

Mohican Native Plant Society

Autumn 2010

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Mystery Plant De-Mystified

Less than ten minutes after the Summer newsletter entered cyberspace with its request for an ID of a plant seen on the May 15 trip to Augusta-Anne Olsen State Nature Preserve, Jan Kennedy replied. She found her answer from a question she posted on Facebook at Friends of Ohio State Nature Preserves that was answered by Bob Klips.

Next came a phone call from Jim Davidson with information about the plant and where he had seen it. The third reply was an email from Steve McKee. All three agreed the plant was Large-flowered Valerian (*Valeriana pauciflora*).

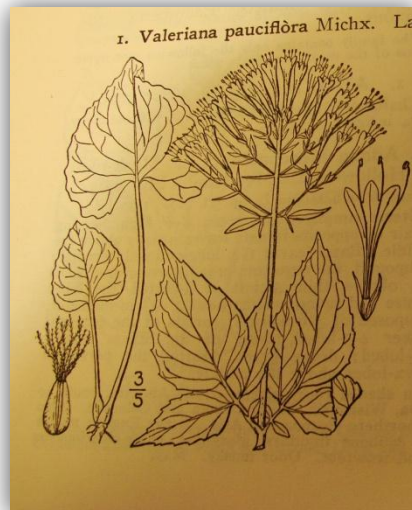


Valeriana pauciflora

By Jim Davidson

Volume III of Britton and Brown, a Dover edition first published in 1970, refers to this plant as “Large Flowered Valerian” and also as “American Wild Valerian”. Wharton and Barbour, in Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky (1971), refer to it as simply “Valerian”.

The plant is in flower in May-June toward the end of the blooming period of the spring ephemerals. When in flower, it is about 1 ½ to 2 feet tall with a terminal cluster of pale pink flowers (photo). The individual flowers are about ¾ inches long with a slender tube and five small lobes. The stem leaves are opposite and pinnately divided. Basal leaves are simple and heart shaped and appear before the vertical stems. The plant is rhizomatous and first appears as a cluster of basal leaves that bear no resemblance to the stem leaves that appear prior to flowering. The plant is usually found along stream banks and flood plains. In Ohio, I’ve seen it along Darby Creek, at Conkle’s Hollow just over the bridge, at Miller Sanctuary State Nature Preserve, and at Fort Hill on the creek side trail. The photo was taken in Zaleski State Forest upstream from the town of Zaleski where there is also a large colony of “Blue-eyed Mary”. The pencil drawings are from Britton and Brown, Vol. III, page 284.



Field Trip Reports

Rhododendron Cove S. N. P.

By Mike Klein

On June 27, seven members of the plant society journeyed southward to Rhododendron Cove to meet with Jim Davidson to look for rhododendron in bloom. Rhody Cove is located south of Lancaster on US 33, adjacent to Wakeena Nature Preserve. Rhody Cove is a very interesting and scenic area, with Blackhand sandstone cliffs and outcrops rising above the Hocking River valley. (A cove is like a box canyon with a circular ridge). The weather was sunny in the upper 80's, humid, and we had some rain later in the trip, but this didn't dampen our spirits.

We met Jim and began walking up the trail to the ridge. Along the way, we saw Swamp Rose (*Rosa palustris*), Water Hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*), Groundnut (*Apios americana*), Deertongue Grass (*Panicum*), Fringed Loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*), Canada Lily (*Lilium canadense*), Halberd-leaved Tearthumb (*Polygonum arifolium*), and Squawroot.

As we walked up the ridge to the top, we saw Green Dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*), Ebony Spleenwort, Tall Bellflower (*Campanula americana*), Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) – in flower -, Chanterelle mushrooms, and Yellow Passionflower (*Passiflora lutea*). Reaching the top of the ridge we encountered numerous Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*). Many were in bloom, but past the peak, However, we



Photo by Mike Klein

still were impressed by their size and beauty among the outcropping and cliff faces of sandstone. Rhody Cove is probably one of the better places in the state for *R. maximum*. We got some rain at the top, but we were able to find shelter in some of the sandstone outcroppings and ledges.

Afterwards we drove a little further south to Clear Creek Metropark for a picnic before starting home.



Dayspring Environmental Preserve

By Soren Brauner

Eight people were on the field trip to the Ashland University Dayspring Preserve in Coshocton County on July 24. Dick Stoffer and Patty Saunders led the trip as Soren injured his leg the day before and was unable to go. Plants observed included wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*), American germander (*Teucrium canadense*), rattlesnake plantain *Goodyera pubescens*, Indian pipe (*Monotropa*), whorled loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadrifolia*), figwort (*Scrophularia*), bellflower (*Campanula*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum*), and an assortment of liverworts, mosses, and unidentified ferns. A complete flora through the seasons is a goal for the preserve, and additional trips are planned for next year.

Dayspring—Photos by Patty Saunders



Trees of South Park

By Joanne Wrasse

Those arriving at South Park in Mansfield for Steve McKee's program on August 14, were surprised to find cars parked everywhere, police present, and loads of Boy Scouts. It seems that this was the day for the Scout-O-Rama. We found Steve sitting on a picnic table near the drive. He handed us a check list of trees for this program which was presented in conjunction with the Gorman Nature Center. This is Steve's annual workshop which has explored many different plant topics over the years.

Ash trees in the park had been attacked by the emerald ash borer. Some branches were dying and had lost their leaves. We observed the D-shaped holes in the bark where the beetles emerged. We continued walking along the edge of the park noticing the differences in tree bark: the alligator bark of the black gum, the subtle purple color of the sassafras, and the close,



vertical lines of the hop hornbeam appearing as cat scratches. We learned that bitternut hickory has yellow buds without scales.

