

Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

OCTOBER 2019

From the President's Desk

Happy fall everyone! And, welcome to the 22 members who joined our hospitable organization since our spring meeting.

I'm writing at the tail-end of September and I'm very happy to put the summer of 2019 in the rear-view mirror. I can be as stoic as anyone when it pertains to the weather, but this past summer sucked the life out of me, probably because I spent so much of my time outside. Moreover, a case of Lyme disease in July only made matters worse. Fortunately, it didn't take much for me to experience an about-face when temperatures dipped on several days in late August and early September. It was as though all I needed was just a few whiffs of fall to be reinvigorated. Maybe there is something to the notion that the intensity of pleasure and relief you experience with the onset of fall is directly related to the severity of the preceding summer – and likewise for the onset of spring. It seems only fair.

I did have a couple pleasant surprises this year in the garden. One surprise appeared in late summer in the form of a woodland sage (*Salvia koyamae*), pictured at the right. I planted it in part shade/shade two years ago and was rewarded this year with its beautiful pastel yellow blooms. We can always use more blooms in late summer/fall, and it does well in shade! It's not native, not that there's anything wrong with that. (I do like my Seinfeld references!) The other surprise happened in the spring when my climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*) bloomed for the first time. I planted it at least ten years ago at



Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis

Photp by Kim A. Sheridan

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the base of a mature oak tree and it proceeded to climb to 25-30 feet. Every spring I searched for flower buds in anticipation, but no luck. But this year was a different story – it bloomed in full regalia.

So, what did I do when the weather broke and my energy returned to normal? Lets just say that this summer's weather was good for the weeds. I'm not making excuses, but my other commitments and lethargy contributed to a major weed backlog. I'm happy to say I made things look respectable and even had *some* success getting to the stiltgrass before it went to seed – no small feat. So, I felt some satisfaction on my hands and knees as I completed the clean up one late afternoon, when I notice to the east and west borders of my blessed plot, an infinite number of stiltgrass seed heads glistening in the late day sun. It was as if all I could do was channel Frank Costanza with the invocation –
Serenity now! Serenity now!

Hope to see everyone at the November meeting.

Yours truly,

Rick

Pictures by Rick Reynolds

Outreach

Rick Reynolds and several other members attended fall plant sales, setting up our banner and a membership table. At the Hardy Plant Society sale Gardner's Landscape & Nursery of Chester Springs donated the ferns we gave to the new members we signed up, plus a nice plant for the raffle. At the Collins Nursery fall sale, Diane Ehrich, nursery manager, provided nice pawpaw fruits for shoppers and others to take home.

Since this time last year, we have had 26 new members. Kudos to all those who helped at the Flower Show and plant sales to promote DVFWS.

Field Trip Suggestions

Please think about what you would like to attend next year with regard to field trips.

Email David Lauer your suggestions at
dml1000@comcast.net

Fall Meeting November 16, 2019

The November meeting of the DVFWS will be held on Saturday, November 16 at Morris Arboretum Bloomfield Farm, Magnolia Room. 100 E Northwestern Ave, Philadelphia. Directions:

www.morrisarboretum.org/visit_directions.shtml

The entrance is directly across the road from the main gate to Morris and will open at 9:30 am.

Program begins at 10 am with the charming and outstanding speaker Jenny Rose Carey. Her topic will be Shade Gardening with perhaps some slides from her recent trip to New Zealand.



Jenny Rose Carey is a renowned educator, historian, and author, and the senior director at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Meadowbrook Farm in Jenkintown. She previously worked at Temple University for over a decade, first as an adjunct professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture

and then as director of the Ambler Arboretum. Jenny Rose has been lecturing nationally and internationally for many years. She is an avid, hands-on gardener who has gardened in both England and the United States. Her Victorian property, Northview, contains diverse garden spaces, including a shade garden, moss garden, and a stumpery. Jenny Rose and her gardens have been featured on the PBS series *The Victory Garden*, in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Washington Post*, *Green Scene* magazine, and the *Pennsylvania Gardener*.

