of thousands". When you add up everyone who pitched in at some point – those who helped with the painting and preparation, during move-in, at the "planting party", welcoming visitors to our display, and at the "take down", there may not have been a thousand, maybe less than fifty. Nevertheless, the committee is very appreciative of all who helped in any way. Every year I receive comments about the scope of our exhibits. And, I always respond by affirming that it is a community effort, for which I am very grateful. This exhibit was truly "Ferntastic".



Finally, please allow me a matter of personal privilege . . . .

In all likelihood, this will be the last report that I submit as the Flower Show Committee Chairman. And so, I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank my fellow committee members for their faithful support as we've worked together to produce these exhibits. Over the past fifteen years or so we've covered a lot of territory. We've been to city and country gardens, an open air café, upstate Pennsylvania, Amish country, Central America, Ireland, Italy, Bucks County, Paris, Hawaii, England, and more. None of this could have been possible without the tireless efforts of the talented and faithful friends who served with me on this committee. During my professional career and since I've retired I've been a member of a number of institutional boards and standing committees, but this group is truly special, not only because of the obvious results they have achieved, but because of their congeniality and sustained willingness to go the extra mile, most often at their own initiative. It has been a blessing for me to chair this committee. *John Albright, Bill and Clara Bondinell, Janet Novak, Jack and Rose Marie Schieber, Alice-Blake Simonson, Tom and Janet Whitefield, and Janice; please accept my sincerest gratitude.*

So, why not continue as chairman? The time has come for me to hand-off this job for someone else to carry on. I believe our association has people with the management skills needed to direct the flower show effort. In addition to securing a new chairperson, the present committee recognizes the need for at least four to six additional members who will be willing to devote the time necessary during the three months preceding the flower show. Please be assured that, as a committee, we stand ready to instruct, assist, and encourage those who join us as we move forward. To move forward we will need more participation from the society at the planning and preparation level.

As I noted at the March 21 meeting, we have some time constraints to achieve this. We will need to have the additional staffing committed by the first of June. By the middle of June, PHS will need to know if we plan to exhibit in 2016. The consensus of the committee is that if the additional staffing is not in place by that time, the society should inform PHS that we will not be able to participate in the 2016 Flower Show. I certainly do not want to see that happen, given the rich tradition the society has enjoyed from this event. To be as concise and direct as I can, we need folks who will buy into the Flower Show process and carry it on. Please give this need your serious consideration. If you have questions about what's involved, please contact me, or anyone of the committee members. We're looking forward to your positive response.

Tom D Tomer  
Flower Show Chairman, 2015

Editor's note:

And finally, for his creative ideas; his diligence and careful attention to detail; his tenacious capacity to deal with PHS, EPHenry, and others with finesse to get the job done and done well; his gregarious and friendly personality; and, of course, his scale modeling and foam artistry skills- the DVFWS Oscar for Best Director goes to Tom Tomer.



# Minutes of the March 21, 2015 Meeting

March 21, 2015, Morris Arboretum

The speaker was A. Miles Arnott, the Executive Director of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve who took us "Through the Seasons at Bowman Hill" with a look at the ephemerals and the longer lasting wild flowers, as well as the ferns, following a bit of history of the Preserve.

The Business Meeting followed the break for refreshments. Thirty members were present.

Announcements:

Mary Carr was thanked for organizing the snacks.

New member Tracy Beerly was introduced. She works at Morris Arboretum and is in charge of the Natural Land Section, including the wetlands and the Woodland Trail.

The Secretary's Report from November, 2014, meeting is found in the January Newsletter.

The Treasurer's Report was incomplete due to the Flower Show expenses and receipts not complete, but the present balance is \$1032, plus \$28 just received for membership.

There was a request from CAPS for DVFWS to join. There is a symposium in Cleveland June 17-19 to discuss the problem of attracting new members. There will also be tours, garden visits. Contact Karen Mohn for more information

The New England Botany Club Symposium will be at Smith College June 5-7. If DVFWS wants a booth, it must register by April 22.

The Millersville Native Plant Conference will be June 3-6.

Old Business

Tom Tomer thanked the membership for help before and at the Flower Show and pointed out the need for new leaders. There are now only four societies exhibiting and PHS wants to encourage them to continue. For example, they need not support the over-all theme in the future. The DVFWS Committee needs help, a new chairperson. There was a round of applause for Tom, Tom Whitefield and Bill Bondinell.

