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Editor's Note: Don't forget there are still programs and field trips coming up, check them out on the NYFA website or in the Spring issue of the newsletter.

In this issue, we are asking all NYFA members to sign up for electronic delivery of the newsletter. Paper copies will still be available, but please see the article on page 15.

The annual meeting was well attended and everyone seemed to have a good time, and the lunch was excellent! Many thanks to all who organized it.

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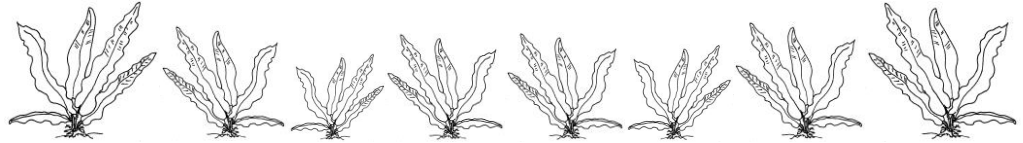
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Frederick Pursh and the Discovery of Hart's-Tongue Fern

by Joseph M. McMullen



The recent NYFA annual meeting was held at Clark Reservation State Park near Syracuse, Onondaga County. As part of the meeting I did a presentation on the life of Frederick Pursh, who originally discovered hart's-tongue fern in North America in 1807 in Onondaga County. The story of this rare and interesting fern and its equally rare and interesting discoverer is detailed in the following. It is a story about botanical pioneers exploring floristic frontiers, leading political figures, a mysterious death, murder, and the downright bad luck of Pursh. Some of the facts are taken from Beauchamp (1923), Rossi and Schuyler (2009), and Reveal (2014).

Hart's-tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium* var. *americanum*) was originally discovered in North America on July 20, 1807 by Frederick Pursh at Split Rock, just west of Syracuse. This rare fern is federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act; it is one of only two ferns so listed in the continental United States. According to Leopold (1990), 92% of all the hart's-tongue fern in the United States are found in Onondaga and Madison counties, and 80% of the hart's-tongue fern in NY occur at Clark Reservation. Also, the largest single population of hart's-tongue in the entire US is at Clark

Reservation. All of those who attended the annual meeting and saw this population should relish this fact, because how often in your life do you get to see the largest population of a species in the country?

In McMullen (2008), I briefly described the 1807 botanical exploration of Frederick Pursh and his discovery of hart's-tongue fern, but the story of this botanical explorer is much richer than that. Pursh was German, not formally educated, but studied plants at the Dresden Botanical Gardens. He came to the United States in 1799 at the age of 25 and settled in the Philadelphia area. At that time Philadelphia was the center of activity in the US. It was not only the place where the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were created and signed, but it was the capital of the US for ten years prior to the construction of the capitol buildings in Washington, DC.

Pursh left his original employer in Philadelphia and went to work as curator for Dr. Benjamin Barton, a leading botanist and influential person of the time. (He also did some work with William Bartram.) Barton had a dream of creating a complete herbarium and flora of America, which was favored by



Thomas Jefferson, who happened to be the current president of the US. Jefferson was a friend of Barton and together they served on the board of the American Philosophical Society (started by another famous fellow Philadelphian, Benjamin Franklin).

In early 1807 Barton sponsored Pursh on a botanical excursion across Pennsylvania, central and eastern New York, and western Vermont. Just a month prior to Pursh's departure on this excursion, Meriwether Lewis (of Lewis and Clark fame) commissioned Pursh to classify and describe plants Lewis collected during his western expedition. Jefferson had originally turned the plants over to Barton to describe and catalogue, but for whatever reason he didn't do it. When it became evident that Pursh had the ability to do the work, Lewis paid Pursh the lordly sum of \$60 to begin this effort. Pursh set this work aside to go on his planned excursion for Barton.

As Pursh readied for this excursion, keep in mind that he traveled alone and that it was 1807. At this time, only three individuals had served as US Presidents; Onondaga County had a bounty of \$20 on timber wolves, and the transportation system and natural environment of the day was strikingly different and much more challenging than today.