Glorious Shade – Jenny Rose's latest book, was released by Timber Press in 2017.

The business meeting will include important information about our display at the 2020 Philadelphia Flower Show. Come with your calendars to sign up for your sitting spot. Show runs 2/29 to 3/8. Set up 2/26 and 2/27 and teardown 3/9 help needed.

Field trip suggestions will be taken.

2020 dues will be collected.

Hope to see you there!

Refreshments needed!

If you would like to contribute a finger food for the refreshments for the November meeting, please contact Mary Carr. 610-933-6352 or marycarr104@gmail.com.

Cheese, crackers, fruit, cookies, cake, donut holes, etc are always welcome! Coffee and hot water are supplied by Morris Arboretum

Flower Show 2020

2020 Flower Show Fern Exhibit News

Last spring our walk-through exhibit, “The Ins and Outs of Fronds,” was well-tended by you, our dedicated DVFWS ambassadors. The Horticulture Information booth reported a steady stream of people asking where to find “the ferns,” suggesting our all-foliage fern exhibit was a hit.

Home gardener education is the overriding theme in our corner of the Flower Show—the plant society and educational institution area. Visitor feedback indicated a strong desire for gardening tips and plants people could implement in their own gardens, not just admire and move on.

As a result, the educational and plant society area has been expanded around the former Gardener’s Studio, and renamed “Gardening for the Greater Good.” The college and school exhibits are arranged in an arc with a single path winding through 7 exhibits. Interactive exhibits will include native plants and insect habitats. My favorite, an insect hotel (with a variety of opening sizes for the different insect species) will be on display. Native plants are welcome regardless of the larger Show Theme.

The six plant society exhibits, (fern, cactus, rhododendron, rock garden, water garden, and garden railroad,) are all in the same area now, and away from the vendor area. We are still along the north wall, but closer

to the center of the show. On the right side of the diagram are some of the themed competitive displays. To the left is the commercial area.

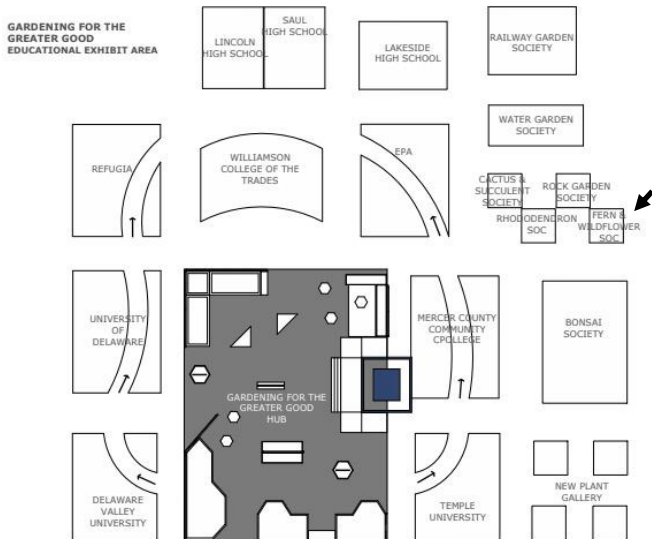
Our 2020 exhibit will keep with PHS’s general theme “Riviera Holiday” by suggesting a back yard on a cliff overlooking the sea. The patio area will feature deep blue tiles, bordered by whitewashed stone, where ferns on stands can enjoy the (imagined) sea-breezes. In the back yard we will feature planted ferns and native companion plants.

Sustainability is another PHS new theme this year. A questionnaire asked about our waste and recycling practices last year and gave ideas for best practices to improve the total environmental footprint of the Flower Show.

