

Mark Your Calendars!

Central Pennsylvania Native Plant Festival and Sale
May 3, 2014

Join us once again to celebrate the arrival of spring, the return of wildflowers, and the beginning of another gardening season at Shaver's Creek! Enjoy a hike, bring a picnic, and join us for our scheduled educational walks and programs.

Native Plants in the Landscape @ Millersville
June 5-7, 2014

The Millersville Conference is back! Details at
<http://www.millersvillennativeplants.org/>

PNPS Annual Meeting at Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve
September 13, 2014

Details to be announced. Please contact
events@panativeplantsociety.org if you are interested in assisting with planning for this event.

What's going on in your native plant community? We would like to hear.

This past year we supported several projects with small grants including the Wayne County BioBlitz and The Bellwood Antis School Environmental Education Center. If you have a project or event to promote we would like to post it on our website and share it through our e-news and Facebook Group. If you have a project geared toward the preservation of native plant habitats or public education about the importance of our native flora – we may be able to help you with donations of plants or funds. Please contact us.

Email Jean Najjar at
president@panativeplantsociety.org for more details for how to apply to the Board of PNPS.



Early blooms in May. Photo by Michael Hough, thismia.com

maple ranges from Labrador to Saskatchewan, south to northern Georgia and Iowa.

Because of its small size and shrub-like characteristics, and its soft, relatively weak wood, mountain maple is not used for commercial wood products. But it has benefits galore for the natural world. Rabbits, snowshoe hare, beavers, white-tailed deer, and moose browse the bark, and ruffed grouse eat the buds. Mountain maple, together with other native maples (red, sugar, striped, and box elder), supply seeds for birds and rodents and support 285 species of Lepidoptera.

In addition, mountain maple is very important for preventing erosion on stream banks and steep slopes. When spreading branches become buried in leaf litter, they put down roots and send up new shoots. This process can produce impenetrable thickets on recently cleared land.

Mountain maple isn't widely used as a landscape tree, but as homeowners discover its seasonal interest and benefit to wildlife it could increase in popularity—and availability. It prefers cool, acid soils where moisture is constantly present, but can grow well on drier, well-drained soils if protected from wind and sun.



The brilliant fall foliage of *Acer spicatum*.
Photo by Jean-Pol Grandmont, Creative Commons

PA NATIVE TO KNOW: MOUNTAIN MAPLE *Acer spicatum*

Betsy Blizzard Whitman

At first blush, mountain maple doesn't sound like the most memorable of species—a shrub or small, short-trunked tree, 10' to 30' in both height and width, with multiple trunks and a mushroom-shaped habit. Its Latin name, *Acer spicatum*, gives the first hint of its striking beauty when from May-June it is bedecked with delicate greenish yellow flowers, borne on erect 3- to 6-inch racemes (or spikes). In autumn comes the second beauty note when the yellow-green foliage turns mottled-orange to bright-red.

Mountain maple occurs throughout Pennsylvania at upper elevations as a common understory plant growing in rich moist soil on rocky slopes and along streams. In North America, mountain

IN THIS ISSUE

PA Native to Know: Acer spicatum
by Betsy Blizzard Whitman

A Tribute to Bob Gruver
by Lee Gruver and Debra Grim

Hidden Treasures at Martin Gap
by Jean Aron

Notes from the 1st Annual Upper Delaware BioBlitz
by Sarah Chamberlain

Letter from the President
2013 Year in Review
Upcoming Events



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Jean Najjar

On behalf of the PNPS Board I would like to offer our heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your support. We are excited with the success of our programs and outreach this past year, and hope that you will enjoy reading about some of the highlights in this newsletter. As you read, please be sure to mark your calendars with important PNPS dates.

PNPS has recently taken an important step toward truly becoming a statewide organization. Starting in 2014 our Annual Meeting will become a roving event – moving to a different part of the state each year. We look forward to partnering with a variety of organizations and connecting with members around the state as we plan these meetings.