The reason that we know so many details of Pursh's excursion is that he kept a daily journal (Pursh 1869). He recorded his travels from place to place, where he stayed, what plants he saw, weather conditions, and other interesting observations. Unfortunate for Pursh, this detailed journal was not discovered and published until 1869, nearly 50 years after his death.

On May 27, 1807 Pursh set out from Philadelphia on his excursion. He left by stage coach, one of the few times he traveled so luxuriantly (he mostly walked). He stayed at the stage office overnight to ensure he had a seat. His journal record of the day is as follows.

“At 4 o'clock this morning we left Philadelphia, the stage being remarkable full of passengers & goods, which made it very disagreeable traveling; the road about 25 m. from the city got bad & hilly; we brok down the stage twice, but lukly without any injury to us; arrived at 10 o'clock in the evening at Easton. Took up lodging at Abraham Horn's Sign of the Golden Swan.”

So after 18 hours on a bumpy, crowded stage, Pursh managed to travel about 60 miles to Easton along the Delaware River.

From Easton, Pursh made his way to the Delaware Water Gap and spent a couple days exploring there. He then searched wetlands across the Poconos to Wilkes-Barre, PA. Next, he traveled north into New York to a place called Chenango Point. You probably never heard of this town, because it later changed its name to Binghamton. From there Pursh went west to Owego and then north to Ithaca. After spending a few days in the Ithaca area, Pursh proceeded farther north to the northern end of Owasco Lake to a settlement called Hardenburgh's Corner, another place you might not recognize, because around this time it was renamed Auburn.

On July 10 Pursh took another stage trip traveling from Auburn to Onondaga Hollow, where he resided with John Adams. On several occasions while there he visited with Squire Geddes, a prominent figure of the area, and father of the Town of Geddes and the salt production industry. He spent about 1½ months in and around Onondaga County. He was very interested in the salt springs around Onondaga Lake and the plants growing there.

The premier discovery of his trip was on July 20, when he found hart's-tongue fern. His journal notes are striking.

“Mr Geddes brought me to a deep valley about 1 m. from his house, where we ascended a steep, very rocky hill; here large masses of rocks seem to be piled up, or tumbled over one & another in such a



*confused manner, that it has left large chasms between them, which sometimes appear like caves; as it has a north aspect & overshadowed with trees, all the rocks are covered with moss and vegetables; & I suppose this must be a very interesting place for the botanist in the spring, the walking is very precarious, as in some places large holes are hid by weeds & bushes, & every step, one is in danger of breaking a leg or falling into a gulph. (After listing many plants he continues) *Asplenium rhizophyllum*, & what I thought the most of *Asplenium Scolopendrium*. – this fern, which I dont find mentioned by any one to grow in America I always had a notion to be here; & indeed I was quite enjoyed to find my prejudice so well founded in truth.”*

I love this writing. He says he thought hart’s-tongue fern was here and upon finding it instead of saying I was happy to see it, he writes: “*and indeed I was quite enjoyed to find my prejudice so well founded in truth.*” So if you ever get the opportunity, you should read Pursh’s Journal, not just for the botanical content, but to enjoy his observations and writing style.

Pursh continued on his journey across New York, ending up in Rutland Vermont. Being short of funds (Barton had failed to provide them), he grudgingly sold his "fowling piece" and left Rutland on September 24. He then travelled to New York City where he took a boat to Philadelphia, arriving on October 6.

A few days after Pursh’s return from his 4½ month excursion, he left the employment of Barton, who failed to properly pay him for his efforts. He continued working on the collections of Lewis, many species of which were never before recorded. There were disagreements as to who should get credit for naming the new species and frustration on the part of Pursh about the failure to get the work published. Then in the fall of 1809, at a critical point in the work, Lewis died (reportedly mysteriously). Although Pursh turned his work over to Clark, who was overseeing Lewis’ estate, he left Philadelphia for New York and took some of Lewis’ specimens and other information with him.

