

# Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society

APRIL 2021



*Cardamine hirsute*,  
Hairy Bittercress  
Exeter River Trail  
Gibraltar, PA  
3/10/21

Photo by Link Davis

## Inside this Issue

Meeting 4/10	1
Field Trips	2-3
Flower Show	4
Remembering Otto Heck	5-6
Member News Note from Rick	7

## Zoom Meeting April 10

There will be a meeting of DVFWS on April 10th **at 12 noon**. Grab your lunch and join us by zoom on your computer or phone. A reminder link and instructions will be sent the day before by Leslie Morris-Smith who will host the meeting. Please note the time is not our usual time to gather, but it is at the convenience of the speakers.

At noon, Bernie and Terry Cabana will have a slide presentation of the wildflowers on their 6-acre property, Hemlock Haven. This is in preparation for an in-person field trip there on April 17th and /or May 15th.

12:30 brings us to the business portion of the meeting.

At 1 pm you will enjoy Janet Novak's program:

### **Water, Sand, and Fire: The New Jersey Pine Barrens**

The New Jersey pine barrens is a place of dark waters, white sand, and—at least in the past—frequent fires. These factors have given the pine barrens a set of plants quite different from our typical mid-Atlantic woodlands. These plants include the lovely (e.g. pine barrens gentian), the intriguing (e.g. pitcher plants and other carnivorous plants), and the bizarre (looking at you, ipecac spurge). In this talk, you'll hear about these and other pine barrens plants, the habitats they live in, and accessible places to see them.

This is particularly apropos to the theme of our Flower Show display this year. The meeting should conclude by 1:30.

*About the picture: Hairy Bittercress is in the mustard family and might be better named Hairy Spicycress. Hairy is for the hairs on the stems. The tender leaves, before flowers appear, have a mild spicy, peppery taste. It is a wild edible, much like gourmet microgreens, which you can add to a salad, a sandwich, or as a garnish. It thrives in cooler weather in damp rich soil, and dies back toward summer. From wildedible.com JW, editor*

# Field trips to start in-person

*Field trips are a vital component of our Fern and Wildflower Society. We enjoy meeting with each other and discovering wildflowers and ferns in their wild habitats, gardens, and conservatories. There is always something new to learn and places to visit that perhaps you did not know existed.*

*If you are immunized and /or feel comfortable in a small group in the great outdoors, please register for the following field trips. The leader will take a reasonable number of participants for social distancing in the area of the tour. Please wear a mask for everyone's safety.*

## **Hemlock Haven: Biglerville, PA, April 17 and/or May 15, Saturdays, 10 am**

Members Bernie and Terry Cabana welcome all members of DVFWS to visit their property, "Hemlock Haven" on Saturday, April 17 to see the early spring ephemerals (i.e. round leaf hepatica, trout lily, etc.), or on Saturday May 15 which would be ideal for the later bloomers (i.e. *Polygala* & *Orchis spectabilis*.) Cabanas think this will be a bountiful year for blooms due to the snow cover this winter.

Bernie and Terry are fully immunized and their 6-acre property has plenty of room to spread out. Their home is in Biglerville, about 2 1/2 hours from most of our members in the Delaware Valley, but an easy trip west on the turnpike. Make a full day of it by visiting Gettysburg or the National Apple Museum (May date only).

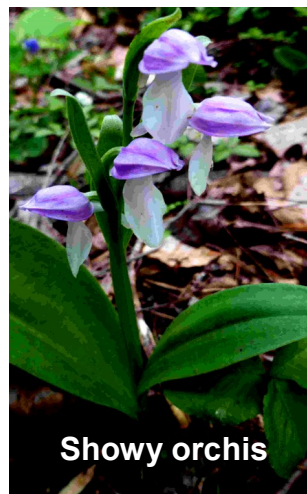
Five years ago our group spent the morning walking Hemlock Haven & photographing the many species of native flowers that abound in the nearby trails and woodland. At times, the flowers were so abundant it was almost impossible not to step on them, but we try to be careful.