Fall web worms locate at the ends of branches. The one we found was low enough for close examination.

They don't do permanent harm to the tree. Tent caterpillars make their "tent" farther in, usually in a crotch of the branches.



Examining fall web worms

Steve is always a source of much interesting information, and this walk around South Park helped us to look at these trees with new understanding.

Bridge of Dreams

By Rick Gardner

On September 19, eleven members walked the "Bridge of Dreams" bike path in Knox County. The "Bridge of Dreams", which crosses the beautiful Mohican River, is said to be the longest covered bridge in Ohio. The group spent a fair amount of time studying the many different plant species along the trail. We found wafer-ash, Indian grass, grease grass, eastern Wahoo, Lowrie's aster, heart-leaf aster, little bluestem, moonseed, wild yam, and flowering raspberry. There are some nice mesic slopes near the bike path that likely harbor many spring wildflowers so we may have to schedule another trip there in spring.

Highlands Nature Sanctuary Weekend Trip: Oct. 2, 3

By Rick Gardner

On Saturday, eleven members met at Ravenwood, a beautiful renovated 2-story house located on Highlands Nature Sanctuary in Highland County. Highlands Nature Sanctuary, a non-profit organization, prides itself on being a "grassroots" organization. Funded primarily from private donations, this wonderful organization has purchased over 2,000 acres in five counties. After eating lunch, the group went to the Appalachian Forest Museum, the headquarters of Highlands Nature Sanctuary. The Museum is in the former 7 Caves building (7 Caves was a tourist attraction for over 100 years). The organization has renovated the building and is in the process of creating exhibits highlighting the diversity of North America's eastern deciduous forest. The Museum is situated on Rocky Fork Gorge, a beautiful gorge with 60 foot tall dolomite cliffs.

We walked **Etawah Woods trail**, one of three trails that starts from the Museum. Along the trail we saw a number of uncommon and rare species including the state potentially threatened mountain-rice (*Oryzopsis racemosa*), Sullivantia (*Sullivantia sullivantii*), walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*), purple cliff-brake (*Pellaea atropurpurea*), Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*), Arbor-vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), blue ash (*Fraxinus quadrangulata*), pale-flower leafcup (*Polymnia canadensis*), and bladder-nut (*Staphylea trifoliata*). The Etawah Woods trail descends into the gorge and ends on a sandy creek bank with a view of the “Three Sisters,” three large dolomite boulders. After walking the trail it began to sprinkle and the group headed back for dinner. Mike kindly braved the weather to build a camp fire for us to cook our hot dogs.

Next morning, most of the group went on an “early riser” walk down the **Ravenwood Listening Trail** down to the Rocky Fork Creek. We returned to Joanne’s tasty french toast and packed up for the next walk. After breakfast, we went to the “**Kamelands**” trail, which is marked as a 2 mile trail but the group decided it is closer to 3 miles. The trail starts through old farm fields that contain species such as goldenrod, asters, ironweed, and field thistle. Then the trail travels along the rim of the gorge. From the rim you can see the Rocky Fork below and the many Arbor-vitae, hemlock, and eastern red cedar clinging to the cliffs. We saw more of the mountain-rice, a lot more! The botanical highlight was the state endangered Walter’s violet (*Viola walterii*). Although, it was not in flower it was the most rare species we saw over the weekend.



Walter's violet, photo by Carol Jutte



Three Sisters Rocks

Miller Nature Sanctuary

By Mike Klein

On Sunday afternoon, after lunch and packing, the group drove back Barret Mill Road to the Miller Nature Sanctuary, where Rick Gardner got us in to this restricted preserve. Miller Nature Preserve is located on the high banks of Peebles Dolomite along the Rocky Fork and was one of the more scenic of our walks. Clouds threatened as we walked down the Falls Trail and eventually it began raining. We saw many plants seen before in the woods along the Rocky Fork River, such as Bluestem Goldenrod, Zigzag Goldenrod, and White Snakeroot. We also saw Scouring Rush (*Equisetum hymale*) growing along the river bottom as well as numerous Paw Paw “patches” in the understory and Walking Fern on the Dolomite rocks. As we climbed up the ridge we saw Wood Poppy, Waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum*), and a few remnants of Shooting Star stems with seed pods.

The geology of the gorge was particularly impressive with a continuous cliff facing of Dolomite all along the gorge. As the trail name indicated, we saw two small waterfalls – one dry- along the way, as well as slump rocks and a small arch on the cliff face. Despite the rain, this was a very interesting area.

Mohican Native Plant Society

2010-2011 Activities Schedule

Sunday, November 7 – 1:30 p.m.– ANNUAL MOHICAN COOKOUT AND HIKE

Mike Klein (440-963-6678)- Note that the date has been moved back from the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We'll have our usual potluck dinner – bring meat to cook, a covered dish to share, and table service. We'll try to meet at the large picnic shelter at the end of the road above the covered bridge where we used to meet. The fireplace on the south end seems to be in working order.

Sunday, March 13, 2011 – ANNUAL DINNER MEETING at Gorman Nature Center

Featured Speaker : Rick Gardner Topic: "The Ravenna Arsenal Flora Will Blow You Away"

Friday, March 25, 2011 – THE OHIO BOTANICAL SYMPOSIUM

Save the date! The 11th Annual Ohio Botanical Symposium will be held at Villa Milano in Columbus on Friday, March 25, 2011. The event is presented by the Ohio Division of Wildlife, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, The Nature Conservancy and The Ohio State University. Mohican Native Plant Society is a sponsor. A few of the topics include: Ohio's clovers, Gallagher Fen State Nature Preserve, Wild Lupine and the reintroduction of Karner Blue Butterfly to Ohio, and of course the best finds talk.

Add to your membership roster:

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