Marilandica

Summer 2012 A Publication of the Maryland Native Plant Society Volume 3, Issue 2

Tina Thieme Brown

Marilandica

A Publication of the
Maryland Native Plant Society

www.mdflora.org
P.O. Box 4877 Silver Spring, MD 20914

Letter from the President

Dear Members,

I read a lot of native plant society newsletters from around the country and I've noticed that presidents often start their letters with a comment about the weather. Something along the lines of, "Here I sit, snowbound, gazing at the wee sparrows pecking at seeds tossed from my feeder by feasting squirrels… ." But this hot day seemed like just the moment to put together my thoughts about changes in plant taxonomy and nomenclature, a topic about which I hear a lot of complaints.

So here it is. See you at the conference in September.

~ Kirsten Johnson

Is Nothing Sacred?

"*Cimicifuga racemosa!*" you proudly exclaim. "Well, yes," says that smug fellow next to you, "but now it's called *Actea racemosa*." Moans and groans all around. Let's face it: no field trip would be complete without the know-it-all and the grouch. And not only are species names changing from the familiar ones in our decades-old Newcombs and Gleason & Cronquists, but whole plant families are being rejiggered in light of DNA and other evidence.

Last spring, Evert Broderick of the Nevada Native Plant Society humorously dramatized the breakup of the Scrophulariaceae (Figwort Family).

> "No, Penstemon, please don't leave me! [Sob . . . !] Our family will never be the same without you!
> "Yes, Scrophularia, I must go. I just don't fit in here anymore.
> "What about the Children?
> "They'll be adopted by good families, where they'll feel even more at home than they did with us. And no doubt you'll take in new ones to replace them.
> "I can't bear the thought of never seeing Mimulus's dear little face again. No, Penstemon, no!!! Please don't let our family split apart!! [Sob . . . !]"[1]

Of course, most of the Figwort species that have now been placed in other families did NOT have their names changed. *Penstemon canescens* (Beardtongue) and *Chelone glabra* (Turtlehead) have simply been recognized as more closely related to members of the Plantain Family than to the remaining Figworts. As Alan Weakley, Curator of the University of North Carolina Herbarium, explained several years ago,[2] name changes occur for different reasons. In some cases, the change is a reversion to an earlier name, correcting an erroneous oversight. In other instances, a name change is due to the splitting of species that mid-20th century authorities had lumped together. A number of those splits result from a current recognition that older authorities had it right. Timothy Block, co-author of *The Plants of Pennsylvania*,[3] commented in a lecture that "Cronquist was an extreme lumper. The frustration many naturalists feel today about splitting is because they grew up with Cronquist, but he's just one voice in the history of botany."

Instead of getting grumpy, let's understand and embrace the changes. After all, they represent additions to our botanical knowledge, and isn't that the very thing we desire? It won't be long before we'll be out in the field hearing the words, "Gee, it looks like a plantain," instead of, "It looks like a scroph." And we'll learn to appreciate the classification of *Pedicularis* (Wood Betony) with the other parasites in the Broomrape Family. Over time, updated floras and checklists are being published. Of practical use in Maryland are *The Plants of Pennsylvania*, Alan Weakley's *Flora of the Southern and Mid-Atlantic States*,[4] and the forthcoming *Flora of Virginia*.[5]

Modern Disposition of Some Traditional Figwort Genera

Scrophulariaceae (Figwort): *Scrophularia, Verbascum*
Plantaginaceae (Plantain): *Chelone, Gratiola, Limosella, Linaria, Penstemon, Veronica, Veronicastrum*
Orobanchaceae (Broomrape): *Agalinis, Aureolaria, Castilleja, Melampyrum, Pedicularis*
Phrymaceae (Lopseed): *Mimulus*

[1] Broderick, E., 2011, Divorce Taxonomy Style, *Nevada Native Plant Society Newsletter* 37:3-7. For a readable explanation of the breakup of the Figwort Family, available on the website of the California Native Plant Society (cnps.org), see Olmstead, R.G., 2002, Whatever Happened to the Scrophulariaceae? *Fremontia* 30:2-22.
[2] Weakley, A., 2005, Why Are Plant Names Changing So Much? *Native Plants*, 6:52-58.
[3] Rhoads, A.F. and Block, T.A., 2007, *The Plants of Pennsylvania, An Illustrated Manual* 2d Ed, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1042 pp.
[4] Available online or by order at www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm.
[5] Weakley, A.S., Ludwig, J.C., and Townsend, J.F., 2012 (expected), *Flora of Virginia*, Botanical Research Institute of Texas Press, Ft Worth, TX. To pre-order, see floraofvirginia.org.