Cabanas would like you to arrive at 10 am if possible, and bring a bag lunch. Beverage and dessert will be provided on their covered porch following the walk. You may come either or both dates. Terry suggested a rain date of Tuesday May 18th if it is raining on the 15th. If not immunized, please wear a mask when not eating. They would prefer that you e-mail that you will be visiting: [ndsi@aol.com](mailto:ndsi@aol.com) or [theresedcabana@gmail.com](mailto:theresedcabana@gmail.com)

**To whet your desire to go in-person, Bernie will present a power point on Zoom at 12 noon for DVFWS on Saturday, April 10th. A link will be sent the day before.**

### **Directions**

- If using a GPS, the address is: 260 Boyds Hollow Road, Biglerville, PA 17307
- OR, take PA Turnpike west to Gettysburg (Exit 236)
- Take Route 15 south to Route 234
- Turn right onto Route 234 west towards Biglerville
- Stay on Route 234 approximately 13 miles.
- Just past Coles Campground bear right onto Shippensburg Road, leaving Route 234.
- Drive 0.5 miles to Boyds Hollow Road on right (near a red barn)
- Drive 0.5 miles to 260 Boyds Hollow Rd. on left.  
Park in the field unless too wet.



**Showy orchis**

# More Field trips

## Leaser Lake: Lehigh County, PA May 8, Saturday, 10 am

**K**aren Mohn, will take us on a venture at a locale she enjoys visiting. Leaser Lake offers beautiful views of the “Blue Mountain” and familiar wildflowers of spring. We will meet at the northern boat launch parking lot at 10 am. Easy walking. Please reserve your space with our leader, **Karen Mohn** at 610-207-6851, [papatrees@aol.com](mailto:papatrees@aol.com) or [Karenmohn@gmail.com](mailto:Karenmohn@gmail.com)

**Directions:** allow 1 1/2 hours GPS Coordinates: N 40.679043 W 75.836162

- Take interstate route 78 west of Allentown
- Exit off to route 143 north at Lenhartsville.
- Follow route 143 north 8 miles thru Wanamakers.
- Take left onto Ontelaunee Trail and follow this road around the north shore
- The boat launch will be on the left.

## A Day of Bogs in the Poconos: July 31, Saturday, 10 am. Save the Date!

**T**his trip is not totally planned at this point, but we intend to start at Valmont Bog which is oddly adjacent to an industrial park and known for its native orchids. We had a trip there 5 years ago and it was amazing. People come from all over the country to photograph these rare orchids.

Easy walking, about 2 hours from Delaware Valley, near Hazelton, PA. After a bag lunch, the plan is to go to Nature Conservancy’s Tannersville Bog. Watch your July Newsletter for more details.

Karen Mohn, leader



*Platanthera ciliaris*

# Flower Show

## 2021 Flower Show Exhibit News

Our Society supports the mission of PHS by participating in the 2021 Philadelphia Flower Show, June 5-13, during this year of challenges. The theme of **HABITAT: Nature's Masterpiece**, allows us to showcase the beauty of plants found in the special habitats of the marshes or bogs in our part of the world.

After I learned that a sphagnum bog in a plateau near Tannersville, PA was the inspiration for the design of our exhibit, I searched further. In a 1991 Nature Conservancy report, Tannersville is the southernmost low elevation boreal bog east of the Mississippi. After a large glacial lake receded, the land looks solid, but is in fact a vast thick soup of peat moss.

Marshy areas like this and the other bogs in the Poconos are filled with rare and endangered flora and fauna. Tannersville Cranberry Bog Preserve offers a chance to safely view this treasure from boardwalks, thanks to the conservation efforts of The Nature Conservancy and surrounding communities.

### Working at the 2021 Flower Show at FDR Park, South Philadelphia:

Volunteer job descriptions: Volunteers are still needed!

Set-up volunteers — Thursday June 3rd: Bring clippers to groom plants, and a knife to cut down flower pot rims. Help plant. Place labels.

Tear-down volunteers — Monday afternoon June 14. Separate plants and stone from mulch and remove signage. Drive in to transport plants, bog gardens, rain barrel, etc. from the premises to their final destinations.