After spending some time in New York, Pursh traveled to London where he worked on the first complete flora of North America. Preparation of such a flora was also being pursued by Thomas Nuttall, who interestingly was hired by Barton for a few years to take Pursh’ place. Pursh and Nuttall were competing to be the first to complete this monumental work – an American flora.

Perhaps it should be noted here that Pursh was an alcoholic and somewhat of a social misfit. His appearance was described as rough-hewn and “tartaresque”, the meaning of which I am not entirely sure, but I don’t think it means handsome. Interestingly, there is no known portrait of Pursh.

In 1814 Pursh formally published his flora, which is titled *Flora Americae Septentrionalis* (Pursh 1814). He beat Nuttall, but he included new plants collected by others as his own. He was greatly criticized for this by Nuttall and others. After some additional work, Pursh turned down an opportunity to establish a botanical garden at Yale University, but accepted an offer to serve as botanist for the Red River settlement in Canada. Shortly after he arrived there in 1816, the leader of the expedition was murdered and the entire project fell apart.

Pursh ended up in Montreal and was working on a flora of Canada. In 1819 his entire work and collected specimens burned up in a fire. Pursh died the following year in June 1820. Of the two biographies I read on line, one reported he died drunk and destitute and the other drunk and poor.

Pursh was only 46 when he died. He made a lot of great discoveries and botanical contributions in his life, but he also did some improper things. I always thought that anyone who could go off all alone on a several-month excursion in 1807 and write the journal he did must have been an interesting and hard working individual, and the way he talked about plants I thought he must have been an incredibly observant and proficient botanist. After doing a lot of reading on Pursh, I would conclude that: indeed I was quite enjoyed to find my prejudice so well founded in truth.



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NYFA ANNUAL MEMEBERSHIP MEETING 2014 by Anna Stalter

More than 40 NYFA members and guests from far and near converged at Clark Reservation in Jamesville, NY, for the May 17th Annual Meeting. After greeting the crowd, meeting organizer Joe McMullen gave a geological and historical overview of Clark Reservation and then related the 1807 discovery of Hart's Tongue Fern in Onondaga County by botanist Frederick Pursh. Don Leopold, who along with his graduate students, has monitored populations of Hart's Tongue Fern at Clark Reservation and other sites in NY, then provided some details on the current status of local populations.



Joe talking about Frederick Pursh



The cool sunny weather was perfect for a hike. With Don in the lead, the group proceeded down stone steps and around Glacier Lake, in search of the famous ferns. A late spring had delayed the emergence of new fronds at our first stop, so we continued our quest, while marveling at the sights and sounds of spring in this rich, floristically diverse forest.



Seen along the trail: *Actaea rubra*, unfurling *Dryopteris goldiana*, *Asarum canadense*, *Staphylea trifolia*

Thanks to Don's expert guidance, the group was rewarded with a look at one of the largest populations of hart's tongue fern at Clark Reservation.



Asplenium scolopendrium L. var. *americanum* (Fernald) Kartesz & Gandhi (photos by Mike Burgess)



We returned to the pavilion for a delicious picnic lunch and much socializing!



Could these be future NYFA Board Members?



After lunch, we conducted some official NYFA business. Members approved the appointment of two new board members, Sean Robinson and Molly Marquand, and President David Werier thanked outgoing board members Aissa Feldman and Priscilla Titus for their work on the NY Flora Board. The 2014 Native Plant Conservationist Award was presented to botanist Anne Johnson (see accompanying article in this issue) and Michael Burgess made a brief presentation to thank outgoing board president David Werier.



Michael Burgess presents David Werier with a copy of the Jepson Flora as Anne Johnson looks on.



Blood root, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, was selected as 2015 Wildflower of the Year by a majority of the members present. And, continuing another annual meeting tradition, Steve Young served as quizmaster for the team plant quiz challenge. Hardest question: In what year was John Torrey's Flora of New York completed? (answer: 1843).