Wildflower in Focus–Bee-Balm

Oswego-Tea
Monarda didyma L.
Mint Family *(*Lamiaceae*)*

The scarlet flowers of bee-balm or Oswego-tea (*Monarda didyma*) appear along the wooded banks of Bear Branch on the lower slopes of Frederick County's Sugarloaf Mountain in midsummer. These vividly hued, strikingly tall members of the mint family have been a favorite sight for artist Tina Brown and me for many years, and we had no idea how uncommon this wildflower was in Maryland when we chose to feature it in "Wildflower in Focus." MNPS board member Carole Bergmann, Montgomery County forest ecologist and botanist, observes: "I've never seen *Monarda didyma* in the wild in Montgomery County Parks. I saw it once on the Frederick Watershed property, but I rarely see it in Maryland. West Virginia is where I've seen it the most in recent years—then always in moist, often partially shaded areas along streams and ponds. It is beautiful when you see it!" MNPS vice president Marney Bruce adds: "I agree with Carole. The only place I've seen it in the wild, in just the circumstances Carole describes, is up in central Pennsylvania. But what a sight! We spotted this large red patch in the distance in the woods and as we got closer it was this lovely stand of *Monarda didyma* in dappled sunlight near a stream. Unforgettable! Had to be a wild population since there was no cabin or even remains of one for miles." Like Carole, MNPS treasurer Matt Cohen has seen wild plants in West Virginia, "notably in the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area in moist seeps in filtered sun." But as an avid and accomplished gardener focused on native plants appealing to wildlife, Matt says: "I grow some in my raingarden where it's been thriving for years." The flowers attract hummingbirds, adding to their value and appeal. I planted bee-balm in my garden several years ago and it seemed that within five minutes of blooming, a ruby throated hummingbird was dipping into the flowers!

Monarda didyma L.
Photo by Carol Bergmann, Inset by Carolyn Fulton

Flowers: Brilliant red, tubular, with 2 widely divergent lips. Long stamens protrude beneath the upper lip. Individual flowers are each slightly more than an inch long, surrounded by purplish or reddish bracts and borne in a showy round cluster.

Leaves: Opposite, simple, toothed, ovate-lanceolate or deltoid-ovate, 2–6" long; pungently fragrant, as many mint family leaves are. Carole Bergmann says: "As a person who loves to use the "sense of smell" when identifying plants, I can say that *all* of the *Monardas* have a wonderful scent!"

Height: 2–5'. Like most members of the mint family, bee-balm has a square plant stalk.

Habitat and Range: Moist woods and thickets, stream banks; Maine to Michigan, south along the mountains to Georgia (some authorities suggest the New England plant populations are garden escapes).

Herbal Lore: According to Steven Foster and James Duke: "American Indians used leaf tea for colic, gas, colds, fevers, stomachaches, nosebleeds, insomnia, heart trouble, measles, and to induce sweating. Poultice used for headaches. Historically, physicians used leaf to expel worms and gas." Marney Bruce observes that the common name "bee-balm" evolved from the plant's use as a remedy for bee stings.

Similar Species: Most apt to be confused with cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*). Cardinal flower has alternate leaves and its flower clusters are long and upright (not round). Another *Monarda* species, wild bergamot (*M. fistulosa*), is more common in Maryland. Its flowers are lavender or pink. Fleming, Lobstein and Tufty list four *Monarda* species in *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area* and Carole Bergmann describes where she sees them in her travels: "I see [horsemint] *M. punctata* most commonly on the eastern shore, but I have seen it in Prince Georges County a few times. I've seen [basil balm] *M. clinopodia* several times growing in partial shade along the C&0 Canal in Washington County, but I haven't ever seen a lot of it in one place. I have seen [wild bergamot] *fistulosa* most frequently. I see it both in sunny open somewhat dry fields and along the edge of woods. I think it tolerates poor clay soil and somewhat rocky soil. It's very attractive to hummingbirds, butterflies and bees."

