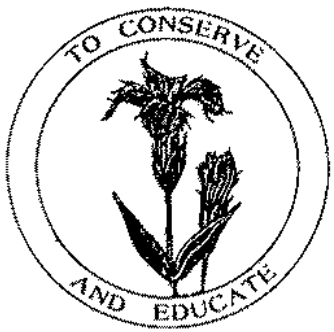
On the Fringe

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NORTHEASTERN OHIO



Founding Chapter of
THE OHIO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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ON THE FRINGE
Quarterly Newsletter of the
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
OF NORTHEASTERN OHIO
2651 Kerwick Road
University Heights, Ohio 44118

FIRST CLASS

SPECIAL FIELD TRIP TO OHIO PRAIRIES
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Dated Material - Do Not Delay

ON THE FRINGE

Quarterly Newsletter of the
Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio

2nd Quarter 1998

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1998 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Dr. George J. Wilder

It is advised that all participants bring a brown-bag lunch on all field trips and to all workshops. All please call the trip leader to let him or her know that you will be coming. This is very important in case of any last minute changes which participants may need to know about. The phone number for the trip leader is listed for each event. Please feel free to invite guests.

SUNDAY, **JULY 26TH**, SMITH CEMETERY AND BIGELOW CEMETERY STATE NATURE PRESERVES – This will be an all day trip to the Darby Plains area due west of Columbus. **Tom Sampliner** will be the local leader for this trip. Since space is limited reservations are mandatory. Please call Tom at (216) 371-4544 to reserve a space for yourself and any guests you might like to take. Reservation must be made by July 20th. Tom will coordinate car pooling and provide directions to the site when reservations are made. **Ron Demmy**, manager of the Smith Cemetery and Bigelow Cemetery State Nature Preserves will lead the trip at these two sites. More details about this trip can be found in the article entitled "Ohio's Relict Prairies in the Darby Plains" by Tom in this issue of the newsletter. DIRECTIONS: These will be provided when reservations are made.

WEDNESDAY, **JULY 29TH**, BIG TREES AND OLD GROWTH FORESTS OF THE EASTERN U.S. – 7:00 PM TO 9:30 PM – This special three-part evening starts outdoors with **Bob Leverette,** co-author of *Stalking The Forest Monarchs,*

demonstrating measuring techniques used for determining champion trees while sharing humorous stories of past and present discoveries. An indoor presentation follows addressing the under-recognized scientific and ecological value of old growth forests of the East, citing examples of impressive stands that can be easily visited. **Jani Leverette**, a Cherokee-Choctaw elder, will conclude the program by relating the role of forests in the Native American culture. This program is co-sponsored by the Society and the **Geauga County Park District** who will host the event. DIRECTIONS: This program will be presented at the Don Meyer Nature Center at the Big Creek Park. From I-90 and Route 44, take Route 44 south about 2 miles to Clark Road. Turn left (east) on Clark Road and travel for about 2 miles to Robinson Road. Turn right (south) on Robinson Road and go about 2 miles to the entrance to Big Creek Park. Turn right (west) into the Park and at the first "Y" in the road bear left. Then take the first right into the parking lot by the Don Meyer Center. No advanced reservations are required for this program.

SUNDAY, **AUGUST 2**, PYMATUNING CREEK FEN – 9:00 AM TO ABOUT 12:00 NOON – **Bill Hudson**, Field Administrator for the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, for the Northeast Lakeshore, will lead this trip to the only known fen in Ashtabula County. Known for the largest populations of Globe-flower (*Trollius laxus*) in Ohio, the site also exhibits Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), Green-headed Conflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), Sundew (*Drosera sp.*), Small Purple-fringed Orchid (*Platanthera psycodes*), Hooded lady tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*), Cotton Grass (*Eriophorum sp.*), and Spike Rush (*Eleocharis sp.*). Prepare for walking in water, as this will be a strenuous "swamp-stomping"

trip. Registration is limited to 10 people. To register, telephone Bill Hudson at (440) 563-9344. DIRECTIONS: Directions will be provided when you register.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
by Tom Sampliner

For the July prairie trip to the Darby Plains you **must call** in to reserve a specific number to Tom Sampliner at (216) 371-4454 whereupon you will be given directions to the rendezvous at our first stop, or for those wishing to car caravan, a local rendezvous. Please call **by July 20th**. For your convenience we have enclosed a tear-sheet reservation form for those who would like to make their reservations in writing.

