

Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

OCTOBER 2020

November 21st Meeting



ORCHIDACEAE
Spiranthes cernua
Nodding Ladies'
Tresses
Fulshaw Craeg
by Link Davis 10/20

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November 21st 9:30 am we will have our November meeting via Zoom in the comfort of your own home. You will receive an e-mail the week before with the link to access the meeting by your computer, tablet or smart phone where you will be able to see and hear other participants. Or you can dial in from your home phone and hear the conversation. Leslie Morris Smith will host the meeting and admit members starting at 9:30 am for a time of socialization together. During the speaker, your microphones will be muted.

The program, starting at 10 am features Kirsten Werner, the Director of Communications for Natural Lands. We needed to cancel Kirsten and our March 2020 meeting due to Covid. She will share Natural Lands' mission, success stories, and much more with a power point presentation. Many of us remember our field trips to Stoneleigh and Meng Preserve which are Natural Lands properties. Prior to working for Natural Lands, Kirsten spent several years at Tyler Arboretum and Mt. Cuba Center.

Following the program, there will be a business meeting and pictures of our past 20 years at the Flower Show. Come prepared to share ideas or memories. This is our 45th Anniversary of DVFWS. Traditionally we have had a luncheon every 5th year anniversary, but we cannot follow tradition this year.

Our first organizational meeting was held on February 22, 1975 at Longwood Gardens following an announcement in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Newsletter. Ninety enthusiasts attended including Dr. Edgar T. Wherry and Dr. Donald G. "Dutch" Huttleston who helped to shape the new society. Emphasis was not necessarily technically oriented, but an informal way for us to learn from one another with speakers at meetings and field trips to discover the ferns, flora, and fauna of the area. We are honored to still have John Scott in our membership, who was at that meeting and became a Charter Member.

These historical highlights are thanks to Bill Bondinell who for the last two decades published beautiful celebration booklets. At our anniversary luncheons everyone also got a door prize. Recently, Alice Blake Simonson gave me two boxes (32 books) of fern and wildflower books, 14 of which are signed by the author. You will find a separate attachment of the titles. Please let me know if you would like to have one and we will get it to you.

Janet Whitefield, editor

Minutes September 19, 2020

The first ever Zoom meeting of this Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society, necessitated by the Covid 19 Virus epidemic, opened at noon, hosted by Leslie Morris Smith and David Lauer and attended remotely by 20 members spread over Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia. Leslie explained Zoom procedures for the meeting. David introduced the speaker, Peter Couchman, the new Executive Director of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve in New Hope, PA.

Peter first showed a brief Power Point introduction about his past varied vocational experiences, and then focused upon the history of Bowman's Hill Preserve. In the mid 1900's, Dr. Edward T. Wherry, University of PA botany professor with a passion for native wildflowers and ferns, helped the newly organized Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve acquire a varied collection of native species appropriate for the diverse soils of the Preserve. It now is the only institution with an accredited native plant collection.

Future plans for the Preserve include establishing partnerships with area art and cultural groups, sponsoring outdoor concerts, conducting research on conservation and ecology, and growing the institution's community through social media. Priorities will be maintaining and expanding the present 168 species plant collection, and maintaining the deer fence, which allows for the enclosed areas, with both understory and canopy intact, as they would have been prior to European settlement. Other priorities are providing education for children, adults, and families through online and virtual programs, and offering outdoor spaces for physical and mental well being of visitors. He recommended especially visiting the meadows this autumn to see their differing phases of plant development and unique species. The Preserve's plant sale area, open for business until the end of October, features straight species of many herbaceous and woody plants.

Leslie then presided over a short slide show from two members.

1. – Dick Wills of VA showed his blooming Franklinia tree. He reported on the Franklinia trees growing at Mt. Cuba and Haverford College. He has harvested some of their seeds and is willing to share with society members.

2.– Bernie Cabana of Adams County PA showed slides of a few of the 108 native flowers and 12

native fern species that grow on his land. He encouraged members to propagate wildflowers which will attract native butterflies, and invited members of the DVFWS to visit in 2021.

3. – Leslie reported that the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society will have the Flower Show in June 2021 at a new outdoor site at FDR Park in south Philadelphia. This site has good subway access, parking lots, and space for tents to shelter exhibits. The 2021 Show theme will be "Habitat".