To kick things we have scheduled our 2014 Meeting for September 13th at the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve in New Hope. Set in the Delaware Valley, Bowman's Hill covers 134 acres and features more than 800 species of natives. The September date coincides with their fall plant sale and hopefully a beautiful day for a native plant walk. If you are a member in the Eastern part of the State, we would love your help on our planning committee for this event.

We look forward to engaging members around the state as we plan future Annual Meetings. It will definitely work best if we have the help and local savvy of members as we go forward. If you would like to see PNPS host its 2015 Annual Meeting near you, please contact me at president@panativeplantsociety.org.

To close, let me invoke an expression that my husband credits to his Syrian grandmother, "many hands make little work." We would love to have more hands in our work. We invite all of you to get more involved. It doesn't matter where you live or what your limitations. Every little bit makes a difference.

Sincerely,
Jean Najjar
President

PNPS advocates for the conservation of native plants and their habitats, and promotes the use of natives in the landscape.

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Visit us online
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UPPER DELAWARE BIOBLITZ GIVES BOTANIST THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

Sarah Chamberlain



*The author and Ann botanize along the West Branch of the Delaware River.
Photo by Ray Najjar.*

several botanists, I found I was the Botany Team! I had heard through the grapevine (no botanical pun intended) that Ann had offered to assist in the BioBlitz if we thought we could use her. That was all the encouragement I needed. Seeing her at a seminar two weeks before the event, I eagerly enlisted her help. With Mark Bowers joining us for part the second day of the blitz, we were set.

On the day of the Blitz, Ann and I, assisted by PNPS President Jean Najjar's husband Ray, began by walking slowly along an old road which ran between riparian forest and a cultivated field. As we walked, I peppered her with questions which she patiently answered. "What characters did you use to distinguish these two species of hawthorn?" and, "How do you tell Canada lettuce from prickly lettuce?" I could not

"...botanizing with Ann was a real treat and an experience I'll not soon forget."

On a warm sunny day in June, I experienced something many other botanists in Pennsylvania would envy. I botanized with one of the Commonwealth's most famous plant experts – Ann Rhoads. How she and I ended up looking at plants on a property adjacent to the Delaware River that last weekend in June was more or less a stroke of luck. I had recently taken over as the head of the Botany Team for the Upper Delaware BioBlitz – an event aimed at identifying all living things within a geographical area, in this case, property recently purchased by the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

As team leader, it was my responsibility to round up a group of 4-5 competent botanists who would blitz the site, identifying every plant they came across in a 24-hour period.

It sounded simple enough, however, after cancellations from several botanists, I found I was the Botany Team! I had heard through the grapevine (no botanical pun intended) that Ann had offered to assist in the BioBlitz if we thought we could use her. That was all the encouragement I needed. Seeing her at a seminar two weeks before the event, I eagerly enlisted her help. With Mark Bowers joining us for part the second day of the blitz, we were set.

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We continued up the road coming upon a small wet depression surrounding a pond. Without warning, Ann darted off the path into the tall grasses surrounding the open water. "How else are you going to get a good look at the vegetation?" she explained. As Ray and I followed her, she easily navigated the pond edge coming back with 5 more species to add to our ever-growing list.

Skirting around the pond we arrived at a steep forested slope, thick with hemlock. As Ann moved on ahead, I turned to glance at Ray. It was going to be a tough climb for us, not to mention Ann. But I need not have worried. Without missing a beat, she headed straight up the incline, clambering over rocks, skirting fallen logs and easily forging stream channels. Half-way through our foray, I was amazed to find she had left me and Ray behind. As I glanced ahead at her meandering slowly through the woods, it occurred to me that this is probably where she is most content, truly in her element, just her and her plants.