We get dues from people all year round. We are on a calendar year. If you do not know if you are paid up why not just call me and ask?

The Canadian Wildflower Society finally returned my slides in April after the last "On the Fringe" went to press. Since then, they sent a letter crying the blues about the warning article. In their letter they seem to blame a problem they are having on their post office whereby their mail was being held for a long time so they never received my various letters of inquiry and complaint. Oh, I get it, their delay is excused because they weren't receiving my complaints. I have subsequently learned the real reason the slides were held so long. I just received the latest issue of their glossy magazine called "Wildflower". Staring at me from the rear cover was a familiar shot: yep, one of my slides, a *Trillium flexipes*. I am actually flattered they used it; however, as a business or even from the legal

implications, you don't do that without asking first. They are welcome to ask for and print anything I own; there are many other out there who would not react so favorably.

* * * * *

WEARIN O THE GREEN

The first flower after St. Patties

by Tom Sampliner

In many years the day following St. Patrick's would not yield much in the way of plant life in the forests. Those forests must not be very Irish. This year, however, with morning temperatures in the mid forties along with light off then on again showers, the day was more April like and that means greenery. The weather was to provide more of the same until the weekend which had a forecast of snow and cold to jolt us back into reality. Some entry for spring.

The forest walk might not have occurred at all had I not been out the day before. In and along ditches roadside of River Road near South Chagrin I noticed purple cress (*Cardamine douglassii*). The buds were visible enough to make out the color. The reason why I had stopped at that location was a small group of deer, six, were not far from the roadside on the west escarpment. They were not concerned with my presence since I viewed from the car first and only gradually emerged with camera gear in hand. That brought a foot stomp and snort or two from the assembled herbivores but no scramble to escape. The cress were as interesting though less vocal. It awoke the wildflower spirit now hungry for more.

Spurred onward, I drove to the lower castle trail at North Chagrin where I know the south facing slopes along the rich

bottomland were usually quickest to awaken from overwinter slumber. True to my experience, the ramps or leeks(*Allium tricoccum*) were up and quite a few by several inches. Leaf blades were beginning to expand. The contrast of bright green atop reddish based stalks was quite striking against the mute tones of last seasons leaves on the forest floor.

The cress was also prominent along this trail. Here I could also notice the foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) leaves that frequently take on a salmon color as they stiffen up and rise from their winter condition.

Not to be outdone, hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*) leaves were still hugging the forest floor, but showing off a beautiful maroon like the human liver which gave the plant it's name. Some were even sending up flower stalk of an inch or two. Still quite young, they were so pubescent that they appeared like fuzzy swizzle sticks.

Broad, for a sedge, green blades marked the rosettes of Plantain leafed sedge (*Carex plantaganea*). Here too some were getting a jump on the season sending up stalk that in a few cases were 2-3 inches high already. You will be sure to notice them as their earth tone colors are much more vibrant than the leaf litter.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) was also beginning to show buds close to open and in a few cases already out. The yellow brightens up the shrub layer considerably at these early dates.

This is as early as I can recall seeing the sickly yellow color of the basal leaf rosettes from woodland hyacinth (*Camassia scilloides*). Somehow they seem out of place. Perhaps it's that color.

That's all I have to report from this early walk. Hopefully, the early beginning to the season is the promise of a long prolific wildflower season for the spring. Recent years have not

kept such a promise. It's about time then for the wearin O the green.

* * * * *

P.S. TO WEARIN O THE GREEN

by Tom Sampliner

Eight days later, Thursday, March 26th, I returned to this site to see what eight unseasonably warm days would bring forth. Ramps were everywhere now in closely packed groups all with fully expanded leaves. The cresses were up much higher and closer to opening.