At our summer picnic there were some excellent suggestions for the 2020 exhibit eg. a wider aisle would have allowed a wheelchair to roll through the exhibit. While the location was farther from our staging room and the entrance, it was closer to the loading ramp for ease in set up and tear down. Supplies did not disappear overnight, letting us leave out our chairs, aprons and water bottles instead of putting them away nightly. More ideas are welcome. Contact Leslie Morris-Smith, Chair, Flower Show Exhibit Committee 215-805-2591.

We will have the signup chart for volunteers at the November meeting. As a DVFWS member working at the show, you receive a ticket for the flower show that day. To keep you company, you may bring a friend to sit with you. We would like to rename “sitters” to be called “Fern Tenders.” PHS has Tree Tenders and Garden Tenders, so Fern Tenders had a nice connotation.

Submitted by Leslie Morris Smith
Diagram from PHS



Minutes of July 27, 2019 Meeting

Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

Minutes of July 27, 2019 Meeting

President Rick Reynolds opened a short and informal business meeting of the DVFWS, held in the cool shade of Pennsylvania Horticulture Society's Meadowbrook Farm's picnic area. Earlier our members enjoyed an excellent tour of the Pennock house and the gardens updated and maintained by PHS. Director Bernie Pettit led the tour and was knowledgeable about both the site's history and extensive gardens. 22 members attended. The following items were discussed:

2020 Flower Show Planning: Leslie Morris Smith will once again lead our endeavors. She will submit our contract for entry by the July 31 deadline. Next year's Flower Show title is "A Riviera Holiday," suggesting a Mediterranean climate theme. Leslie received many ideas from our "around the table" discussion about possible exhibit themes and designs, with strong support for a wheelchair accessible walkway through the exhibit and a design with vertical structure. She asks for help with signing up the many volunteers needed for Flower Show work.

Future Program Suggestion: Morris Arboretum has considerable Edgar Wherry historic records and memorabilia including glass lantern slides of his trips and ferns, around which a presentation could be designed. Dr. Wherry was important in the founding and early activity of our Society.

Future field trip suggestion: Henry Botanic Garden in Gladwyne, was highly recommended. The contact person there is Susan Treadway. Member John Gyer, a trillium expert, said that the trilliums there were unusual varieties and a tour in early spring would be especially nice.

Upcoming field trips:

August 17, 10 am at Tucquan Glen, Lancaster County led by David Lauer.

August 31, Longwood Gardens, meeting at the meadow entrance at 10 am, Rick Reynolds will lead a tour of the meadow where he is a volunteer guide.

September 28, 10 am Stoneleigh in Villanova led by Natural Lands staff.

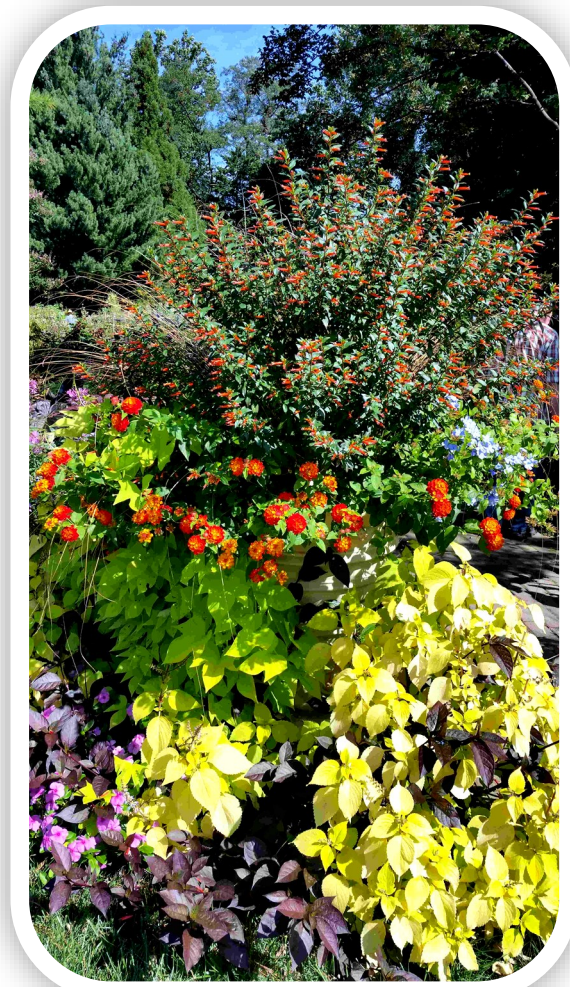
Upcoming activities of interest:

August 24 - Hardy Plant Society Fall Plant Sale at Temple Ambler Campus, 8:30 to 12:30. Kathy Klein and Doris Fiorentino volunteered to help Rick Reynolds at the DVFWS promotion table.

September 14 and 21, 11 to 3, the fall Open House and Plant Sale at Collins Nursery, Glenside. We need help to man our outreach table.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Wilhelm, secretary



Summer colors at Meadowbrook Farm

Field Trip Reports

PINE BARRENS, NJ, July 14, 2019

On July 14 a group of DVFWS members traveled to Pakin Pond (which means cranberry bog) for a guided tour, by Mark Szutarski. He noted he would specify if an item of interest was a graminoid, or grass like, instead of getting into a lengthy ID.

Our group consisted of Janet and Tom, Mike, Sandy, Karen and Brian, and Rick. We prepared with bug spray, hats and gear and set off around the pond. This area was used for commercial cranberry bogs as there are locks, but the area has grown back with a vengeance.

We enjoyed the shade of the black gum trees, pitch pines, oaks and red maples. The shrub layer included *Hypericum*, brake fern, and inkberry. Noting the turkey beard grass and *Lespedeza*, we startled a black snake sunning itself. As long as we saw it disappear into the thicket, we moved on.

The smallest plant of interest was the curlygrass fern (*Schizaea pusilla*). Looking closely also gave us a view of the threadleaf and round leaf sundews.



Schizaea pusilla, Curly grass fern

We observed *Lycopodium alopecuroides caroliniana*, and *Inundatum* var. *appressum*. The club mosses are a favorite of mine.

We then traveled to the Greenwood Wildlife Management area along route 539, to a boardwalk trail around Webb's Mill Bog. Among many species of plants, we observed *Utricularia cornuta*, an unusual carnivorous plant, and white beaksedge. It was a very peaceful location despite the nearness of the highway. Our guide had a plethora of information about each plant.



White Beaksedge

Enough heat sent us back to the cars for a drive to the bombing range. We were told we were safe!?! Here was an upland area (about 20 feet above sea-level) of drier habitat and dwarfed bell oak trees that stood at 9 feet. We found the shrubby *Camerida comadidi* (crowberry), and even in this drier area we found sundews.

This was a great trip of the NJ Pine "gardens."

Submitted by Karen Mohn, pictures by Brian Mohn

TUCQUAN GLEN, August 17, 2019

On an overcast and hot muggy morning the DVFWS met at Tucquan Glen Nature Preserve in Lancaster County to challenge not only the heat, but also bugs, briars, and a wet trail. As always, just in view of the parking lot we observed our first gem. *Asplenium pinnatifidum* (Lobed spleenwort) was basking in a rock ledge.



Asplenium pinnatifidum (Lobed spleenwort)

Once we got on the trail many wonderful and lush native plants emerged. From the skyline of black oak, red maples, black gum, hemlock, and tulip poplar to the middle layer of *Amelanchier*, hackberry, hydrangea and pawpaw. Walking thru a grove of the pawpaw hanging from the trees gave us a feel of the tropics. Too bad they were not yet ripe. Finally, focusing on the perennials: white asters, false sunflower, cucumber weed, wood fern, rattlesnake fern, evergreen, and maidenhair ferns blanketed the hillside.