According to MNPS board member, teacher and author Cris Fleming: "*M. punctata* fills the open fields at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary in Anne Arundel County in late summer. It is also listed on a MNPS field trip to Piney Orchard, also in Anne Arundel County, on Sept. 21, 2008." Cris adds: "I have seen a nice colony of *M. clinopodia* along the C&O Canal just north of Violette's Lock in midsummer."

Blooming Time for Bee-Balm: June-September. Other *Monardas* also summer-early fall blooming.

~ Melanie Choukas-Bradley

MNPS board members Carole Bergmann, Marney Bruce, Matt Cohen, Cris Fleming, Rod Simmons and artist Tina Thieme Brown contributed to this article, which was adapted from *An Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Wildflowers and Trees: 350 Plants Observed at Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland* (Choukas-Bradley and Brown, University of Virginia Press).

Conservation Watch

TREES AND POWER LINES: LETTER OF SUPPORT

This spring, many Montgomery County residents felt under siege as PEPCO crews inflicted an extremely aggressive tree-trimming and cutting program. In response, Councilmembers Berliner and Elrich introduced a bill that would impose more stringent reliability standards for electric companies operating in Maryland and require them to obtain permission from homeowners before pruning on private property. MNPS submitted the following letter of support. The bill was put on hold after the power outages from the June 29th storms.

May 29, 2012
Dear Councilmembers:

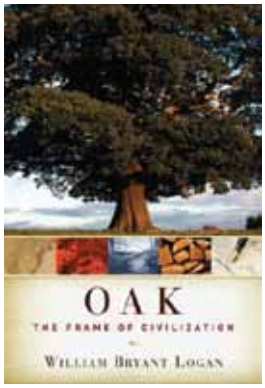
On behalf of the Maryland Native Plant Society, I write to urge you to support Bill 16-12, the Tree-Utility Vegetation Management bill proposed by Councilmembers Berliner and Elrich. We are a state-wide organization dedicated to promoting appreciation and conservation of Maryland's native plants and their habitats. A large number of our members live in Montgomery County.

In the name of "improving electrical service," Pepco has damaged or removed many large trees throughout Montgomery County. Obviously, dead or dying branches overhanging power lines need to be carefully removed, but Pepco's contractors have devastated the gracious tree canopy in many suburban and rural areas in the county. It is tragic to see huge swaths cut through the middle of mature trees, branches completely removed from one side of tall trees, and grand old trees simply felled to the ground. In a great many of these cases, skilled pruning would have sufficed to save the tree and to protect electrical wires.

Pepco managers seem to have no sense of the important benefits provided by large trees, particularly native trees — benefits such as control of air, noise, and visual pollution, moderation of climate, and control of water run-off. Frequent and carefully managed tree-trimming near power lines would have avoided the drastic devastation of trees throughout the county during the past year. We hope this bill will force Pepco and other utilities to obtain permission before disturbing trees on private and locally owned property and will motivate them to provide more sensitive care of our county's public trees, thereby contributing to the health and well-being of all county citizens.

Yours truly,
Kirsten Johnson, President

BOOK REVIEW ~ Oak: The Frame of Civilization



Oak: The Frame for Civilization
~William Bryant Logan

In this extensively researched micro-history, William Bryant Logan traces how oaks and the people of the Northern Hemisphere (mainly Europeans) have influenced each other for millennia. In his homage to *Quercus*, Logan cites world religions, literature, and natural history to show how people and other animals used oaks for food, shelter, ships, fuel (including charcoal), tanning, ink, (used by the likes of Michelangelo) and barrels. He argues that balanocultures—societies' relying on acorns for food—were among the most stable and affluent cultures the human world has ever known.

