On The Fringe

Quarterly Newsletter of

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NORTHEASTERN OHIO

Founding Chapter of

THE OHIO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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1st Quarter 1999

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1999 PROGRAM SCHEDULE
by Dr. George J. Wilder

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, FIELD TRIP TO OBSERVE SPECIES OF FALL-BLOOMING COMPOSITAE (SUNFLOWER FAMILY) - 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM (OR MAYBE LATER). George Wilder, Professor of Biology at Cleveland State University, will lead this trip. Emphasized will be identification of asters and goldenrods. Participants will travel by automobile to various locations to observe diverse species of Compositae. Telephone George Wilder before this trip to tell him you will be coming (216-687-2395) or (216-932-3351). At that time, he will tell you where to meet him.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER, CLEVELAND BOTANICAL GARDEN, 11030 EAST BLVD., CLEVELAND, 5:30 PM TO 9:30 PM. The Board of Directors of the Society are pleased to announce that **Frederick W. Case, Jr,** co-author of "*Trilliums*" will make a presentation on "North American Trillium" after our annual dinner. The Cases' book on *Trilliums* was published by Timber Press in 1997 and is the most complete and accessible book on the genus. It represents decades of first-hand experience with *Trilliums,* including countless trips to photograph *Trilliums,* and years of gardening experience. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing at the meeting. The evening begins with a wine and cheese social hour at 5:30 followed by a buffet dinner at 6:30. Mr. Case's presentation will begin at 8:00. The cost of dinner and the presentation is $15.00. The presentation alone is $3.00. Guests are welcome.

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THOSE LADIES OF KENTUCKY; SLIPPER TYPES THAT IS

By Tom Sampliner

If I were a ladyslipper orchid, I would not select as growing-mates poison ivy and multiflora rose. Yet this is exactly what my first view of a small population of these stately, graceful orchids. Revealed. Tucked away in the northern portion of the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky, these largest of the yellow ladyslippers lend their beauty to an otherwise, dark and unnoteworthy forest. Perhaps the overall impression is negative not only because of the extensive amount of aggressive invasive species but also because of the amount of human debris strewn throughout the area. However, to meet for the first time such an impressive orchid flower as *Cypripedium kentuckiense*, such distractions are quickly forgotten.

My journey was southward on Saturday, May 22, 1999 taking along a congenial driving companion with a similar photographic goal in mind. Armed with both written directions and a map, hand drawn by an acquaintance from the North American Native Orchid Alliance, I was confident, I would see the species for the first time. However, as we reached Columbus, Ohio, and the skies opened up with whatever had not been used to float Noah's Ark, I was less confident about getting pictures. The rains came in waves one after the other. Each would require lights as bright as possible and wipers working at the fastest possible speed. Speaking of speed, that became a reduction from normal

interstate travel to that of a small side street. Even that was unsafe for some, as we saw one of those unsafe at any speed SUV cars flip at a turn on the interstate ending upside down with the young lady driver emerging from the passenger's side door seemingly unhurt though shaky from the experience. Not an encouraging beginning for a 600 mile plus round trip. Just like the heavy downpours, all of this, too, would quickly fade from memory.

A wide though fairly dry stream parallels the country road harboring the orchid site. Completely dry creek beds meander along the opposite side of the road where the orchids are found. The entire area is forested bottomland becoming thickly canopied to the creek embankments. For us Ohioans, a noteworthy tree in goodly supply was the umbrella magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*). This species along with its even larger-leaved cousin, (*Magnolia macrophylla*) only penetrate into the southern one-third tier of our state. The present species shows off the name engendering clusters of long, dark green leaves near the end of flowering branches. Dimensions of the leaves listed in many authorities are impressive just on paper--lengths of 7-16 inches and widths of 4-8 inches. The flowers are white, large and impressive, though purported to be somewhat foul smelling up close. Here only a few were in evidence and they were high up.

Aside from the previously mentioned obnoxious pests of *Toxicodendron radicans* and *Rosa multiflora*, the most noticeable was spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Passage through was made quite pleasant as brushing

by released the fragrance of lowering herbs, the ephemerals were mostly past; one exception was a substantial amount of Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*) showing off white petals with dark violet lines and on the backside, a pink-violet combination of color suffusion.

It was already afternoon and rather late at that. Even with an early morning start, 300 plus miles one way, calls for a few stops on the way and the route is not all freeways. We were hopeful wind and rain would offer a lull or two. My shout of exuberance signified to Fred Wolf that I had found our quarry and in prime bloom, no less. An immediate visual impression confirms the literature on the stature if not the elegance of the plant. Even wind, darkness of the weather and dense forest canopy did not stop us from commencing to document the orchids on film. Granted these would not be great pictures unless the weather broke. To enable such a window of opportunity, we leisurely examined the various specimens as well as the immediate area. Time passed, drifting into what must be dubbed early evening. Say, does that allow me to now call these beauties "ladies of the evening?"

Patience was a virtue this day. The wait opened up a brief but adequate window of calmness and shafts of light and brightening that gave us hope for some keepers from the many pictures shot this day.