Donna Wilhelm, Secretary

Our president, Rick Reynolds works at a nursery which has 3 nice Gordlinea trees. It is a hybrid of Gordonia and Franklinea trees, mentioned previously by Dick Wills. The full botanical name is *x Gordlinia grandiflora* 'Sweet Tea'. It blooms in the fall. If any members are interested, Rick would make the purchase and pass on his 30% discount. That represents \$42 net for a five foot specimen. RickReynolds5@verizon.net



Memories

Editors note: In light of our 45 anniversary which we cannot celebrate this year with a luncheon, I asked for members to submit favorite memories for the newsletter. I was pleased with the responses and hope you will enjoy reading the fond memories published here. May we all continue to have a great time in DVFWS and hopefully we will be able to enjoy a luncheon together when Covid is controlled. Please join the Zoom meeting on November 21st.

Clara Bondinell, member since 1992

My first introduction to DVFWS was a bus trip to the NY Botanical Gardens. Marilyn Cartwright asked me to write a trip report. Then I found myself as editor of the newsletter. Next it was anniversary time and I was part of the committee and continued to be so for subsequent luncheons under the tutelage of Henrietta Adkins.

Somehow Bill and I became involved in the Flower Show along with the crew of the Schiebers, Adkins, Tomers, John Albright and Whitefields. We planned and executed the DVFWS display for numerous years, from painting the backdrop on Saturdays, to forcing ferns at the Horticulture Center and booth sitting.

Although we did not see each other socially we were friends and looked forward to seeing each other at painting parties, set up and take down, as well as at our meetings twice a year.

It was 20 years ago July that 16 plus members of the DVFWS took a trip to Virginia and West Virginia. We stopped in Richmond to visit the Swell's, long distance members. We toured their garden. Nancy had made arrangements for us to tour local historical gardens in the area. Our next destination was the Gaudineer Scenic Area in West Virginia. This is where three of our members linked arms around a yellow birch estimated to be over 600 years old with an estimated circumference of 17 feet.

We stayed at the Hermitage Inn in Bartow. The highlight there was the homemade fruit pies, especially the bumble berry which was in short supply. The men were almost drawing straws for the last piece! Whenever I see Vienna sausages in the store, I think of Ed Adkins and Leon Swell and their lunch of choice on our West Virginia trip.

All good memories and miss them all! Clara

Donna Wilhelm, member since 1997

Intrigued not only by ferns, but also by the interesting people I'd met in DVFWS meetings, I joined the group in June, 2001, for a marvelous week's adventure in Ontario's beautiful Bruce Peninsula. Bounded by Lake Huron on the west and Georgian Bay on the east, this mostly forested land, has many varied habitats, and features 50 species of ferns and many kinds of wildflowers.

In my mind's eye I still can see our group, on hands, knees, and stomachs in the grass of a century old church cemetery searching for moonworts, of the genus *Botrychium*, growing in this long undisturbed place. Moonworts are strange little ferns. Another of this group, was discovered under a child's swing in the yard of our motel. Much effort was put into protecting this tiny fern growing in such a precarious place. The wildflowers I remember best were yellow lady slipper orchids growing profusely along edges of roads and forest. Throughout the week we were led by local fern expert Nels Maher, our kind and gracious host, and our own fern experts, Jack Schieber and Otto Heck who wrestled for hours over IDs for *Dryopteris* hybrids.

Our group was so interesting and congenial – a hallmark, I suspect for most all DVFWS outings. Donna



Botrychium, different trip, same scenario, old gravesite. Photo by Whitefield

Alice Blake Simonson, member since 1979

I have so many vivid, pleasant memories of my 40-or so-years in our Fern Society, far too many even to mention here, so I'll share just a few.

Several of our field trips were week-long adventures, and a few are already discussed by others here. My memories of our week-long stays in several of the State parks in West Virginia seem particularly vivid. Two of our members who were from WV (Ed and Henrietta Adkins) recommended Lost River Park as particularly rich in variety and quality of ferns and wildflowers. This proved to be true. We enjoyed it so much, that we returned there another year for a second week-long stay.