Steve Young announces the contenders for 2015 Wildflower of the Year: Turk's Cap Lily, White Trillium, Showy Lady's Slipper, Butterfly Weed, and Blood root.

Everyone seemed to have a great time and most were reluctant to leave at the end of the day. Thanks to Joe McMullen and Don Leopold for sharing their knowledge and the party favors, Connie and Ed for the excellent food, Steve Young for all the activities, Michael Burgess, Andy Nelson, and Kevin Bliss for photos, and everyone else who had a hand in planning and putting on this event. I hope to see even more members at the 2015 Annual Meeting!



The youngest attendee, aspiring botanist Isabel Bliss, age 5 (photo and caption by Kevin Bliss).



Field Trip Report: Catskill Flora (Delaware County), June 14, 2014

By Rich Ring

It was a beautiful, even chilly June morning when we gathered outside Margaretville. (See photos, which feature some intrepid botanists sporting down vests and others in shorts.) We had folks from the Hudson Valley, the Susquehanna Valley, and Central and Midwestern NY). I had been to the site once before to visit the *Adoxa moschatellina* (Musk Root, or more whimsically, “Wee Toon Clock”, from its supposed clock-like flowers). On that first visit I had charged up the trail looking for the rare plant, and apparently missed, or didn’t remember, all the interesting plants along the trail up. As our plant list shows, Pakatakan Mountain is actually quite the diverse spot, with a number of “rich site” species not so often seen in the typical Catskill northern hardwood forest.



The intrepid botanists on Pakatakan Mountain.

As is no shock to veterans of NYFA outings, we didn’t “charge” anywhere, but rather plodded, or perhaps moseyed, heads down and lenses out. After prying ourselves away from *Carex sprengei* and *Rubus odoratus* in the parking lot, we headed up the Dry Brook Ridge Trail. There was a nice selection of woodland sedges and grasses in fruit. We were also lucky to have a mycophile along, to introduce us to a whole new collection of Latin names to ponder and strange morphologies to wonder at. By lunch we must have covered, oh, about ½ mile of trail in over two hours. After eating we were, luckily, a bit higher up and so seeing a little less plant diversity, finally did reach the bend in the trail where our *Adoxa* hunt started. As the pictures show, we found it! Not blooming with its wee toon clocks, but a few fruiting with the equally interesting many-sided capsules. The plants grow there on a somewhat ledgy and precarious talus-slope, and



the group got in a nice work-out cutting back to the trail, complete with impromptu investigation of a probable bear den, and hiked back down past various pretty car-sized boulders and all the plants we'd stooped over earlier. Thanks to Donna Vogler and Connie Tedesco for the plant list, F. Robert Wesley for the photos, Richard Cook for the fungi list, and to everyone for coming along.



Along the Dry Brook Ridge Trail.



The centerpiece of the trip, Musk Root, or Wee Toon Clock (*Adoxa moschatellina*).



List of plants from the June 14th Catskill trip. An asterisk indicates a tentative identification.