Before giving you my personal trait additions or observations of what this one and only population of the Kentucky slipper I have ever seen, it may be appropriate to briefly review what some others found. Alliance member, Carl R. Slaughter, MD in his "Wild Orchids of

Arkansas" 1993 notes this species can rise to 3 feet in height. In his state, it apparently blooms some two weeks later than the other two yellow pouch orchids (*Cypripedium parviflorum var. pubescens and parviflorum*). Having just come down from Ohio, I know this would not be our case since the latter two species were then quite prime while var. *makasin* was not yet even open. Carl also provides helpful complete range information going from Kentucky in the north, then south Arkansas to Louisiana, then west in scattered sites in both Texas and Oklahoma.

Another alliance member, Philip E. Keenan, in his book, "Wild Orchids Across North America, a botanical travelogue" 1998 provides in one of the appendices both a habitat and geographical distribution. His habitat information may prove useful. Phil sets them forth as being wooded floodplains, marshes and seeps. The site at issue is clearly the first one. His height and size comments agree with Carl's.

In an issue of the *American Orchid Society Bulletin*, Oct. 1985, John T. Atwood, the then Director of the Orchid Identification Center at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, has written a brief article of the range of this species. In connection therewith, he had planned a treatment of the yellow slipper complex for Southeastern U. S. He requested loans of any yellow slippers from herbaria throughout the Southeast. His comments that specimens with labellum pressed laterally were most useful as this shows the deep almost globular labellum with a much-flattened top. The large dorsal sepal also shows off well. Bordering states such as ours are en-

couraged to be on the look out for this handsome species as are residents of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, West Virginia and Georgia. After all, we haven't been introduced all that long ago to this species--see: *Cypripedium kentuckiense Reed*, a new species of orchid in Kentucky, PHYTOLOGIA 48:426-8, C. F. Reed 1981. I am not a trained botanist nor can I claim that observations of one population of a species new to me are meaningful. However, having set forth those caveats, here goes. In the dappled light of the canopied forest, once my eyes picked out the plants, a silvery pubescent stout stalk standing the earlier-mentioned three feet tall called attention to itself. In addition, these specimens manifest a zig-zag stem most prominent after the first scape of leaves to the top of the flowering stalk. This trait was present even upon the stems of those plants not blooming. The leaves were immense; especially the width dimension. Each dark green leaf was deeply pleated and so broad in appearance each seemed to be a great weight upon the stem. The overall impression made by the visible pubescence, stem zig-zag and broad leaves is the most striking of any other slipper orchid I have seen. Turning to the orchid flower, it, too, creates a most unique portrait in the dark woods. We already know the flower size makes it the largest of the yellow slippers. Atwood gave us commentary on the pouch orifice. However, I will presume to comment on the color and patterns.

Each flower's orifice rim was lined with a seemingly manufactured madder color parade of evenly spaced dots. The pouch interior design was equally well

planned. The veins along the pouch bottom were also neatly lined with the same pretty dots. For whatever reason, I did not see any random scattered dots. Each pouch was a rich, creamy white/yellow color. Each also emitted a pleasant fragrant to any inquiring nose. The lateral petals and the three sepals exhibited the same combination of lines, blotches, suffusion of maroon and green that Sheviak describes so well for *Cypripedium parviflorum var. parviflorum*. Thus, the degree of maroon suffusion varied considerably with the specimen being examined.

I have concern for this Morehead, Kentucky, site not only due to the human trespass damage, but also due to obvious evidence of what I observe to be browse, presumably by white-tail deer. I did not locate evidence of what I had been told were holes left by plant pirates. Perhaps this society or even the Kentucky Native Plant Society can become unofficial stewards for orchid locations such as this. After all, if we do not act to preserve our heritage; who will?

* * * * *



Seed of Bloodroot with caruncle, which serves as a handle for ants to hold on to.

"STARTING FROM SEED"

A Review by Tom Sampliner

This is one of a series of educational yet practical handbooks published by the BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN which has come forth with what they call the 21st century gardening series. Each in the series is assembled chapters by well-known authorities, modestly priced and lay gardener friendly.

The initial chapter of this winter of 1998 work is particularly well done and useful. Peter Loewer puts into lay language the role seeds and the flower play in nature. While basic botany may not be the reason for buying this book, the necessity for understanding the growing process justifies the act just for this chapter. For the experienced, learning about dormancy and dispersal schemes will be helpful.

Kent Whealey's Chapter II does a good job of explaining seed diversity and the case for heirloom and native species. His caution on the trend toward ever-larger multinational companies seed sources of Chapters IV and V thought they would repeat this theme. Brainwashing the reader is the fault of the "guest editor," Karen Davis Cutler.

The most practical chapters are the last three. Respectively, they are: getting started with seeds, caring for seedlings and lastly, storage. Not only is the advice good but reasons for the procedures are also set forth.

By including a seed source list, short essay about each contributing author, further reading suggestions and list of plant and horticultural societies, this work is well worth the acquisition.