A couple of events from our visits there stand out. Our mentor and friend, Dr. Dutch Huttleston, Taxonomist at Longwood Gardens, had heard a certain rare fern had been reported in that Park. Well, on a drive along a one-lane road in the Park, Dutch announced, "STOP, this is exactly the habitat the rare fern would choose." He climbed a hill and found the elusive fern!

On one of our many walks through the woods, just a few feet off the path, we suddenly found ourselves witnessing a dramatic dance by 8 or 10 pileated woodpeckers, wings spread wide, dancing in a circle on the ground. This was obviously a well-orchestrated ceremonial dance, and they were completely oblivious to the human eyes that were watching. Feeling as if we were intruding, invading their privacy, we crept on silently down the path.

So many memories, adventures, and so many wonderful, very special people. I could go on and on, but will conclude this now. Alice Blake

Separately, Alice Blake had given me this information about Dutch Huttleston.

Dr. Donald Huttleston, affectionately known as "Dutch" taxonomist at Longwood Gardens, was instrumental in founding our Society. A meeting was held at Longwood, February 22, 1975, with Dutch leading. For many years, he was the authority on everything in the out-of-doors, from birds in the air to everything growing out of the ground. A truly remarkable person, he lead many of our forays in near-by locations and far-away week long trips. He always seemed to know everything, always answered questions completely, thoughtfully, and politely, even the simple ones from me. Sadly, a driver ignoring a stop sign killed Dutch not far from Longwood and his home. What a tragedy! Certainly John Scott, our only remaining founder, would remember him. ABS

Janet Whitefield, member since 2004

Although I have many great memories of interesting field trips and week long forays to Vermont and Virginia, helping with the Flower Show for many years with painting, construction, set up and tear down, I choose to write a memory of the time I was asked to be hospitality director by then president, Donna Wilhelm. I thought, "Yes, this is something I could enjoy." At each meeting I would come early and make the coffee and tea and bring a fruit tray and a baked good. I asked for others to donate a finger food, and we always had a great selection and a lively social time which often lapsed over to the business meeting. I thought I would share with you several favorite goodies for which the bakers are known. Janet

Dilly Crackers by Clara Bondinell, brought to every occasion we would see Clara and Bill, often with take home bags!

3 -9 ounce pkgs of oyster crackers
1 pkg hidden valley ranch **dry** dressing
1 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp dill weed

Pour crackers into covered container.
Mix oil, dressing mix, and dill, shaking to mix.
Pour mixture over crackers. Cover and shake.
Let stand for a while, an hour +, and shake now and then.

Cheese Biscuits by Alice Blake Simonson

Mix together with hands:
1 stick of butter or margarine softened
2 to 2 1/2 + or - cups sharp cheddar cheese grated (I like lots of cheese)
Add 1/2 cup flour and pinch of salt

Work with hands until all comes together and forms a ball.
Roll out with rolling pin until thin, then cut into desired shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet, sprinkle lightly with dried red pepper - CAREFUL !

Bake 350 degrees. 10-15 minutes until done but not browned. Remove with spatula. Enjoy !

Donna Wilhelm gave me her Applesauce Cake recipe which comes to almost every meeting— see last page as I ran out of space here.

Tom Tomer, member since 1994

We've been asked by our newsletter editor to come up with some memories; *"field trips, forays, flower shows, anything you found significant"*. Lately, most of my fern society memories relate to the camaraderie we enjoyed while planning and organizing the flower show exhibit. The flower show committee was truly a congenial group. They were able to pull off this event every year, with impressive creativity and high standards. And it wasn't all due to the planning committee, we had a platoon of willing workers who helped all along the way. The whole team deserves recognition and gratitude, and there are several distinguished members whose contribution should be noted. But I'm going to limit my comments to three associates, whose contribution was absolutely essential to our results.



John Albright. Professional artists are often characterized as idiosyncratic, short-tempered, and self-centered, etc. That's certainly not our John. He is able to teach effectively and graciously lead a crew of artistic novices to produce a compelling setting for our exhibit. John brought the highest artistic results to the show. I heard one of the PHS judges observe that our mural set the standard for the entire show. That should have made the six o'clock news.

Bill Bondinell. Every flower show exhibit needs high quality plant material: no plants, no exhibit. Every year

Bill organized the plant material from start to finish as a science. That included purchasing the product, forcing dormant ferns to emerge, packaging the plants and transporting everything to the convention center. Bill would be the first to admit that he didn't do it alone. But, we would have had a very difficult time doing it without him.

