

Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

MARCH 2022

From the President's Desk



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As I write, the Super Bowl Sunday snow is still lingering, but just before that snow arrived, I glimpsed winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) pushing up amongst the leaf litter. Although not in bloom yet, we all know spring is just around the corner. I only wish we had the same certainty about Covid; that normalcy is just around the corner. While the impact of Covid on our organization is ultimately a trivial matter, it's still a major disappointment. Let's forget about that for the moment and talk about a couple of ferns. I thought I'd highlight two somewhat unusual and underused ferns that might spark some interest to those unfamiliar to them.



The first is one you should be familiar if you saw our exhibit at last year's flower show – Hairy Lip Fern (*Cheilanthes lanosa*). This was one of three or four ferns that we thought would hold up under the sun at FDR Park. In reality, this fern was an excellent choice because it prefers full sun and dry soil. The other selections we made could tolerate full sun with sufficient moisture. Of course, keeping the exhibit well-watered was a serious issue. Here's a recap of the culture and characteristics of *C. lanosa*, a nice eastern U.S. native: cold hardy to zone 5; slow spreader and only reaches 6 to 8 inches tall; tolerates full sun, but does well in part-shade like most ferns; grows naturally in dry, gravelly conditions and can handle alkaline to acid soils; and fronds have a grayish green cast and are evergreen. Like most ferns, this one is relatively carefree, but be mindful of winter wet and potential crown rot. It seems to me this fern would be an ideal candidate for a sunny rock garden.

The other fern I'd like to promote is Hart's Tongue Fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) – the species and its many cultivars are also referred to affectionately as "scollies." This is not your stereotypical lacy fern as the fronds are undivided, wavy and tongue-shaped. The plant is native to Europe and the eastern U.S., but it's the European variety that you'll find in cultivation as the North American variety is rare and endangered. This fern is best grown in medium moisture, well-drained, alkaline to neutral soils. It's hardy to zone 4, grows to 1 to 1.5 feet tall, and is clump-forming and evergreen. Just like the Hairy Lip fern, Hart's Tongue needs superior drainage to prevent crown rot over winter.



While I don't generally see these two ferns on offer at local nurseries, I purchased the Hairy Lip fern at Gardner's (Chester Springs) last year for the flower show, so it is available from the growers. I purchased my Hart's Tongue fern many years ago from Carolyn's Shade Garden in Bryn Mawr, at great place to visit for their gardens as well as the plants for sale. Of course, mail order is always an option.

Hope we get to meet in person sometime soon.

Yours truly, Rick

Field Trips and Events

Business Meeting via Zoom:

Saturday, March 26, 2022 - 11am
With a presentation of the documentary
My Garden of a Thousand Bees
Zoom link to be sent out later.

Field Trip:

Shenks Ferry/Tuquan Glen - Lancaster Co.
Monday, April 11, 2022 - 10am.

If you need directions, please reach out to
David Lauer by email:
DML1000@comcast.net

Suggestions for field trips for 2022 from
our members include the following:

- * The Laurels, Chester Co.
- * Maiden Creek, Berks Co.
- * State Game Lands #52, Berks Co.
- * Ferns in Philadelphia
- * Barton Arboretum, Medford Leas, NJ
- * Henry Foundation, Montgomery Co.
- * Duke Gardens, Hillsborough, NJ
- * Chanticleer, Wayne, PA
- * Monocacy Hill, Douglassville, PA

Dates for field trips will be determined at our next meeting.



Rock Garden of Survivors photo - D. Lauer

Flower Show

From Hannah Mullen, Exhibitor Manager, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society:

Thank you all so much for your patience as we made a decision regarding the 2022 Flower Show. As you may be aware, we've spent the months following the 2021 Show starting our planning for a safe and successful 2022 Flower Show. The 2022 Flower Show, titled "In Full Bloom" will take place in South Philadelphia's Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park (FDR Park) from Saturday, June 11 through Sunday, June 19, 2022.