* * * * *

Sandusky Bay Wetlands, Erie County

by Jean Roche

A small group of NEON and Native Plant Society members made the trek to Erie Country and the Sandusky Bay Wetlands on Saturday, August 7 for a NEON scheduled trip. The drive itself (one and a half hours from Aurora and the same driving time from the west side of Toledo) was a pleasure. The long heat wave had broken at last and that Saturday was a beautiful warm summer day. The breeze from the lake was gentle and the lake itself had hardly a ripple. The purpose of the trip was to investigate what might have emerged on the newly-exposed lake bottom nearest the shore. The drought this summer extended the area between the lake and normal shoreline by several yards.

The trip was planned to investigate the shoreline around the area called Putnam Marsh which is located off Rt. 6 between Huron and Sandusky. After meeting at the McDonald's at the intersection of Rye Beach Road and Rt. 6, the group headed off to the nearby marsh. Unfortunately, the trail leading to the shore was more a study in what is wrong with society than a nature walk but once the group got through the unpleasantness, it opened onto the shoreline. The shore was a stretch of marsh covering an area several yards out into the lake. An adjoining inlet was a combination of drying marshland with the view of a tourist tent city in the distance. The view was not at all what the group had hoped for but having traveled from far and wide to get

this far, we began with a quick inventory of the surrounding area.

The ground was black and soft with deep mud nearer to the water. As might have been expected, the ubiquitous Phragmites (*Phragmites australis)* and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) were very much in evidence. A quick inspection yielded Blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), several smartweeds including (*Polygonum lapathifolium* and *punctatum)*. What might have been the normal waterline of the lake was a thick growth of first year cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) seedlings. Obviously, the lake had receded leaving the seeds just where they had fallen when the trees shed them in May. We observed another member of the loosestrife family, Scarlet loosestrife, (*Ammania coccinea*) which was a new plant to some of the group and nearer to the water, we found water stargrass (*Heteranthera dubia*) and colonies of other water grasses forming in the wet and marshy soil. Water plaintain *(Alisma subcordatum*), Water pimpernel (*Samolus parviflorus)* and Monkey flower *(Mimulus ringens)*were more difficult to see than the taller and more prolific sedges and smartweeds. Wild grapes (Vitis sp.) were ripe and while the dark purple fruit looked sweet and rich, the opposite is nearer to the truth!

There were, however, two real treats for the eye in the area. Swamp rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) grew everywhere and the bright colors of the large pink and white flowers were attention grabbing. The dark red throats made them easy to spot and added a look of

the tropics to the marsh. The inlet was covered with American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea)* which stood three feet tall from what had been the bottom of the lake earlier in the season. In full bloom, the large creamy yellow blossoms looked almost surreal standing in the marshy ground instead of floating on water. It was well worth the knee-deep mud to be near enough to collect a few specimens for one or two of our members.

Finishing up at Putnam, the group agreed to meet for lunch at the entrance to the nearby Sheldon Marsh. This spot was not a scheduled stop but it turned out to be a beautiful and rich area to investigate. Of course, none of us could resist the temptation. Sheldon Marsh is a State Nature Preserve recently written up in the Spring 1999 *Division of Natural Areas and Preserves Newsletter*. It is located approximately 5 minutes east of Putnam Marsh and Cedar Point is within sight just across the lake to the west.

The entrance to the park has carefully trimmed grass, benches, special signage and ample parking. It is so civilized that it belies the treasures to be found on the trails and boardwalks of the park itself. The area is best known as a great birdwatching spot. Birds by the hundreds stop here during the spring and fall migrations. On the day of our visit there were quite a few shorebirds in evidence, including great blue herons, egrets and many others not so easily recognizable in their fall plumage. Insects abounded as well. We were surprised and thrilled to see a giant swallowtail butterfly, dozens of beetles of various varieties and had an opportunity to observe the defensive behavior of a batch of caterpillars

which apparently took offense to our cameras.

During the leisurely stroll along the well-tended trails, boardwalks and overlooks, the group found Figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*), Yellow giant hyssop (*Agastache nepetoides*) and, surprisingly, Partridge pea (*Cassia fasciculata*). Nearer to the lake on the short of the inlet there were the usual water plants--Ditch stonecrop (*Penthorum sedoides*), Spatterdock *(Nuphar advena*), and Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata).* Of course, there was the usual thriving poison ivy population along with other less sought-after plants such as *Desmodium sp.*

The broad expanse of clean, white, sandy beach ended the walk and aside from the cottonwood-lined shore, the plants were quite different from anything we had seen so far. Willows abounded but it was late so we did not take the time to identify all the varieties. We did identify Trailing wild bean (*Strophostyles helvola*), Wild four-o'clock (*Mirabilis nyctaginea*); Winged pigweed (*Cycloloma atriplicifolium*) and Clammyweed (*Polanisia graveolens*).

It was a wonderful ending to a wonderful day. The ride home was full of warm memories of the finds of the day including places, plants, insects and friends old and new.

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