Tom Whitefield. Our construction engineer and producer. Tom could be counted on to build whatever we needed in the way of exhibit structures. He has the skills and the tools to pull off some very complicated designs. We had an eight foot high, pentagonal column that required perfectly mitered corners with internal hinges so that it looked like it was all one piece. We had an illuminated cantilever theater marquee that was fit for a Broadway production. Tom always did whatever we asked of him, and did it with aplomb.

There were many other folks who worked on the exhibit over the years, and most of the time just got an "Attaboy". But, if I could leave you with one thought regarding our flower show team, it would be this: they did it all with grace and humility. And they left me with some precious memories.

Regarding the Philadelphia Flower show, it will probably never be the same again. But, we can truly claim that the fern society gave the flower show customer their money's worth, all the while encouraging them to delve into the wonderful world of ferns and wildflowers.

P.S. There will be a brief DVFWS Flower Show review slide show at the end of the November 21st meeting. Stay tuned. Tom Tomer

Editors' note: When I received Tom's memory by e-mail, there were 20 pictures of the past Flower Shows since 1999, no text. I know a picture is worth 1000 words but I told Tom that there was just not room in the newsletter for 20,000! You will see those pictures at the Zoom meeting.

Leslie Morris Smith will also give an update about the 2021 Flower Show to be held outdoors at FDR Park in South Philadelphia for 9 days in June. We have been asked to participate. Please be with us on Zoom to discuss our options at this new venue. JW

Link Davis, member since 2015

Link has led field trips for us and posts pictures at least 5 times a week of hikes he has taken alone. I asked him to write a memory of a favorite place he has gone. JW

Fulshaw Craeg, in my opinion, is the botanical mecca of Montgomery County. The parcel encloses a section of the Ridge Valley Creek and lies in Salford Township. Originally, A. Sanford Craven purchased 136 acres in 1919, which has since expanded to almost 300 acres and, since 1987 has been overseen by the Natural Lands Foundation. The name derives from Fulshaw Hall, which was Sanford's ancestral home in England and "craeg" which is Gaelic for rock.

I was introduced to Fulshaw Craeg, AKA Craven's Meadows, in 1988 by Val Udell who was then the botany leader for the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. Over the last 30 years I have trekked the meadows many times, in all seasons looking for the familiar and elusive. I divide the property into 4 areas or meadows. The first meadow is adjacent to King Road. In past years it has yielded nodding ladies' tresses, fringed and bottle gentians, ragged fringed orchid, Canada lily, sundrops, Indian paintbrush, blue cohosh, alumroot, smooth aster, devil's bit, and showy gold-erod.

Continuing down the gravel pathway toward the creek we find the second area. Here I have found liverleaf hepatica, bishop's cap, leatherwood, barren strawberry, climbing hempweed, long-spurred violet, both monkey flowers and the showy orchis.

In order to get to the third meadow, the creek must be crossed with the help of a wire cable and multiple stepping stones. If you go the day after a heavy rain, all the rocks will be covered and the passage is almost impossible. Once safely on the other side, turn left and walk about 100 feet along the creek to the third meadow. This meadow often yields wild sweet William, sneezeweed, green milkweed, great lobelia, yellow star grass, beechdrops, squawroot, and one-flowered cancer-root.



Following the main trail along the creek, we enter the fourth and largest meadow, which is often flooded when the creek rises. This meadow can yield Culver's root, Canadian burnet, green dragon, cardinal flower, New England aster, columbine, black cohosh, Indian pipe, marsh hedge-nettle and yellow stargrass.

My walks are usually about 2 hours in length. I often start by lighting a cigar. I carry an old, canvas bag which has a shoulder strap. In there is a copy of Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, a loupe, my Canon G-12 camera and two extra batteries. When I find something to image, I shoot several shots, checking the playback for clarity. I walk at a fairly slow pace through all the meadows of Fulshaw Craeg, rarely meeting anyone – especially on a weekday.

I'm fortunate to live in Sanatoga near the junction of Berks, Montgomery, and Chester counties. An hour's ride will take me to their outer borders. A day's journey to the Susquehanna River or north to Pike, Monroe, or Carbon County is a day of exploration. On occasion, when the weather doesn't cooperate, I will return to the same spot the next day to get a better shot of a flower, as I did with the fringed gentian that wasn't quite open.