Near the highest area on this trail was a grouping of crane fly orchids, so narrow and petite, a joy to see. Through the woods we traveled, then down towards the ravine to our next gem, which was hugging the east side of a large rock outcropping. *Asplenium Bradleyi* was viewed by lying on our bellies!!

Enjoying the humidity and heat means ingredients for a thunderstorm which settled upon us. As Dave would say, "This will pass."

Well, we became soaked enough to cross the stream to explore another rock ledge which held *Asplenium montanum*. With the downpour continuing we headed back to the cars.

This area is rich in diversity and great trails. A return visit awaits.

Submitted by Karen Mohn. Pictures by Brian Mohn



LONGWOOD GARDENS MEADOW,

August 31, 2019

Under bright sun, white clouds and blue sky on Saturday, August 31, 2019, Rick Reynolds, our Society president, now in his second season as a Longwood Gardens meadow volunteer, greeted 21 members and friends of the DVFWS. Our visit began with a two plus hour slow meandering meadow walk among abundant end-of-summer blooming grasses and wildflowers. Including a few trees and shrubs, about 200 plant species grow in this area. Rick explained that one third of the meadow's 90 plus acres are burned every winter to destroy emerging woody plants and maintain open space for growth of sun-loving meadow plants.

We entered the expansive meadow through its surrounding woodland border where we spotted some shade-loving blooms – Great blue lobelia, Cardinal flower, White wood Aster, White turtlehead, and fronds of Royal Fern, one of the few ferns seen on this excursion. Then we walked into sunlight on spacious mown pathways, bordered by lush late-season growth. Among the many wildflowers we encountered were: dusty-pink Joe Pye weed, magenta New York Ironweed, numerous species of the white rayless composites – Pilewort, Horseweed, and



Cirsium discolor (Field thistle)



Eupatorium hyssopifolium
(Hyssop-leaved thoroughwort)

Bonesets, many golden composites - nine species of Goldenrod, several kinds of Sunflowers and Cone-flowers, Black-eyed Susan, and numerous other yellow-flowered species such as Wild Senna, and Partridge pea.

Forming the background framework for the wildflowers were grasses, most prominently Little bluestem, with its hues of greenish-blues, purples and reds, and golden Indiangrass with its yellow flowers blowing in the breeze.

After emerging from the meadow, many of us enjoyed welcome cold drinks and lunch in the Longwood cafe, followed by watching the spectacular musical fountain display, and wandering through Longwood's special collections, such as the water lily pools, and the orchid and tropical plant rooms in the large Conservatory.

We give special thanks to Rick Reynolds for arranging this wonderful Longwood Gardens experience for DVFWS members and guests.

Submitted by Donna Wilhelm.
Pictures by Kim A. Sheridan

STONELEIGH, September 28, 2019

Eight members of the DVFSW returned to Stoneleigh a natural garden operated by the conservation organization Natural Lands, and located in Villanova, PA for a follow-up to our 2018 trip. We were welcomed by horticulturist Samantha Nestory, our guide for this visit. The 42-acre property, the former home of the Haas family of Rohm and Haas Company fame, was donated by the family in 2016 to Natural Lands.

One of the goals of Stoneleigh is to educate and inspire people to think of new ways to combine traditional garden plants and native plants in their home gardens. The first large bed visited was the "Carex matrix" consisting of various sedges interspersed with other plants, resulting in an interesting ground cover. Further along, a berm has been created covered with native grasses, including *Eragrostis eliottii*, 'Wind Dancer' which were beautiful blowing in the breeze. The prior standard landscape plantings around the house have been removed and replaced with an interesting mix of native trees, shrubs, and flowers. Stoneleigh plans to include cultivars of many plants native to eastern North America.