Finishing back at the main tent, we tallied up the results – over 150 plants identified in addition to those collected by Ann for further study. By the end of the Blitz, we had identified 267 plants on the Norcross Property, 29 of which were first recorded occurrences in the County. In addition to seeing some new species such as long beech fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*), botanizing with Ann was a real treat and an experience I'll not soon forget. For more information on the Upper Delaware River Bioblitz, visit <http://upperdelawarebioblitz.com/>.



Ann Rhoads. Photo by Ray Najjar.



Obolaria virginica.

HIDDEN TREASURES AT MARTIN GAP

Text and photos by Jean Aron

I may have first learned about Martin Gap when I accompanied Bob Olsen on a hike there as he was planning Keystone Trails Association's new Link Trail, which links Mid State Trail System to Tuscarora Trail. The first time I saw Martin Gap was too long ago to pinpoint exactly. A 1984 photo shows two friends, whom I closely associate with my early memories of that area, so I believe it must have been sometime in the 1980's.

A bit later I went back with Jane Wood to rediscover the *Obolaria virginica*, which we took that evening to our Nature Study class, taught by George Beatty. He recognized it immediately, and was dismayed that we had picked it. But back then we had no camera with us, and it was quite abundant at that place and time.

So where is Martin Gap? The answer is here.

excerpts from: The Short Hiker, 3 ed. 1999, Jean Aron

The Martin Gap area, in Rothrock State Forest in Huntingdon County, has long been recognized by teachers and naturalists as a diverse outdoor learning lab. The primary features are the Oriskany sandstone outcroppings, and an unusual diversity of plant types, including a few wildflowers that are rare to Pennsylvania. This diversity reflects the presence of many different soil types. In 1988 it was proposed (by yours truly) as a State Natural Area. The campaign was soon joined by a diverse array of conservationists, wildflower lovers, birdwatchers, geologists, and outdoor enthusiasts. After many letters, visits, and expert opinions, about 150 acres, or half of the proposed acreage, was officially designated a Natural Area. The listing was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on September 18, 1993, as "Rocky Ridge Natural Area", one of a group of eighteen new Pennsylvania Natural Areas. Although many would have preferred the name "Martin Gap N.A." it is rewarding to know we helped to save an uncommon piece of Penns Woods for everyone to enjoy.

"Look for white, yellow, and common violets; hepatica; rue anemone; and fringed polygala. Closer to the stream find Jack-in-the-pulpit; bishop's cap, maidenhair fern, wild ginger; and, if you are really blessed, showy orchis. A rare species, puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*), can also be found here....."

"Part way up you may chance upon some yellow lady slippers. Squawroot is usually found here, too. A red-bellied woodpecker gives a giggling, tickly sort of call. Various warblers move through the trees. Take your time going up. It is worth the trip. We once encountered a box turtle coming up the trail even more slowly than we do...."

Location: 15 miles south of State College. Start from PA 26 S

Getting there: Start from West College Ave.; follow PA 26 South about 20 miles, passing through McAlevy's Fort. At the Saulsburg road sign, near a white church, turn left (south) onto Martin Gap Road. After a mile, cross the bridge over Standing Stone Creek and keep right. Follow a dirt road into Rothrock State Forest and pass a shale pit and a pair of rustic log cabins. Where the road forks, keep right and follow Frew Road. After half a mile, find a small parking area on the left. Park your car here. It is just a short way beyond this where the orange-blazed Link Trail (gated on the east side) crosses Frew Road.

George said, "You found it, at Martin Gap, didn't you. You should not have picked it!"



George Beatty and Jane Wood 1984.

A TRIBUTE TO BOB GRUVER

Bob Gruver is a man of exceptional character and knowledge.

As a founding member of PNPS, we pay tribute to Bob in two accounts:

by Lee Gruver, Bob's daughter

Dad always was interested in the natural world. Growing up in York PA during the 1920s and 30s he and his friends loved to jump on their bicycles and take off to the country side to look for snakes and lizards. Dad was always down in the stream near his home or exploring the stone quarry down the road as well as tipping over hay stacks looking for mice and voles when he visited his cousins who lived on farms out in the country.