Not in evidence before but now obvious were the following in the conditions described. The Plantain leafed sedge out with many showy flowering stalks. Hepatica fully out with those different shades of pastel flowering stalks each being visited by numerous insects. Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) completely out. Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) out and many flowering. Trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) now sending up those tell-tale mottled leaves. The season is coming fast folks. It never lasts long enough either.

* * * * *

OHIO'S RELICT PRAIRIES IN THE DARBY PLAINS

NPS FIELD TRIP: JULY 26, 1998

by Tom Sampliner

On Sunday, July 26th, 1998 I have arranged a trip for our members and guests to the prairies in the Darby Plains area of the state. We are fortunate to have obtained the services of

Preserve Manager, Ron Demmy, who will be our leader as we visit at least three sites. Our rendezvous will be at Smith Cemetery State Nature Preserve. All participants must call me at least one full week prior to the trip (by July 20th) to reserve space. Arrangements for car pooling and directions to Smith Cemetery Preserve will be provided at that time.

The summary of this area is a condensation of the ODNR auto tour pamphlet of the Darby Plains and some other literature.

It is interesting to note that when the Rocky Mountains arose some 80-100 million years ago, the natural features enabling the growth of the prairies also came into being. Moisture is rung from the clouds as they rise to cross the Rocky Mountains. This came to mean that immediately east of the mountains there was an arid zone. Wherever this phenomena occurs it is known as a rain shield. The farther east and away from the mountains, the less the effect of the rain shield. It becomes easier to understand how the most arid regions became short grass prairie while farther east the long grass became dominant. The xeric period some 4-6,000 years ago saw the tall grass prairies penetrate into Ohio. It has been estimated that at one time Ohio had more than 300 prairies ranging from a few acres to in excess of the size of a township; this means 1,000 square miles. One of our largest prairie areas was these Darby Plains of Union and Madison Counties.

Since most of you will be traveling along State Route 161 westward from Columbus, note Big Darby Creek at the east side of Plain City. The Indians called the creek "Ollentangy" or Crawfish Creek. It was the early surveyors who selected the present name "Darby" to honor the Wyandot Indian Chief by that name who befriended them. Both Big and Little Darby Creeks have been awarded designations as state scenic rivers.

FLORA OF CENTRAL OHIO PRAIRIES

Anenome, Canada	*Anenome canadensis*
Bastard toadflax	*Comandra umbellata*
Bergamot	*Monarda fistulosa*
Black-eyed susan	*Rudbeckia hirta*
Blazing-star, Northern	*Liatris scariosa*
Bluestem, Big	*Andropogon gerardii*
Bluestem, Little	*Schizachyrium scoparium*
Bluestem, Tall	*Eupatorium altissimum*
Bouncing bet (non-native)	*Saponaria officinalis*
Brown-eyed susan	*Rudbeckia triloba*
Bush-clover	*Lepedeza capitata*
Carrion-flower	*Smilax herbacea*
Catchfly, Royal (Potentially Threatened)	*Silene regia*
Coneflower, Gray-headed	*Ratibida pinnata*
Coneflower, Purple	*Echinacea purpurea*
Cordgrass, Prairie	*Spartina pectinata*
Culver's-root	*Veronicastrum virginicum*
Deptford-pink (non-native)	*Dianthus armeria*
Dropseed, Prairie (Threatened)	*Sporobolus heterolepis*
Gaura, Biennial	*Gaura biennis*
Golden alexanders	*Zizia aurea*
Goldenrod, Canada	*Solidago canadensis*
Goldenrod, Early	*Solidago juncea*
Goldenrod, Stiff	*Solidago rigida*
Hazelnut	*Corylus americana*
Hickory, Shagbark	*Carya ovata*
Indian grass	*Sorghastrum nutans*
Indigo,Prairie false (Potentially Threatened)	*Baptisia lactea*
Ironweed, Tall	*Vernonia altissima*
Lobelia, Pale-spike	*Lobelia spicata*
Meadow-rue, Skunk	*Thalictrum revolutum*
Milkweed, Common	*Asclepias syriaca*
Milkweed, Orange or Butterflyweed	*Asclepias tuberosus*
Milkweed, Sullivant's	*Asclepias sullivantii*
Mountain-mint, Virginia	*Pycnanthemum virginianum*
New Jersey tea	*Ceanothus americanus*
Oak, Burr	*Quercus marcrocarpa*
Oak, Shingle	*Quercus imbricaria*
Oak, White	*Quercus alba*
Obedient plant	*Physostegia virginiana*
Onion, Nodding wild	*Allium cernuum*
Petunia, Wild	*Ruellia humilis*
Plum, Wild	*Prunus americana*
Prairie dock	*Silphium terebinthinaceum*
Rose, Pasture	*Rosa carolina*
Rose, Prairie	*Rosa setigera*
Rose, Smooth (Threatened)	*Rosa blanda*
Sainfoin	*Orbexilum onobrychis*
Side-oats gramma grass	*Bouteloua curitpendula*
Solomon's-seal, Giant	*Polygonatum commutatum*
Spiderwort, Ohio	*Tradescantia ohioensis*
Spurge, Ohio	*Euphorbia corollata*
St. John's-wort, Round-fruited	*Hypericum sphaerocarpum*
Sunflower, Ox-eyed	*Helianthus helianthoides*
Sunflower, Pale-leaved wood	*Helianthus strumosus*
Sunflower, Saw-toothed	*Helianthus grosseserratus*
Switch grass	*Panicum virgatum*
Tall coreopsis	*Coreopsis tripteris*
Whorled rosinweed	*Silphium trifoliatum*