The 2016 theme is National Parks. PHS needs to have a contract for 2016 signed by June and DVFWS needs the concept developed by September. David Lauer suggested that we try for a more reusable exhibit and/or possibly using herbarium specimens of ferns. Janet Novak cited Rock Garden Society's exhibit as an example of a more reusable plan. The need for a new booklet was mentioned. David Lauer suggested that a fern photo bank be established.

The 40 Year Anniversary Celebration will be at Williamson Catering in Horsham on October 24, 2015, from 11:30 – 3PM. Clara Bondinell heads the committee. Help is needed for table décor, door prizes, etc. Lois Brooks is in charge of reservations. There will be a choice of chicken, fish or vegetarian meal. It was agreed to charge a flat fee of \$35 per person to cover all expenses.

The field trip list will be in the April Newsletter and posted on our webpage.

The next DVFWS meeting will be July 18, the site to be decided.

The last business was an appeal to locate the second green apron from the Flower Show. It apparently disappeared before Monday night of the show. If anyone has any information as to its whereabouts, its return would be greatly appreciated.



*Minutes continued:* disappeared before Monday night of the Show. If anyone has any information as to its whereabouts, its return would be greatly appreciated.

Hope Punnett, acting secretary

## Report of Bowman's Hill Program

After a beautiful drive through the snowy countryside, we enjoyed an entertaining and informative program at Morris Arboretum by A. Miles Arnott. Mr. Arnott is the Executive Director of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve and his presentation and slides featured spring ephemeral and companion wildflowers found at the preserve. Ephemeral wildflowers, such as Spring Beauties and Trout Lilies are those that grow, bloom and set seeds in a brief period of time during the spring and then die back. Mayapple and Bloodroot, on the other hand, are known as spring companion wildflowers, blooming early in the spring but then remaining visible throughout the summer.

Mr. Arnott had interesting tidbits to share which made our appreciation for the wildflowers much more than just a study of botanical structure. For example:

- Goldenrod Crab Spiders blend in with the yellow flowers for which they are named and lurk there waiting to ambush and devour an unsuspecting bee.
- Mayapple seeds are best processed for germination by passing through the digestive tract of box turtles.
- Trillium seeds are assisted in dispersal by ants as a part of a mutualistic relationship called myrmecochory. The seed of the trillium has a little food packet attached to it which interests ants. They take this seed with the food packet to their underground nests and after the food packet is consumed, they cart off the rest of the seed to their underground garbage dump, where it promptly germinates.
- Jack-in-the-pulpit plants can switch from year to year from being a plant producing only male reproductive structures (staminate) to one which produces only female reproductive parts (pistillate).

Our field trip to Bowman's Hill is on April 18th and their native plant sale begins on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Submitted by Karen Frazier

## Fern Propagation

DVFWS conducted a fern propagation workshop at Morris Arboretum in 2014 and the event was well attended. Hopefully the participants in that workshop have sporophytes (the visible ferns that we know and love) growing even as you read this! Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve is interested in enlisting our support in propagating fern species that have been present historically at the reserve but have disappeared in recent years. David Lauer is going to enlist members who participated in last year's workshop (or anyone else, for that matter) who may be interested in putting their newfound skills to use in helping Bowman's Hill replenish their fern flora. If you'd like to participate, please contact David at [DML1000@comcast.net](mailto:DML1000@comcast.net).



Editor's note: Check the Winter 2015 issue of the newsletter on the website. [www.DVFWS.org](http://www.DVFWS.org). This is the same container of *dryopteris intermedia* pictured on page 5 which was started in July 2014.

## Morris Arboretum Plant Sale

Please consider helping at the Morris Plant Sale on May 5-9 at Bloomfield Farm across from the main entrance to Morris Arboretum, where our meeting was in March. Members with enough plant knowledge should sign up to be sales associates in the Perennial Area to advise and answer any customer questions on Fern & Wildflower selection & planting. If you don't feel comfortable interacting with the public as a consultant, set up and other activities across all days and times need coverage. Shifts are for a 3 hour commitment. No task requires much strength beyond standing and walking around. Free food and refreshments are available in the meeting room we used last month. In return for helping you will get a 20% discount for a one-time use on May 8th or 9th. *continued*

*Plant sale continued:* People at the flower show were often asking us where to buy ferns. The thought is that we could get a feel for how this sale is run and next year DVFWS could dig up their own ferns, or buy wholesale and have a fern (& wildflower) sales corner to benefit the society. The Rhododendron Society does this every year & gets great exposure.