His mother raised Boston Terriers and chose a puppy that was born on the same day he was to grow up with him. Along with his dog, Trixie, he loved to keep some of the animals he found as pets. He had a pet crow and also Bantam chickens. He had a sparrow hawk and a rat. He even kept a Black Widow spider in a jar in his room. Dad brought his love of collecting animals when he and my mother bought a house and started their life in State College. He started his menagerie again and at one time had a porcupine, groundhogs, doves, ferrets, a blacksnake, box and wood turtles, mice, rats, and even rattlesnakes among other pets. He enjoyed showing his pets to groups like Junior Museum and Grade School classes.

Dad married Norma Lee Hoover in 1946, and they both loved going for walks in the woods and fields looking at and identifying wild flowers. Dad was one of the first members of a garden club for men that started around 1950 in State College. He met Norm Deno at this club and they became friends.

George Beatty taught a course on wildflowers through the State College District School that dad attended and continued to attend until George stopped doing it. George's class was a place where many of the people in State College interested in wildflowers met and began going on trips to the surrounding woods to seek them out. When George Beatty started the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society in 1979 dad was a member of the board. He stayed a member of the board for many years.

Dad likes nothing better than going out to his favorite sites (like Fisherman's Paradise on Spring Creek) looking for plants by himself or with interested friends. He'll also be looking under rocks in case a snake or salamander could be there. See you in the woods.

by Debra Grim, Vice President

Robert Gruver has been a fixture of PNPS since before I first joined in the '90s. He always appears in his khaki shirt, pants and hat, and stays in the background, until he becomes excited by a plant, insect, snake or amphibian (constantly turning over rocks, is Bob). He always used to drive on our distant field trips, tireless and efficient behind the wheel.

I learned early on to stay on Bob's heels as he leads the way. He moves fast and speaks quietly, so it's easy to miss as he identifies and discusses plants. Bob has such a sharp eye. I remember a trip to a serpentine barrens in Chester County, where we were searching for a number of specialties to be found in those hostile soils. I scrambled to keep up with Bob as the rest of the party fell behind; he was my ride so I wanted to make sure I didn't lose him. We hadn't located one of our targets, whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*). As we talked about the plants we were seeing, I suddenly realized that Bob didn't know what it looked like and was looking for something that resembled common milkweed. I had never seen the plant but had researched it. I described it to Bob, and immediately he strode to the side of the path and pointed it out.

Bob comes to all our events without fail. Nowadays he is a little slower and not quite as steady on his feet, and sometimes we have to remind him of plant names. He came out for our Martin Gap hike this May and seemed to have a wonderful time, but I became concerned that he would have a serious fall. At the end, he thanked me for leading the hike and said it might be his last visit to Martin Gap. I sincerely hope not.



Bob in 2009, minus the trademark hat and khaki shirt!

Thanks to Jean Aron for contributing this article, please look for the full version on our website.

2013 YEAR IN REVIEW

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make this a successful year for PNPS. We also want to thank our partners at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, the PSU Master Gardeners at the Snetsinger Butterfly Garden, and the folks at Clearwater Conservancy.

OUR DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

Debra Grim

Our native plant demonstration plot is in its second year. Steeplebush, cardinal flower, blue vervain and shad bloomed especially well. Members are encouraged to come out and help maintain the garden. Watch our website or check our Facebook page for updates and work days.

The garden occupies a wet site in the Centre County Master Gardeners' Snetsinger Butterfly Garden, located in State College. Master Gardeners have become aware of the importance of native plant gardening and native pollinators and other wildlife, so we make good partners. PNPS members gave a talk highlighting our garden in the Master Gardener Second Sunday series, which was well received.

OUTREACH EVENTS

Debra Grim

We participated in several excellent events this year, including: Wings in the Park at the Snetsinger Butterfly Garden, Earth Day at Millbrook Marsh, Forest Fest at Penn State's Arboretum; Wild Bird Day at Wiscoy Pet Supply, and Master Gardener Plant Festival.