Such designation requires constant monitoring of the stream quality by collecting and analyzing microinvertebrates. The state invites interested persons to help in this gathering. To help assure quality maintenance, landowners and local governments are taught to protect buffer strips of vegetation along these creeks. As you might expect both federal and state endangered species of fish and and mollusks live in these waters.

Between the Darby Creeks, the land was flat and poorly drained. Several months of the year the land was covered with water. During the autumn drought the soils dried into powder and cracked. Spring brought floods; not an auspicious site for trees. Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is one species that can tolerate the autumn drought and spring flooding. Hickories (*Carya sp.*) and to a lesser degree, white oak (*Quercus alba*) would also be found in these areas. The prairie grasses often attained 6-8 feet heights.

West of Plain City you may notice even from your car the Sullivant's milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*) along the road as well as Bur oak. The milkweed is said to be a good prairie indicator. It bears the name of William S. Sullivant, a son of the businessman founder of Columbus. Notice the difference of this species from the common field milkweed (*Asclepais syriaca*).

Smith Cemetery is a state nature preserve which will be our first stop. It lies within the Virginia Military Lands. Soldiers who fought under Virginia banners during the Revolutionary War were entitled to select acreage here as payment for their services. Before title would issue, the prospective owner was required to have the land surveyed. These professionals were in such demand that they often charged as much as ½ the land they surveyed as payment. Indeed, this is how this tract first

came into being.

Thirty species of native prairie plants have been inventoried in the preserve. Among the grasses, big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) dominates. Others present in lesser quantities include: little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and prairie cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*). Among the flowers, the most numerous include such as Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), and whorled rosinweed (*Silphium trifoliatum*). July begins peak bloom.

The reason why cemeteries as well as railroad rights of ways are the last holdout for such habitats is due to the insatiable appetite we have had for development.

During our trip maybe we will be lucky enough to see a few of the animals. The thirteen-lined ground squirrel would be nice. Ohio provides the eastern boundary for this prairie dweller. It favors short grasses such as where some mowing occurs as along roadsides, in cemeteries and even yards and farmland. Perhaps we can even see one standing upright on guard duty beside it's burrow like it's larger cousin the prairie dog.

Also possible would be the badger, larger member of the weasel family. It is only infrequently upon the Darby Plains and is also at the eastern extremity of it's range. The squirrel is hoping it becomes even less frequent since the badger preys upon them.