Plants

<i>Acer pensylvanicum</i>	Striped Maple	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Blue Cohosh
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red Maple	<i>Clintonia borealis</i>	Clintonia, Bluebead Lily
<i>Actaea rubra</i>	Red Baneberry	<i>Collinsonia canadensis</i>	Horseweed
<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	Maidenhair Fern	<i>Coptis trifolia</i>	Goldthread
<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	Wee Toon Clock	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate Lvd Dogwood
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Goutweed	<i>Cryptotaenia canadensis</i>	Canada Honewort
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Fragile Fern
<i>Allium tricoccum</i>	Ramps	<i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i>	Hay-Scented Fern
* <i>Amelanchier (arborea)</i>	Serviceberry	<i>Deparia acrostichoides</i>	Silvery Spleenwort
<i>Anemone acutiloba</i>	Liverleaf, Hepatica	<i>Dicentra canadensis</i>	Squirrel Corn
<i>Anemone americana</i>	Round Leaved Hepatica	<i>Dryopteris intermedia</i>	Wood Fern
<i>Anemone quinquefolia</i>	Wood Anemone	<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	Marginal Wood Fern
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Wild Chervil	<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	False Hellbore
<i>Aquilegia canadense</i>	Wild Columbine	<i>Erigeron pulchellus</i>	Robins Plantain
<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>	Wild Sarasprilla	<i>Eurybia macrophylla</i>	Aster
<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	Jack-In-The-Pulpit	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Beech
<i>Asarum canadense</i>	Wild Ginger	<i>Festuca subverticillata</i>	Nodding Fescue
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady Fern	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White Ash
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese Barberry	<i>Galium lanceolatum</i>	Wild Licorice
<i>Betula lenta</i>	Yellow Birch	<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Wild Madder
<i>Betula nigra</i>	Black Birch	<i>Galium triflorum</i>	Bedstraw
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Paper Birch	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>Botrychium virginianum</i>	Rattlesnake Fern	<i>Geum canadense</i>	White Avens
<i>Cardamine diphylla</i>	Toothwort	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	European Avens
<i>Cardamine pennsylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania Bittercress	<i>Glyceria melicaria</i>	Slender Manna Grass
<i>Carex communis</i>	Sedge	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Witch Hazel
<i>Carex debilis</i>	Sedge	* <i>Helianthus (decapetalus)</i>	Thin Leaved Sunflower
<i>Carex gracillima</i>	Sedge	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Dame's Rocket
<i>Carex hirtifolia</i>	Pubescent Sedge	<i>Huperzia lucidula</i>	Shining Clubmoss
<i>Carex intumescens</i>	Bladder Sedge	<i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i>	Virginia Waterleaf
<i>Carex laxiculmis</i>	Sedge	<i>Impatiens pallida</i>	Pale Touch-Me-Not
<i>Carex laxiflora</i>	Sedge	<i>Laportea canadensis</i>	Wood Nettle
<i>Carex pedunculata</i>	Sedge	<i>Leersia virginiana</i>	White Grass
<i>Carex pennsylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania Sedge	<i>Lobelia inflata</i>	Indian Tobacco
<i>Carex plantaginea</i>	Plantain Sedge	<i>Lonicera canadensis</i>	Fly Honeysuckle
<i>Carex platyphylla</i>	Broadleaf Sedge	<i>Lonicera sp.</i>	Honeysuckle Invasive
<i>Carex radiata</i>	Sedge	<i>Lysimachia ciliata</i>	Fringed Loostrife
<i>Carex rosea</i>	Sedge	<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i>	False Solomon Seal
* <i>Carex (prasina)</i>	Sedge	<i>Maianthemum canadense</i>	False Lily Of The Valley
<i>Carex sprengelii</i>	Sedge	<i>Medeola virginiana</i>	Cucumber Root
* <i>Carex (swanii)</i>	Swan's Sedge	<i>Micranthes virginiensis</i>	Virginia Saxifrage
<i>Carex tribuloides</i>	Blunt Broom Sedge	<i>Milium effusum</i>	Tall Millet-Grass
<i>Carex trisperma</i>	Sedge	<i>Mitchella repens</i>	Partridgeberry
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	Ironwood	<i>Mitella diphylla</i>	Miterwort
<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Bitternut Hickory	<i>Monotropa uniflora</i>	Indian Pipe
<i>Carya ovata</i>	Shagbark Hickory	<i>Oclemena acuminata</i>	Wood Aster
<i>Castanea dentata</i>	Chestnut	* <i>Osmorhiza (longistylis)</i>	Sweet Cicely