**If you would like to volunteer for the Morris Arboretum 2015 Plant Sale please visit this link on Sign-up Genius** <http://bit.ly/MAPlantSale2015>. You will find dates, time slots, and job descriptions posted there.

This would be a very nice gesture to Morris Arboretum for welcoming us to have our meetings there.

Submitted by Leslie Morris-Smith

## 40th Anniversary Luncheon

Save the date: October 24, 2015, 11:30 am

Williamson Catering, Blair Mill Road, Horsham, PA

Join fellow fern enthusiasts to celebrate the founding of our organization.

Luncheon will include appetizer, entree with vegetables and dessert. Cost per person is \$35.00 which includes tax, gratuity and speaker honorarium. Invitations will be sent later in the year.

We are looking for someone to do some poster presentations to highlight our forty years, or if you have photos or albums to share, please contact Clara Bondinell: [Cbondinell@gmail.com](mailto:Cbondinell@gmail.com)

## Changing of the Guard

The DVFWS exhibit at the Flowers Show will have a new look in 2016. Not only will our exhibit have a new look but the people responsible will change. The exhibit should have an educational slant and not necessarily follow the theme of the show.

The three main players ( Tom Tomer, Tom Whitefield and Bill Bondinell) have asked for volunteers to replace them. The three have been working on the show for more than ten years. Each will guide the new volunteers.

Areas where you can help:

Design and implementation of design, which includes attention to details and following PHS guidelines.

Carpentry to make the exhibit's props.

Procuring, buying and forcing the hardy ferns for the display. Ferns have been forced at the Horticultural Center in Fairmount Park. Ferns are placed in the hot house in late December and then watched and watered twice a week. Ferns are transported to the Convention Center for the display.

Contact Tom Tomer before June 1st: [tdtomer@juno.com](mailto:tdtomer@juno.com)

Submitted by Clara Bondinell



# Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome nine new members who have joined since our last newsletter. We hope to see you at our meetings, and on future field trips. Please add these names and addresses to your membership directory. Please remember, membership information is only to be shared within the society.

## Marice Bezdek, Membership Chairman

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Auvil, Beverly<br>Quakertown, PA 18951 | Horn, Deborah<br>Earleville, MD 21919               |
| Davis, Link<br>Schwenksville, PA 19473 | Martuniak, Gerald<br>Quakertown, PA 18951           |
| Girton, Donna<br>Glen Mills, PA 19342  | Ruiz, Chelsea<br>Wilmington, DE 19802               |
| Gold, Nancy<br>Ambler, PA 19002        | Ziembra, Mary Ann & Vince<br>Philadelphia, PA 19128 |

## About DVFWS

*The purpose of DVFWS shall be to encourage the enjoyment of ferns and wildflowers by cultivating and propagating them in the home and garden; by studying them in their wild habitats, gardens and conservatories; by promoting their conservation and preservation; and by providing a forum for the exchange of information and expertise.*

## Officers

- President:** Karen Mohn  
papatrees@aol.com
- Secretary:** Donna Wilhelm  
donnacwilhelm@gmail.com
- Treasurer:** Alice-Blake Simonson  
asbjj28@yahoo.com

*Membership in DVFWS is open to anyone who is interested in ferns and wildflowers. Three general membership meetings are held each year and a number of field trips are scheduled each year to areas rich in botanical interest.*

*The newsletter is published quarterly. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome and may be e-mailed to [delvalfernsoc@gmail.com](mailto:delvalfernsoc@gmail.com) or mailed to Janet Whitefield, editor 863 Store Rd. Harleysville, PA 19438.*

*Membership is \$10 for individuals or \$14 for two members at the same address per year or \$28 and \$39, respectively for three years. Dues are payable to Alice-Blake Simonson 28 Chancery Court Souderton, PA 18964 215-868-0440*

**Web site:** [www.dvfws.org](http://www.dvfws.org)  
*will post the current newsletter in color.*

**Webmaster:** Leslie Morris-Smith

Many thanks to Alice-Blake Simonson for proofreading this newsletter.