Exhibit up-keep: While we are not required to sit at the booth in teams as before, someone from our organization must be at FDR park every day as a DVFWS contact for PHS. Our plants need water every day. Two people are needed to water as weather requires, and be on site daily, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There will be a water "pod" we can use behind the Horticulture which is adjacent to our display. We need to keep our membership brochures stocked and perhaps explain to visitors how to build a bog garden, which is the educational aspect (as requested by PHS) of our display. There will be signage at the display showing the steps. You may wander the show when not at our display. Let Janet Whitefield know at [jntwhite863@gmail.com](mailto:jntwhite863@gmail.com) if you are interested in a pass to the flower show to help with these tasks.

Thank you,  
Leslie-Morris Smith

### ***PLEASE JOIN US FOR REMOTE FLOWER SHOW STATUS MEETINGS***

The next zoom meeting will be Monday, April 12 at 6:30 pm and every other week until the end of May.

You will receive a link by email to the meeting the day before, unless you opt out by contacting Janet Whitefield at [jntwhite863@gmail.com](mailto:jntwhite863@gmail.com)

Please email me at [leslm5791@gmail.com](mailto:leslm5791@gmail.com) if you have questions about the meeting or about zoom.

All are welcome whether or not you have been involved with Flower Shows in the past.  
We really would like to see your interest and input.

Leslie Morris-Smith

# Remembering Otto



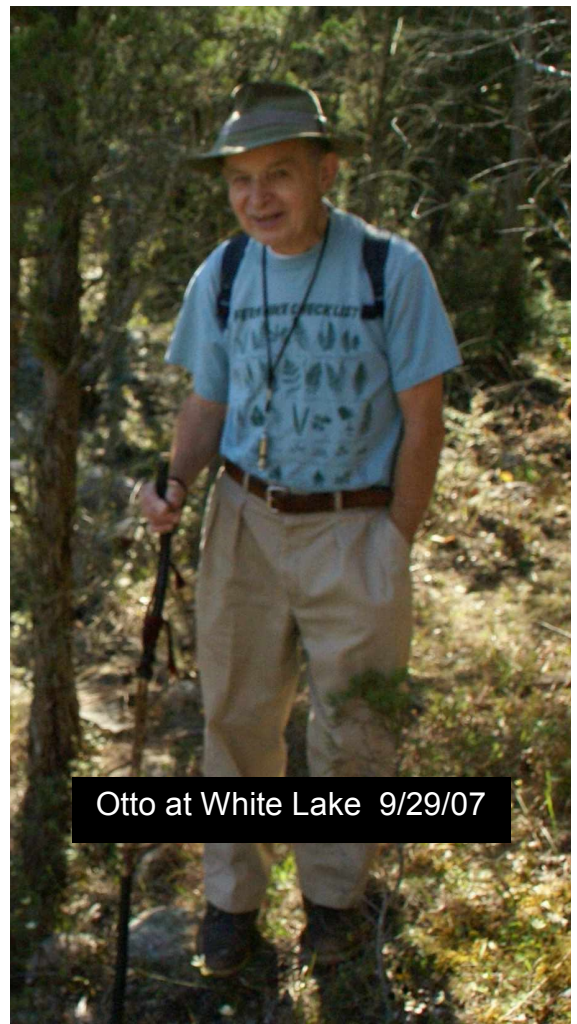
## Otto Ambrose Heck August 26, 1929 - February 4, 2021

With an enthusiasm for the sciences and ecology that was unmatched, Otto channeled his passions into helping the environment as well as teaching. He began teaching ninth-grade general science and biology. It was there that his classroom became known as, “The Zoo” as he kept a large collection of snakes, lizards, salamanders, and toads. He would later become a Professor of Biology at Trenton State College. Teaching was not confined to the brick and mortar structures of the campus, but he was often leading trips into the wilderness to show his students biology in action. They benefited greatly from this real world immersion into nature.

Otto was a specialist in Corn Snakes and also Great Horned Owls, and did a large amount of research on the two. He was always interested in the flora and fauna of an environment and had a passion for ferns.