"In Full Bloom" welcomes all as we journey to explore the restorative and healing power of nature and plants, while experiencing all that gardening offers to improve our lives. This year's theme connotes good health, positive well-being, and a passion for life that culminates in a gorgeous and colorful spectacle.

The decision to produce the 2022 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show outdoors was made to accommodate the continuing challenges and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. FDR Park's spacious 15-acre footprint allows for social distancing and the associated health benefits of being outside.

Your input has been invaluable in helping us to make this decision, we can't wait to discuss plans with you more in the coming months. As an integral part of the show, we cannot thank you enough for making a transition like this possible once again. Thank you for your continued support of PHS, we look forward to making our second outdoor Show even better than our first!

The official Press Release from PHS:

The PHS Philadelphia Flower Show will Return to FDR Park in 2022

September 20, 2021, PHILADELPHIA, PA – The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) has announced the location, dates, and theme for its highly anticipated 2022 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show. "In Full Bloom" will take place in South Philadelphia's Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park (FDR Park) from Saturday, June 11 through Sunday, June 19, 2022.

As the world evolves, the inherent beauty in nature restores us. One's garden provides a place for healing and connection. The 2022 Philadelphia Flower Show, "In Full Bloom," welcomes all as we journey to explore the restorative and healing power of nature and plants, while experiencing all that gardening offers to improve our lives. This year's theme connotes good health, a positive well-being, and a passion for life that culminates in a gorgeous and colorful spectacle.

Guests will encounter outdoor gardens at the peak

of seasonal perfection and beauty that will inspire everyone to plan for a better tomorrow.

In its second year hosting The Flower Show at FDR Park PHS plans upgrades and enhancements based on feedback from guests, staff, and stakeholders. Guests will find improvements to several areas of the Show in order to deliver a high-quality customer experience, including parking, transportation, ticketing, and design. More details available at: <https://phsonline.org/the-flower-show>.

FDR Park serves as the ideal location for the outdoor 2022 Flower Show. A registered historical district designed by famed landscape architects, the Olmsted Brothers, in the early 20th century, FDR Park features impressive landscapes and architecture with walkable pathways, majestic trees, and breathtaking views. FDR Park is an inspiring venue that contributes to the splendor that the Flower Show is known for, while also being accessible by mass transit and car.

The decision to produce the 2022 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show outdoors was made to accommodate the continuing challenges and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. FDR Park's spacious 15-acre footprint allows for social distancing and the associated health benefits of being outside. Public safety is a critical component for the upcoming Show, and adherence to recommendations from City/State health officials is paramount to Show planning. PHS will continue to work closely with health officials leading up to the Show with updated guidance available online.

"The decision to host the 2022 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show outdoors was based on the continuing evolution and uncertainty of COVID-19. 'In Full Bloom' is PHS's celebration of how gardening and plants have helped people navigate these challenging times. We hope that by sharing the hope and healing that nature and gardening bring, it will inspire people to look towards a brilliant future," said Sam Lemheney, PHS Chief of Shows & Events.

Each visitor who purchases a Flower Show ticket, attends a Flower Show special event, or becomes a PHS member contributes to PHS to further its community-driven work planting trees, supporting neighborhood greening, establishing community gardens, providing job training, managing public gardens, and connecting people with horticulture and one another.

FYI: It has been determined by our organizers that DVFWs will not be participating in this year's flower show. More about that later.