One final creature comment for the coyote. Since they like open country, it should not surprise us they are here. In fact, they do well in Ohio being recorded from all 88 counties. They are seldom seen as they are nocturnal hunters with a range as great as 25-30 miles in diameter. Wonder if this developed as a protection method from wolves? No longer do they have as

common dwellers, the elk, buffalo and bear. Turkey, however, has also become a success story and could be present.

No doubt we will also stop in at Bigelow Prairie Cemetery State Nature Preserve. This tract is near the county border of Union to the north and Madison on the south, with the preserve within the latter. It is believed that this cemetery has never been ploughed or grazed. Geographically, it appears higher than the surrounding farmlands. Current thought is that this represents proof of how much erosion due to wind and water has occurred over time.

At one time this tract was the only know site for royal catchfly (*Silene regia*), a state and federally listed species. Other sites have been subsequently found within the Darby Plains.

Forgive me if I ignore the black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) which literally takes over the rear yard gardens at my place during summer months. It even comes up through cracks in the patio and drive. Wonder what the city would say if I give my place an annual burn? In the same vein, I hope the herbalists don't notice the purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) at all the sites we visit. They'll probably come in at night and start grazing for health purposes.

I trust this brief written sojourn will entice you to join the outing. Watch your newsletter for instructions – you must make a reservation.

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WHITE PINE BOG FOREST
by Tom Sampliner

Geauga County is home to one of the most unusual, unique

habitats in Ohio. This national natural landmark lies in a shallow depression between what had been two advancing lobes of the most recent glaciation; the lobes being known as the Cuyahoga and the Grand River lobes. This land was one of the extensive area holdings of the City of Akron. These lands were originally acquired to protect their chief water source. Recently, Akron transferred this parcel to The Nature Conservancy who in turn made it available to the Geauga Park District. The preserve name only hints at what may be seen in this access permit required preserve.

The parcel is withing the well know Burton wetlands. Such well know adjoining parcelsas Fern Lake, Lake Kelso and to the west Punderson Lake, put our subject in some very select company.

Meanwhile, back at the tract, our society had a field trip on Sunday, May 3rd which is reviewed by this article. The walk in from the road is noteworthy. It goes upland through a woods to a field still owned by Akron and actively being worked. From there one may either parallel the western border of the ploughed field or immediately descend into wet forest. The former is easier but the latter is more interesting.

Your first impression of the wetland might be an endless sea of skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). Close scrutiny discloses the hidden treaures of pastel spring ephemerals in bloom beneath the giant leaves. Let's look closely and catch glimpses of very plentiful trout lilies (*Erythronium americanum*) now largely out of bloom as well as toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*), wood anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*), and Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*). Bedstraws (*Galium sp.*) were everywhere as well but not even close to bloom so we did not stop to identify them. We were after bigger game-er plants.

Strewn around like pickup sticks are downed logs. In addition to being footing obstacles, they develop into nurse beds for a variety of vegetation. For the photographers, the raised beds often offer the best or only opportunity for a shot at certain species.

Emerging from the muck like nature's vases, the tawny soft brown coats of Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamonea*) were prominent. Other fern companions were numerous colonies of New York fern (*Dryopteris noveboracensis*), marsh fern (*Dryopteris thelypteris*), and sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*). Only the drier areas offered the bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Not as numerous but still noticeable were the lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*). There were probably others too, but we were after the guys with the big reputations – those rarities making their way onto various lists.

Sphagnum hummocks abound in this wetland. Their soft greens lend an ethereal atmosphere to this mystical place. For walking they present a dilema, the good, bad and downright ugly. Experience teaches that they can be hard to maneuver around or gain good footing upon; however, as opposed to hidden deep spots and partially obscured logs they often offer salvation. The trouble with the balancing act they require is that a hasty grab for a handhold assist could grab you a branch of poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*). Such assist will linger along with your regret. Fortunately, the more pervasive obnoxious cousin, poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) was at early enough stage to be only calf height showing madder leaflets in threes as you scraped by.

The other alternative to reasonable footing is stepping on the skunk cabbage mounds. This is only offensive odoriferously.