He was married to Catherine for 68 years, living in Kingwood Township, NJ for over fifty years prior to moving to Raritan Township three years ago. He and Catherine had eight children. *(Excerpts taken from the tribute written for his funeral. For a full copy, contact Janet Whitefield.)*

Otto joined DVFWS in 1993 with his wife Catherine, whom we affectionately called Kit, and was very active for many years until health issues intervened. In those years he participated in everything—meetings, flower shows, day trips, and those marvelous week-long excursions to Bruce Peninsula in Canada, New England, and West Virginia. He was an expert on the pine barrens of New Jersey and would take us to his favorite places, always with a hooked stick along, hoping to find a snake to show us. He was president of the society in 2003—2004 and was an energizing force for DVFWS. He led many field trips and presented several



Otto at White Lake 9/29/07

*(Continued on page 6)*

slide programs at our meetings. Unfortunately, so many of our current members were not around in those days and never knew Otto.

Otto was one of our "mountain goats" and would run up a steep mountain-side, climbing over rocks, roots, boulders, as if it were child's play. He was never happier than if he found a snake - or an exotic plant. On one of the forays to Bruce Peninsula, he and Jack Schieber along with the local fern expert host would spend hours in the evening examining fronds to discern the parentage of Dryopteris hybrids. Otto's son Richard came on one of the trips to Bruce Peninsula and it was fun to hear the bantering between him and his dad.

Otto spent his final three years at Hunterdon Care Center in Flemington, NJ. Kit still resides there on hospice. I visited him there twice. One story I heard was that someone from Wildlife Service came to give a program to the residents and the ranger recognized Otto and announced to the group, "Otto taught me everything that I know." Otto called him by name and enjoyed visiting with him after the program was over. He enjoyed my visits too, hearing about the members that he would remember, and perusing the newsletters with me.

Otto was one of our members that raised the "humility index" of the Fern Society. We stood in awe of his knowledge, a humble scholar who enjoyed people as much as snakes and ferns.

*Comments compiled from memories of Donna Wilhelm, Alice-Blake Simonson, Tom Tomer, Michael Brooks, and Robin Hoy, who knew Otto only through her parents' comments. (Jack and Rose Marie Schieber) written by Janet Whitefield*



A pensive moment caught by Tom Tomer



**Otto, (in yellow shirt) always the educator with Bill Bondinell, Lois and Michael Brooks, and Jack Schieber at Brendon Byrne State Forest , NJ 5/31/08**  
photo by Tom Whitefield

# Member News

Welcome, Elisabeth Griggs, a returning member.  
Check the membership list for her contact information.

## A Note from our President, Rick Reynolds:

I bought an interesting newly released book a couple of weeks ago -- *Grasses, Sedges, Rushes: An Identification Guide*. I think it's an important book because it covers the niche of natives other than ferns and "wildflowers." Out of the blue, the author contacted me the other day by email asking whether our members might like to know about it.

*Dear Rick Reynolds:*

*I am writing you on behalf of the Yale University Press to tell you about a new book that we believe will appeal to members of your organization. *Grasses, Sedges, Rushes: An Identification Guide* by Lauren Brown and Ted Elliman is a user-friendly introduction to these plants that many botanical enthusiasts tend to pass by, considering them too challenging to identify. Using non-technical language and a simplified key, the book describes and illustrates 141 common species of grasses, sedges, and rushes, highlighting the features that are essential to their identification....*

*The book is a revised and updated edition of my 1979 *Grasses: An Identification Guide*. This new edition retains the clarity and descriptive quality of the original but has many enhancements, most notably the addition of diagnostic color photographs to complement the original line drawings. In addition, the text has been expanded to provide more information about species' life histories, ecology, and cultural connections, and scientific and common names have been updated to accord with current usage. Compact and portable, the book is an excellent field companion....*

*Thank you very much for your attention!*

*Yours truly,*

*Lauren Brown*

**Rick is reaching out to her to see if she could do a presentation for a future zoom meeting.**

## 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](mailto:delvalfernsoc@gmail.com)**

**or e-mailed to Janet Whitefield, editor**  
**[jntwhite863@gmail.com](mailto:jntwhite863@gmail.com)**

**Membership is \$10 for individuals or \$14 for two members in a household per year or \$28 and \$39, respectively for three years. Dues are payable to DVFWS and mailed to:**

**Alice-Blake Simonson**  
**24 Bridle Ridge Circle**  
**Lewes DE 19958**  
**215-868-0440**

**Web site: [www.dvfws.org](http://www.dvfws.org)**

**Webmaster: Leslie Morris-Smith**  
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