Trip Reports

THE HENRY FOUNDATION FIELD TRIP

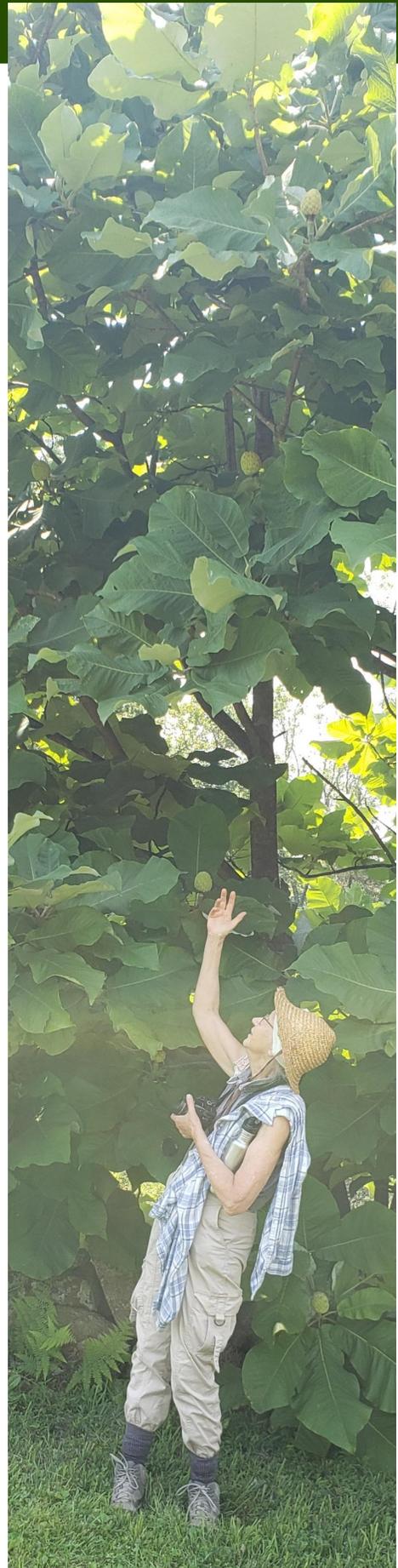
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The Henry Botanic Gardens

On Saturday July 24th members of the Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society (DVFWS) met under clear skies and moderate temperatures at the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research in Gladwyne to experience their Wilderness Garden grounds <https://www.henrybotanicgarden.org/>. Twenty people met, including 13 DVFWS members along with members of the Philadelphia Botanical Club and the Delaware Valley Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society. This was the first time that a joint field trip was held with these three groups, and the general consensus was that it was a great chance to meet members of the different groups. Plans are underway to schedule similar joint trips.



Elliotia racemosa (Georgia plume) photo -D. Lauer



Trip Reports

(continued from page 4)

The Henry Foundation includes much of the original estate of Mary Henry, an early/mid-20th century botanist, plant collector, explorer, writer and parent. (<http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/2000-60-1-mary-gibson-henry-plantswoman-extraordinaire.pdf>.) The garden still consists of many trees, shrubs and herbaceous specimens that were planted by Ms. Henry, and many are quite large and stunning. Almost all of them share a common characteristic: they are indigenous to North America. The grounds are primarily on a south facing slope, with a large "wild rock garden: at the top of the slope amongst a large natural rock outcrop. This rock garden, established by Ms. Henry, is notable for being in a state of self-perpetuating wildness instead of the more common (and also wonderful) groomed rock gardens with which we're more familiar.

We were escorted around the grounds and given extensive historical background information by Susan Treadway, President (and one of our members) and Henry Ortmeier, Curator of the Foundation. Susan has been associated with the Garden for many years, and Henry is fairly new, but with good horticultural experience and a great knowledge of the plantings, as, of course, does Susan.

It would constitute a very long trip report if we were to list all of the wonderful plants that we identified with the help of Susan and Henry. One of my favorite genera is *Halesia*, and they have multiple specimens of various species. We saw *H. parviflora*, *H. diptera* var. *magniflora* and *H. monticola* aka *H. tetraptera*. The nomenclature of the genus is quite confusing, so a project could well develop involving their collection! (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halesia_carolina), Let's continue, in a small way, Mary Henry's legacy.

Janet Novak has identified some of notable specimens that caught her eye:

Elliottia racemosa (Georgia plume): a rare tree in the heath family with fluffy racemes of white flowers. While it had only a few flowers left when we visited, we could see that it had flowered heavily. This may be one of the largest specimens of this species.

Sideroxylon tenax (tough bully, or bully thorn): a small tree native to the deep south. Its leaves are handsome: small, hard dark green with brown undersides, and they give the tree a distinctive look. The tree must be well over 50 years old, but it was still a small tree, making me think it could be a great choice for people with small yards.