Since acquiring the property most of the original garden has been renovated leaving a wide variety of beautiful tall old-growth trees including the sixth largest cucumber magnolia and tenth largest river birch in Pennsylvania. A champion Franklinia tree, although leaning and propped, seems to be thriving and was still in flower. Other large trees include burr oak, eastern white pine, and European beech. A southern catalpa (second largest in PA) majestically stands next to the former tennis court. This area is scheduled to become a water feature and will be named the Catalpa Court. The nearby circle garden is bordered by a grove of arbovitae and false cypress original to the landscape and with fantastic growth forms, reminiscent of octopus.

The bog gardens occupy the site of the former swimming pool with several circular beds containing a variety of pitcher plants, sundews, gentians, and other native plants suited to these conditions. These circular beds are the only area at Stoneleigh with automatic

underground irrigation. Lush lawns surround these beds along with beds of New England asters, milkweed, white star sedge and fireworks goldenrod

A long pergola fronted by a wide planting bed, is where volunteers recently planted a hundred different plant species. These new plantings take advantage of the shady and sunny ends of the bed and include salvia, hibiscus, prickly pear cactus, and several fern varieties. At the far end of the pergola, a native hops plant (*Humulus lupulus*) grows up and over the pillars beginning what will eventually be a cool shady retreat. Leading from the pergola is a long dense hedge of a compact variety of southern magnolia. Towards the back of the property a sapling of mountain silverbell that was donated by a DVFSW member is doing well. A huge American elm that stood nearby unfortunately died this year and has been removed.



Solidago rugosa (Fireworks goldenrod) and aster
Symphyotrichum novae-angliae 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke'

A rain garden was created alongside the parking lot to accommodate water runoff. This section, in full sun and with poor soil, is planted with a large array of plants including pink muhly grass, lobelia, Indian tobacco, and prickly pear. Along with most of this property, it is a "work in progress." The Stoneleigh garden would be a worthy candidate to visit again during different seasons and future years to see how all the new plantings fare and their ambitious plans come to fruition.

Submitted by Jacqui Mascucchini,
Picture by Janet Whitefield

Member News

Jess Slade, Morris Liaison: I wanted to let you know that I will be leaving the Arboretum and moving to Kentucky to be closer to family. I've accepted a new position there at the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves. I will miss the Arboretum tremendously and am sad that I won't be involved with the Fern and Wildflower Society any longer.

Caroline Carbo, member for 25 years, reported that her husband died October 21, 2018 following a long illness.

New e-mails listed in the October directory:

Kathy Klein

Janice and Tom Tomer

Karen Mohn

New members listed in the October directory:

John Donohoe,

Carla Gauger

Dorothy Kowey

Anita Ann Murphy

Jeanne and Joe Patti

Kim Sheridan

Nancy Stedman

Jane and Edward Winski



2020 Dues

If you see **2019** after your name in the Membership Directory, please bring your dues for 2020 with **exact change or a check**, to the November 16th meeting or mail to the treasurer as listed on the right.

Thank you!

About DVFWS

The purpose of DVFWS shall be to encourage the enjoyment of ferns and wildflowers by cultivating and propagating them in the home and garden; by studying them in their wild habitats, gardens and conservatories; by promoting their conservation and preservation; and by providing a forum for the exchange of information and expertise.

Officers

President: Richard Reynolds
RickReynolds5@verizon.net

Vice President: Michael Brooks
Mbrooks@wcupa.edu

Secretary: Donna Wilhelm
donnacwilhelm@gmail.com

Treasurer: Alice-Blake Simonson
asbjj28@yahoo.com

Membership in DVFWS is open to anyone who is interested in ferns and wildflowers. Three general membership meetings are held each year and a number of field trips are scheduled each year to areas rich in botanical interest.

The Newsletter is published quarterly. Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and may be e-mailed to:

delvalfernsoc@gmail.com

or e-mailed to Janet Whitefield, editor
jntwhite863@gmail.com

Membership is \$10 for individuals or \$14 for two members at the same address per year or \$28 and \$39, respectively for three years. Dues are payable to DVFWS and mailed to:

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