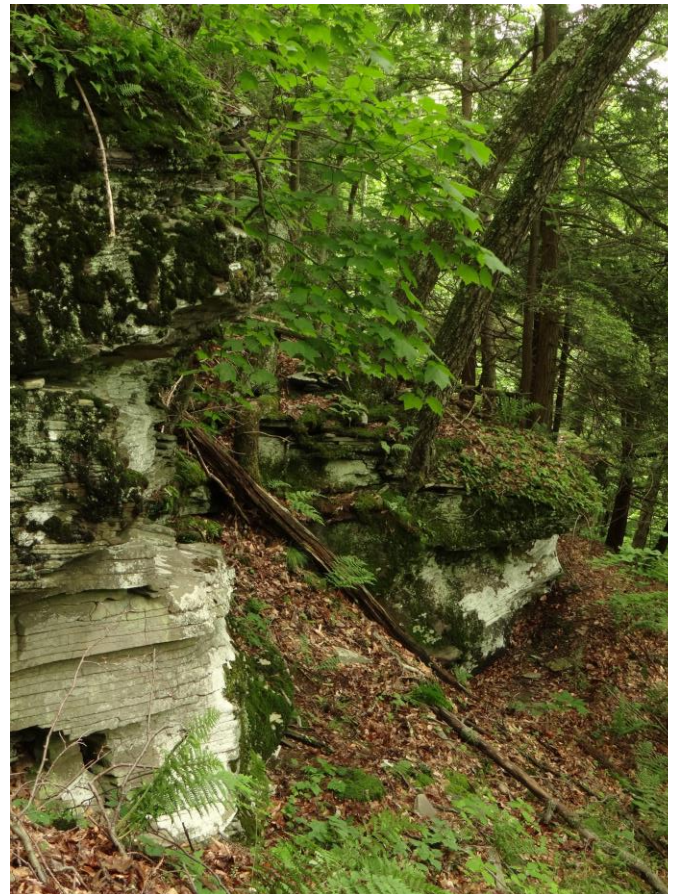


Ostrya virginiana	Hop Hornbeam
Oxalis montana	Wood Sorrel
Parthenocissus quinquefolia	Virginia Creeper
Persicaria virginiana	Jumpseed
*Picea (rubens)	Spruce
Polygonatum biflorum	Solomon'S Seal
Polypodium virginianum	Rock Polypody
Polystichum acrostichoides	Christmas Fern
Potentilla sp.	Cinquefoil
Prenanthes sp.	Lions Foot
Prunus serotina	Black Cherry
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Ranunculus abortivus	Kidney Leaved Crowfoot
Ribes cynosbati	Prickly Gooseberry
Rubus allegheniensis	Blackberry
Rubus odoratus	Thimbleberry
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-Leaved Dock
Sambucus racemosa	Red Elderberry
Schizachne purpurascens	Purple Oat
Solidago bicolor	Silver Rod
Solidago caesia	Blue Stem Goldenrod
Solidago flexicaulis	Zigzag Goldenrod
Solidago gigantea	Goldenrod
Streptopus rosea	Twisted Stalk
Thelypteris noveboracensis	New York Fern
Tiarella cordifolia	Foamflower
Tilia americana	Basswood
Trientalis borealis	Starflower
Trillium erectum	Red Trillium
Tsuga canadensis	Hemlock
Ulmus rubra	Slippery Elm
Uvularia sessilifolia	Bellwort
Vaccinium angustifolium	Blueberry
Viola canadensis	Canada Violet
Viola pubescens	Downy Violet
Viola renifolia	Kidney Leaved Violet
Viola rotundifolia	Round Leaved Violet
Viola sororia	Common Blue Violet
Viburnum acerifolium	Maple Leaved Viburnum
Zizia aptera	Golden Alexander

Fungi

Boletus sp.	Blue Bruise Bolete
Chlorociboria aeruginascen	Coupernot Fungus
Clavulina	White Coral Fungus
Daldina concentrica	Coal Fungus
Diatrype stigma	Common Tarcrust
Favolus alveolaris	Hexagonal-Pored Fungus