Cyrilla racemiflora (swamp titi): a southeastern shrub deserves to be better known, as it has abundant white flowers and vivid fall color. I normally think of this as a medium-sized shrub, but the Henry's specimen approaches the size of a single-car garage.



Trip Reports

(Continued from page 5)

Plants from the "rock garden of survivors": Because the rock garden went for decades without delicate care, the remaining plants had to be tough in order to persist and propagate. (See photo on page 2). A few examples:

- *Dicentra eximia* (fernleaf bleeding heart), growing in full sun among the rocks (and still in bloom). This isn't how most gardeners grow it, but I've seen it in similar situations at Dolly Sods in West Virginia.
- *Woodsia obtusa* (blunt-lobed woodsia): we saw one plant peeking out between two large rocks.
- *Eriogonum allenii* (shale barrens wild buckwheat): This is the only eastern member of a genus that is common in western US. One plant in the rock garden drew the eye with bright yellow flowers.

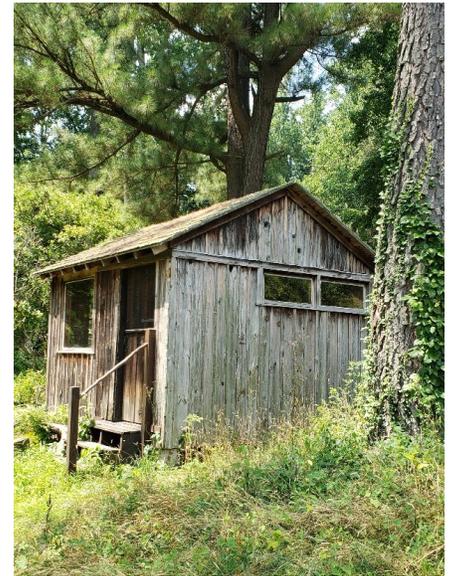
Check these interesting videos with Henry:
<https://www.henrybotanicgarden.org/events/>

We also saw the writer's cabin that Mary Henry built in the garden when she was 75 years old. Very interesting! She clearly had energy, and it reminded me of John Burroughs' writing cabin, Slabsides, in West Park NY.

All around, it was a great trip and we invite anyone who took additional photographs to send them to Kendra, our newsletter editor, for future publication. We look forward to another trip to the Henry Gardens in mid to late April 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

David Lauer



Writing Cabin photo - K. Schieber



Susan Treadway speaking at the Henry Foundation photo - K. Schieber



Henry Foundation Field Trip photo - D. Lauer

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

RickReynolds5@verizon.net

Vice President: Michael Brooks

Mbrooks@wcupa.edu

Secretary: Donna Wilhelm

donnacwilhelm@gmail.com

Treasurer: Alice-Blake Simonson

asbjj28@yahoo.com

Field Trips: David Lauer

DML1000@comcast.net

Member News

Did you know that Alice-Blake Simonson has been our dedicated Treasurer since 1992? 2022 marks her 30th year anniversary in that role. She diligently keeps track of all of our members, all expenses, income, and all tasks related to that position on the DVFWS Board. Thank you, Alice-Blake for your many years of dedicated service!

Janet Whitefield will continue along with treasurer Alice-Blake Simonson to update the membership list on excel and publish the PDF Membership Directory. She also writes letters to all new members welcoming them.

Kendra Schieber is happy to report that she now spends a good portion of her time living and working at her cousin's orchard in New Hope, PA where she sorts apples, readies housing for farm workers, and generally helps with maintenance and bookkeeping. Her home in Corinth, NY is also home to many ferns and wildflowers where she paints signs for businesses, landscapes and still lifes for local residents, and helps run a summer theatre camp for kids. If you have an item for the newsletter, please send it to her at kenschieb@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: Kendra Schieber at kenschieb@yahoo.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:

**Alice-Blake Simonson
24 Bridle Ridge Circle
Lewes, DE 19958
215-868-0440**

Web site: www.dvfws.org

**Webmaster: Leslie Morris-Smith
leslm5791@gmail.com**