Always explore these sphagnum hummocks as they are often home to some interesting species. One certainly is the glossy

green tripart leaves with individual starry white flowers of goldthread (*Coptis groenlandica*). Their gently scalloped leaves are much brighter than companion growing but more maple-shaped duller green leaves of foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*). The dainty raceme of white flowers for the latter is perhaps even more showy that the single blooms of the former.

Seeming to arise from open water, as well as at the bases of skunk cabbage mounds, were impressive stands of marsh violets (*Viola cucullata*). Keeping much more private company were clusters of marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*). They were not so frequent that they formed hedgerow look alikes I have seen elsewhere, especially farther north.

It was satisfying to find not yet blooming scattered rose-shell azalea shrubs (*Rhododendron roseum*). Though they were not yet lending their pretty pink fragrant blooms to the vast expanse of greenery, they contrasted nicely with the abundant highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*). The latter was in peak bloom with many bushes loaded with white bell shaped florets. Smaller blueberry shrubs were also present, some also in flower; however, we did not stop to key the various ones out. I did notice a coarse-toothed viburnum that I guess was probably one of the arrowwoods.

Completely out of the water on slopes adjacent to the wettest areas, star flower (*Trientalis borealis*) was blooming away. You have to look carefully at these plants when not in flower for they can be easily confused with the also present Indian cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*) when the latter only puts up one tier of leaves in the standard whorl. Fortunately for us, the latter was in plentiful supply with many having a second or more tier of leaves to give itself away.

Making this site so unusual for our area were white pines (*Pinus strobus*) right in the wetlands. Once again it was skunk

cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in the wettest portions, but violets and now the addition of miterwort or Bishop's cap (*Mitella diphylla*) put on a good show. Frequently, clusters of 6-12 flowering scapes of this frilly flower were blooming away.

On an embankment near a beaver lodge, we found a couple leaf rosettes of one of the rattlesnake plantain orchids (*Goodyera pubescens*). The bold white reticulation pattern easily identify this species.

The find of the day though had to be the location of scattered small groupings of the state endangered orchid, early coral root (*Corallorhiza trifida*). Our leader, Geauga Park naturalist Judy Barnhart, counted in excess of 25 blooming scapes. These were in prime condition. We couldn't have timed our visit any better if we had a scout giving us daily reports. In case you are unfamiliar, each tiny floret is white showing yellow on the lip and pediceled to a chartreuse flower stalk. Their intricate beauty can only be appreciated by getting down to their level of a couple of inches off the wet bog surface. We did not have time to explore all the similar habitat. Therefore, we can hope that more are lending their frilly beauty to the other like portions of this exquisite wetland.

Once our eyes were tuned back to less showy things, it became apparent that sarsparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) was fast unfurling compound leaflets. Scattered but frequent colonies of various Lydopods wer also present. Some of those we noticed include *Lycopodium obscurum*, *Lycopodium lucidulum*, and in drier terrain *Lycopodium flabelliforme*.

As we departed the wetlands, we found some fascinating mushrooms in prime fruit. May being their month, the pheasant's back (*Polyporus squamosus*) did not disappoint. The off white flesh predominates the upside surface but enough dark brown blotches occur to give the common name reality

and great beauty. One fallen log was home to a good sized colony of brown cup fungi (*Ziza badio-confusa*). These handsome brown mushrooms are like little nests created by some woodland resident in colony form.

We all agreed that this national landmark holds many hidden treasures. The good company and pleasant day along with the findings made our small group happy if tired as we finished our over half-day hike; and glad that we had done so.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio
2651 Kerwick Road, University Heights, OH 44118

Membership categories – Active: $10.00 Family: $15.00
Sustaining: $25.00 Patron: $50.00 Life Membership: $500.00

Name:
Address:

City: **State:** **Zip Code:**
Phone:

FIELD TRIP RESERVATION FORM

Darby Plains - Sunday, July 26th, 1998

Name:
Address:

City: State: Zip Code:
Phone:
Number of People in Party:
I would like to (a) car pool or caravan or (b) drive separately.
Must be made by July 20th, 1998.