

*Tsuga canadensis*

# Mohican Native Plant Society

## Newsletter

Autumn 2011

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### Trip Reports

## Brinkhaven Trip

Led by Rick Gardner

Several years ago MNPS members did a walk into Brinkhaven Oak Barrens Nature Preserve and, Sunday afternoon, August 14th, we went back. Some of us who did not make the first trip were especially glad we returned. It's a great spot.

Ashland University's Dick Stoffer together with hike leaders Rick Gardner and Don Beam steered the acquisition of the property by the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust in 2005. It sits quietly (but open to the public) in Appalachian-like remote woods.

The Oak Barrens borders an old railbed at a spot maybe half a mile hike northeast of the intersection of Richland Township roads 5 and 13 in the southwest corner of Holmes County. Brinkhaven is about 4 miles west and Loudonville 12 miles north of there.



Milkweed Tussock Moth caterpillars (or Milkweed Tiger Moth caterpillars) Photos by John Boggs

We all parked along the narrow road just outside

the stone tunnel and hiked up to the roadbed. On the stroll to the Oak Barrens we spotted Lopseed, American Hazelnut and a few Poke Milkweed plants loaded with Milkweed Tussock Moth



caterpillars (they sting.) We saw Panic Grass (as in panicles.) Common Mullein and Flowering Spurge. Nearing the Barrens, we came to Skullcap, Oxeye (False Sunflower) Tall Bellflower, Hairy Hawkweed, Pale Indian Plantain, and some beautiful white blossoms of Wild Potato Vine. Climbing up the hill into the north Oak Barren, we were dismayed to see the area becoming overgrown with Winged Sumac. Another field burn or two might be considered soon. Haircap Moss was everywhere and Rick and Don



Oxeye

showed us two or three species of Pinweed. Four of the five varieties of state-listed Pinweed are found right here, a good reason for making the trip. Don spotted two rare plants of Pasture Thistle and Rick found Purple Triple Awn Grass. Ovate-leaved Violet and Upland Willow were also present. Somewhere along the walk it was said that attentive observers saw Biennial Gaura, Hairy Bushclover and Maryland Tick Trefoil. Several stragglers missed those. There were bouts of a little rain and sometimes more rain. Appalachian Ant mounds dotted the landscape.



Winged Sumac

we came to two packed Amish buggies laboring up a hill (with an Amish guy on a bicycle really working at it, too). The buggy in front was barely moving as it and its straining single horse neared the top of the hill. Then a back door opened up and a woman jumped out and started pushing the last few feet. Didn't see that coming...

By John Boggs

And, oh yes, some of us car-pooling in for the walk earlier got behind a typical Holmes County traffic obstacle. On this narrow up-and-down little road



Appalachian ant mound

## Mohican's Fern Hollow

On August 27, 2011, seven members of the MNPS plus other people from Gorman Nature Center met at Mohican State Park to walk a section of the park containing some very interesting and not too common ferns. The weather was very nice, sunny, and in the upper 70's, so we had a pleasant walk in the woods. The trip was led by Steve McKee and Brian Gara, from the Ohio EPA, both of whom are very knowledgeable of ferns, so we had expert leadership on fern identification.



Broad Beech Fern



Ebony Spleenwort

Fern Valley (or more specifically Fern Hollow) is located on the western hillside of Pleasant Hill

Lake, just above the dam. The parking area and trail head is on Goon Road, about 1/4 of a mile above the dam parking area. The upper reach of Fern Hollow can be reached from the road going to Mohican Lodge, but is relatively inaccessible. We assembled at the Goon road parking area and trail head and proceeded along the trail, which is somewhat difficult, with a steep ravine and several trees to be climbed over. However, much of the half-mile trail is relatively an uphill walk.

Steve McKee began the walk with an explanation of his basic three-point fern identifier:

- (1) "laciness" of the frond or how many cuts the leaf has - 1, 2, or 3;
- (2) length of rhizome that develops fronds, i.e. is the fern bushy in one location, or is it spread out over a larger area; and
- (3) reproduction of the fern - where are spores located on the frond.



Examining a nice patch of Glade Fern

We then continued on our walk along the hillside, climbing and dipping. We saw Christmas Fern (very common), Marginal Wood Fern (spores on margin of leaf), Broad Beech Fern, Maidenhair Fern, and Ebony Spleenwort. As we approached the upper end of the trail, ferns became more profuse and varied. We saw and discussed Interrupted Fern, Silvery Glade Fern, Glade Fern, Lady Fern, Cinnamon Fern, Sensitive Fern, and Goldie's Fern (one of the largest). The upper section of the trail,

just below the road to the lodge, has been officially designated Fern Hollow by Mohican State Park rangers, with a sign stating such.



Steve with Goldie's Wood Fern

Part of the trail is also a horse trail. But that veers off in another direction and does not go through Fern Hollow, thanks to Steve's influence.

Fern Hollow is truly an area that needs protected, and more study and trips could be planned there. The whole trip was very enjoyable and very informative. This is one other area of Mohican that is very surprising and unique.

By Mike Klein



# “Best Fronds Forever”

## A Workshop on the Wood Ferns

The Mohican Outdoor School Field Trip Center on Bunker Hill Road was the location of Steve McKee’s Annual Plant Workshop on September 11, 2011. Ohio has eight species of Wood Ferns. Spinulose, Evergreen, and Marginal are the most common. In general appearance, Spinulose is the lightest of these three, usually lime green, while the Evergreen is darker, and the Marginal appears more bluish-green and leathery. Crested Wood Fern grows in or near water with fertile fronds that stand straight up. Goldie’s Wood Fern is the largest. Male, Clinton’s, and Log Ferns are not common. To further complicate identification,



wood ferns will hybridize. Following the excellent presentation inside, Steve led us into the woods where we could practice identifying the three most common wood ferns, which were plentiful on the grounds. We also saw Goldie’s Wood Fern.

By Joanne Wrasse

In some wood chips, we observed tiny bird nest fungi with some "eggs".

Crested Wood Fern



*Dryopteris X triplodea*----a hybrid



## Grass Workshop



Photo by Rick Gardner

Grasses and grass-like plants are some of the most difficult plants to learn. They are a major



component of our flora, and therefore, should not be ignored. Dr. David Brandenburg, botanist at Dawes Arboretum, taught a workshop on the graminoids (grasses, rushes and sedges). Fourteen people attended the workshop, which was held at Gorman Nature Center on Saturday, October 1, 2011. David talked about the differences between the three groups with a focus on the grasses. David brought a large selection of specimens for the group to examine to show key characters of the three groups. The diversity in the grasses alone is impressive, and members who attended the workshop left the day with a greater understanding and appreciation for the grasses and their kin. We thank David and his volunteer Stewart for giving us an excellent workshop on this difficult group. We may have a follow-up field trip in 2012 to look at these 3 groups in nature.

By Rick Gardner



***Last Event of the Year:***

**Sunday, November 6, 1:30 pm –**

**ANNUAL MOHICAN COOKOUT**

**AND HIKE** – Meet at the usual shelter house

at the end of the road above the covered bridge. Bring table service, a covered dish to share, and meat to cook if you wish. The stone fireplaces are still not useable according to the signs on the shelter house. The outdoor grill will need to be used instead.

This is also the date Daylight Saving Time ends. Clocks will need to be turned back one hour.

***Looking ahead:***

**ANNUAL DINNER MEETING**

**Sunday, February 26, 2012**

**At Gorman Nature Center**

**2:30 pm**

**MNPS Steering Committee**

John Boggs – **Chairman**

Ginny Boggs

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