All of these activities were in Centre County. We would like to support and participate in more events, and in events outside of Centre County to spread the word about native plants and find new members. To do so we need to increase our volunteer pool. Can you help?

We always need help with display content and with staffing the table. Please contact Debra Grim, vp@panativeplantsociety.org, if you are interested in helping or if you would like us to attend your event.

NEW WEBSITE AND FORUM

Justin Wheeler

Early in 2013 we redesigned our website, changing the URL from pawildflower.org to panativeplantsociety.org. The new design has allowed us to share articles, resources, and information as well as timely updates regarding our events. We hope to continue to add engaging and informative content going forward, check back often!

Our Facebook page has been abuzz with photo's, plant identification, and discussion! If you haven't visited our Facebook page lately - you're missing out. Join the conversation at facebook.com/groups/109886394607/ (you can also find a link to our page through our website by clicking the Forum link.

SUCCESS AT OUR ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL

Diane Albright, Betsy Whitman

This year marked our 3rd year of co-hosting the Native Plant Festival and Sale with Shaver's Creek Environmental Center and it seems to be a winning combination as it proved to be our most successful yet. Of course the perfect weather helped!! We had a record number of visitors and the vendors reported it was one of their better sales.

Visitor survey responses were also very positive, with 100% of visitors responding to our survey saying they would come again and were likely to recommend it to a friend. Positive feedback indicated that programs, hikes, talks, and the selection of native plants were all appreciated in 2013.



Photo: Justin Wheeler



Photo: Stan Kotola

PNPS members Pam Ford and Justin Wheeler gave a presentation on butterfly gardening, State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham (also a member) gave a talk on gardening with natives, and Stan Kotola and Eric Burkart gave tours, all of which were well received. We are indeed fortunate to have such knowledgeable members. Special thanks to all the members who volunteered their time to help with the sale and/or donated items for the PNPS plant donation sale table. We will be having a sale table again next year so start thinking about any extra Pennsylvania natives you may have in your gardens!

If you would like to help with planning or to volunteer for next years' event, please contact Betsy Williams (bbwhitman@gmail.com) or Diane Albright (albright@penn.com).

Scenes from 2013: Helianthus in our demonstration garden makes a vibrant display, a scene from our Native Plant Festival, a showy orchid from our Martin Gap hike, Ian Gardner of Shaver's Creek Environmental Center during a winter tree ID walk, big blue-



Photo: Stan Kotola



Photo: Stan Kotola



Photo: Stan Kotola

stem at Chicory Farm

On June 28-29, PNPS President Jean Najjar and members Sarah Chamberlain and Mark Bowers participated in the first Upper Delaware Bioblitz. A Bioblitz, as its name implies, is an attempt to identify all the organisms in a specified area within a 24-hour period. In this case, the place was property recently purchased by the Norcross Wildlife Foundation along the Branch of the Delaware River. Sarah and Mark along with Ann Rhoads made up the Botany Team while Jean organized various demonstrations and walks that were offered to the public. The Pennsylvania Native Plant Society was one of 2-day event. At the close of the second day, the Botany Team had identified 267 species, 29 of which were first recorded occurrences in Wayne County.

It's hard to describe the exhilaration of being a part of an effort that brought together over 50 scientists and amateur naturalists from across Pennsylvania and New York to this tiny property along the Delaware. But, suffice it to say, those of us who participated not only wholeheartedly enjoyed the experience, but also learned a lot about the birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects and other organisms that inhabit the Upper Delaware River basin.

To read more about the Upper Delaware Bioblitz, turn to page 7.

Keep up to date on all of our events, subscribe to our email list by emailing members@panativeplantsociety.org

Save the Date!
Our Native Plant Festival will be held May 3rd 2014

UPPER DELAWARE BIOBLITZ Sarah Chamberlain