Fomes fomentarius	Tinderhoof Fungus
Ganoderma applanatum	Artist's Conk
Hygropophorus	Mushroom- Orange
Hypoxylon multiforme	Hypoxylon
Lycogala epidendrum	Slime Mold
Marasmius rotula	Pinwheel Fungus
Multiclavula mucida	White Green Algae Coral
Mycena haematopus	Bleeding Mycena
Mycena leaiana	Orange Mycena
Pezizia sp.	Pigs's Ear Fungus
Pleurotus ostreatus	Oyster Mushroom
Polyporus badius	Black Footed Polypore
Schizophyllum commune	Split Gilled Polypore
Tricholomopsis platyphylla	Platterful Fungus
Umbilicaria sp.	Rock Tripe Lichen
Xylaria hypoxylon	Carbon Antlers Fungus



Adoxa habitat



Plant Conservationist of the Year

The New York Flora Association (NYFA) has named Anne M. Johnson of Waddington, NY the recipient of the 2014 New York Native Plant Conservationist Award. The award recognizes an individual who has contributed to the conservation of native plants in New York State.

Anne has been actively exploring the wild plants of New York for most of her life, particularly in her home county of St. Lawrence. She has performed plant ecology work at Fort Drum, conducted rare plant surveys for the New York Natural Heritage Program and works as a botanical consultant.

In 2010, Anne co-authored with Nancy Eldblom the *Plants of St. Lawrence County, NY, An Annotated Checklist of Vascular Flora*. This is the most comprehensive guide to date for the over 1300 species that grow in the St. Lawrence region, including many previously unreported native plants. Anne has been a member of NYFA since its inception, formerly serving on the Board of Directors. Anne now volunteers as the editor of the quarterly NYFA newsletter. She has coordinated NYFA workshops and field trips, and leads hikes that connect people with native plants throughout the northeastern Adirondack region. Presenting the award at the NYFA annual membership meeting, President David Werier proclaimed the *Plants of St. Lawrence County* a botanical masterpiece, and lauded Anne's tireless efforts to document the flora of this large and floristically diverse New York county.



David Werier presenting the 2014 New York Native Plant Conservationist award to Anne Johnson.

Note from the Editor:

I obviously have a personal interest in the preceding newsletter notice, but please bear with me on this related note, which also serves as a submission related to our past request for articles or tributes to inspirational NYS botanists.

As a young botanist in central New York during the late 1970's, I of course wanted to follow in the footsteps of Mildred Faust and Orra Phelps, with their sturdy shoes and walking sticks. Looking back now, while I was greatly admired them, I would have to say that the botanist who inspired me the most was my "co-St. Lawrence County botanist", Nancy Eldblom.

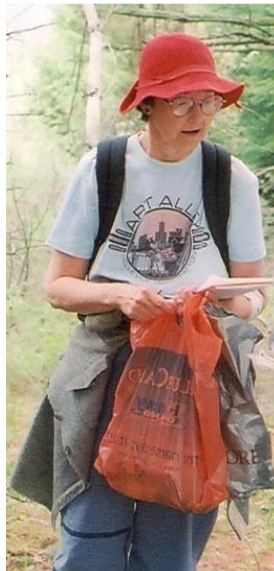
We were introduced to each other many years ago after we had both signed up for a geology field trip based out of Paul Smith's College (Thanks to Mimi Tyler for introducing us, and to Mike Kudish for a great trip!). Nancy was the Science Librarian at SUNY Potsdam, as well as an avid botanist. She called herself an amateur, but many "trained" professionals doing wetland delineations or plant surveys at the time consulted her when it came to northern New York flora. She was also an excellent editor and proof-reader, putting



together a St. Lawrence County Native Plants newsletter for a number of years and proof reading for the Natural Areas Journal.

We botanized together for over 27 years, sometimes once a week during the field season, sometimes less; but never not at all. We covered a lot of territory and went places most people would not dream of going (pushing through dense thickets of winterberry, clinging to vertical rock faces, toppling off of cinnamon fern hummocks into black muck, or wading through thigh deep water, all in search of the next interesting habitat). I have greatly enjoyed the years spent together, whether covered with blackflies while sitting on a rock shelf in the woods (Nancy once counted 93 blackfly bites on herself) or kayaking in scenic peatlands while ospreys flew overhead, or the time we both sat down for lunch in a patch of poison ivy and didn't notice until we got up (fortunately, both of us were relatively immune). She taught me to fill my mouth full of wild grapes and suck all the juice out of them then spit the seeds out, and she instilled in me the importance of drinking water and having food to nibble on in the field. We've driven each other crazy at times over the years, but I've got to conclude that those times together were by far some of my best.