Over the last 32 years I have accumulated over 5000 images from Fulshaw Craeg which are all tagged with their family, genus, species, common name, location and date. I enjoy going throughout the year in order to find the remnants of what was once in bloom. Although I also visit many other places, to me, Fulshaw Craeg is the jewel in the crown. Link



Gentianopsis crinita
Fringed Gentian
Perkasie, PA
10-02 & 10/3/2020



Brian and Karen Mohn, members since 2010

A Fall bog walk on the Pocono Plateau- 10/4/2020

Many things have drawn me to the wetlands over the years with the exception of pesky flying insects. Ironically those irritating insects have a link to the carnivorous plants that I seek. I was first introduced to pitcher plants many years ago in the swamps of South Jersey and had a fascination for them since. The closest population to me is on the Pocono plateau where I spend a fair amount of time in the winter, trapping and ice fishing, providing opportunities to scout new areas of interest. One recent Saturday after presenting a trapping techniques seminar in the Pocono's, Karen and I spent the remainder of the day hopping from one bog to another. One of our favorite locations is the headwaters to the Lehigh River. Navigating our way to this bog is a challenging maze of mature rhododendrons, but the reward of solitude and the treasure we seek makes it all worthwhile. Binoculars are a valuable tool to pick out the pitcher plants, round leaved sundews, and variety of cotton sedges without venturing too far onto the sphagnum moss mat. We need to remind ourselves, as on all walks, that we are only a guest and need to leave the area undisturbed for the future. As with all areas, the visible plant diversity changes with the season and that is what makes each walk special. With our interest in ferns we can easily identify the cinnamon, sensitive and royal ferns but are challenged with others like the marsh fern. Trees like red maple, American larch, alders and black spruce give way to the deciduous shrubs as the environment of the bog takes control. Species in this group we often see are: highbush blueberry, arrowwood, red-osier dogwood, winterberry, leatherleaf, Labrador tea and a variety of spiraea. One of the few orchids we will see in the Fall is the Lady's tresses, but earlier you could be pleasantly rewarded with the white and yellow fringed orchids. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the vast number of cranberries that are ripe for the picking and puckering.

Karen and I had a trip scheduled to Newfoundland in July to enjoy the orchids that call the bogs and fens home. I don't have to elaborate how that went due to Covid. Fortunately, I have a half dozen container bog gardens around the yard that allow me constant enjoyment of some of my favorite plant material. Over the years our club has visited several propagators of common and hybridized carnivorous plants to fill my containers. I am now cautious of declared

hardy zone of the material I purchase because I live north of most of these nurseries and winter survival is questionable. Karen came up with a system using straw and leaf mulch held in place with wire that allowed all my gardens to survive through the minus 15 we incurred last winter.

We make time to share our interest with others,

Brian & Karen



Member News

Michael Brooks, Joan Detz, and Mary Daniel have moved to other nearby locations. You will find their addresses in the attached Membership Directory.

Please open the Membership Directory and check your information. If you see **2020** after your name, you owe dues. Dues are payable at the November meeting. Please mail your dues to Alice Blake Simonson. If you do not plan to renew, please notify Alice Blake or Janet Whitefield. It will save us a lot of unnecessary correspondence.

Continued from page 4:

Applesauce Cake by Donna Wilhelm
(from my battered 1953 version of the Joy of Cooking)

1 c. brown sugar firmly packed
1/2 c. butter
1 egg
1 3/4 c. flour sifted with
1/2 t. salt
1 t. baking soda
1 t. cinnamon
1/2 t. allspice
1 c. raisins
1 c. walnuts, chopped
1 c. thick unsweetened applesauce, heated

Beat butter until soft. Add sugar gradually and beat until light and creamy. Beat in the egg. Stir in the dry ingredients until the batter is smooth. Add the raisins and nuts. Beat in the applesauce. Bake in a greased 9 inch tube pan at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Caramel icing is suggested, but I like the cake better without icing.



Pay Dues now

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: Richard Reynolds
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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

or e-mailed to Janet Whitefield, editor
jntwhite863@gmail.com

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 DVFWS and mailed to:

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