Of course I am biased, but I think Northern New York has been very lucky to have had Nancy Eldblom poking around in the wetlands and woods and recording meticulously, as well as identifying meticulously. Of course I was very lucky too; like Mildred Faust and Orra Phelps, I was privileged to have a good botany buddy during my prime botanizing years.



Nancy Eldblom in her "natural habitat", shopping for plants to identify.

NOTES OF BOTANICAL INTEREST

The **Kansas Native Plant Society** has posted a new book notice: "Field Guide to the Common Grasses of Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska", by KNPS board member, Iralee Barnard, presents a blend of ecological and cultural contextual information with identification steps so the novice and expert alike will not only be able to recognize and identify the grasses so abundant in our natural landscape but do so with an interesting diversity of complimentary information about each grass species. Seventy of the most common grass species are included with 415 color photographs revealing details not found in previous grass identification field guides. Now available at local and online book suppliers. ISBN 978-0-7006-1945-0. Published by University Press of Kansas, (<http://www.kansaspress.ku.edu/bargui.html>).



Fitzgerald Pond Revisited. Lee Ellsworth, who went on the Fitzgerald Pond NYFA field trip a year ago, reported that he went back this year but 4 days earlier. Everything was much later, the water level was up considerably, and mosquitoes were ferocious. He found none of the orchids we listed last year, but did find two mature flowering *Arethusa bulbosa* orchids - not found last year. Photos were taken. He was amazed at the difference from one year to the next and suspects the higher water level had an impeding effect.



Arethusa bulbosa, swamp pink or dragon's-mouth, at Fitzgerald Pond. Photo by Lee Ellsworth, 2014.

Native vs. Non-native Phragmites. In case you haven't yet seen these, the links below provide good information on distinguishing between native and non-native Phragmites:

<http://invasiveplants.net/diagnostic/diagnostic.asp>

<http://greatlakesphragmites.net/native-vs-invasive/>



The red lower stem of native Phragmites



The NYFA Newsletter: Past, present, and future

by Anna Stalter

I've just spent a pleasant hour or so perusing past NYFA newsletters (did you know they are posted on the website?). Since 1990, this publication has featured informative species accounts and field trip reports, highlighted botanical research throughout the state and shared news from other native plant groups in New York and neighboring states. The first NYFA newsletter consisted of one article describing the nascent organization, on a single typewritten and photocopied page. Subsequent issues were longer, and included line drawings of plants and even an occasional cartoon! Today, the quarterly newsletter is several pages long, in a full color electronic format, and represents the efforts of the newsletter editor and committee, as well as many contributors who work hard to provide an informative, quality publication for NYFA members.

In recent months, the NYFA board has asked all members to consider switching to the e-newsletter format, and many members have done so. With a single stroke of the keyboard, we now send the newsletter to over 250 members! E-newsletters save time, money and resources, a desirable outcome for a conservation-minded, non-profit organization run by volunteers. With this in mind, the board has decided that, beginning in 2015, NYFA will no longer offer a printed newsletter to its members. Current, renewing members who already receive the printed version may continue to do so, for an additional \$10 fee annually. And recognizing that some members have a genuine need for a print copy we will consider that option on a case-by-case basis. If you have questions or concerns about this change, please contact membership@nyfa.com, or send a note to NY Flora Association, PO Box 122, Albany, NY 12201-0122.

If you have comments about newsletter content or have a botanical story, report or cartoon you'd like to share with fellow NYFA members, contact the editor: editor@nyflora.org. Thanks!



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Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Wildflower of the Year for 2015. Photo by Natalie Aldrich.



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