The reader learns the origin of dozens of words and phrases, all rooted in our relationship to trees in general, and oaks in particular. For example, we learn that swords and steel tools must be tempered in order to hold an edge. If it is too zealously grinded, the blade will lose its temper, ergo to apply too much heat is similar to having too much anger and losing one's temper.

Logan examines the physical properties of oaks and how these properties have been used variously to our ends. The Vikings used the wood's strength and flexibility to build longships that moved as fluidly as the water in which they sailed. Hundreds of years later, a young United States launched the USS Constitution. This sailing vessel was so fast and solidly build that it was formidable even to the British Navy. Logan argues that the British could not build ships the same way because they had already depleted their oak resources.

As a horticulturist, I find the ideas of coppicing provocative. In order to sustain an indefinite source of wood, oaks were coppiced, or cut to the ground, every seven to twenty-five years. The cut-back trees resprouted and grew quickly to provide firewood, charcoal, fence posts, and palings. Logan, a certified arborist, maintains that pruning trees in this way actually prolongs the trees' lives.

Logan points out that "it was no mean thing to be a carpenter in [medieval] Europe. In the great halls of European kings, carpenters sat with priests and merchant adventurers." We, like Logan, admire the carpenter for being an intellectual, in the original sense of the word—"a person who puts reflection into action."

At times, Logan focuses a great deal of attention on technical carpentry jargon——how specific pieces of lumber were used in ships and other structures. For those of us who are not carpenters, this section can drag.

One of the most appealing aspects of the book is Logan's obvious love for the tree. More than a catalog of oak trivia or a carpenter's handbook, the book includes Logan's reflections on what he's researched: "The great thing about coopering and other crafts was that they occupied the brain, the hand, and the emotions, all at the same time. There was a resistance to the completion of the task, and this had to be overcome by the craftman's know-how, a composite of his knowing, remembering, and action…the simultaneous activity of the three might just be a requirement to become and remain a human being." He writes longingly of our lost intimacy with the oak.

Oak: The Frame of Civilization is a provocative read for the Year of the Oak. "We invented a whole way of living out of [the oaks'] fruit and their wood, and by that token, they too invented us."

~Christa Partain

At Last–An Entry Into Sedge Identification

"I haven't worked my brain that hard in years - or enjoyed doing it more!" - Ann Lundy

I've been talking for years about learning the sedges. Until the weekend of June 9–10 it was just that—all talk and no ID. But now, after spending two intense days with workshop leaders Christopher Frye (MD State Botanist) and Wesley Knapp (MD Natural Heritage Program Regional Botanist), I can confidently say I have a clue. Organized by the Baltimore Chapter, the Sedge Workshop started with a Saturday in the lab at Towson University with the benefit of dissecting microscopes. After Chris's succinct introduction, we dove right in to keying out the numerous *Carex* samples they had brought along. We used the 1991 Gleason & Cronquist key, recommended as the most straightforward key available even though the nomenclature is somewhat outdated. Every time we got stumped, Chris or Wes was right there with help and encouragement. For example, when I had trouble deciding whether the perigynium I was looking at was tapered or rounded at the base, Chris brought over a species with a rounded perigynium for comparison, and I immediately saw that mine was tapered.

Leaders: Chris Frye and Wes Knapp

Sunday morning the group headed for the Gunpowder River (Hereford Area) to practice in the field. I was initially worried about having to rely on a hand lens, but I found it easier than I anticipated. We experienced the triumph of success, and when we failed, our leaders were always able to show us where we had gone astray.

The following week, Dwight and I tried out our new skills on sedges growing at Robert E. Lee Memorial Park in Baltimore where Dwight is working on a plant survey for the Nature Council. Some were pretty straightforward. Others not. Happily, Charlie Davis of the Natural History Society was available to help. I hope that in the coming months and years, those of us who participated in the workshop will develop enough expertise to contribute sedges to the compilations of species seen on MNPS field trips. "Exciting and inspiring" was Heidi Pringle's comment on the workshop. And she already reports identifying five sedges collected at the site of the May 2012 Howard County field trip.

Grateful thanks to leaders Chris and Wes, to Professor Roland Roberts of Towson University for making a lab available, and to Baltimore Chapter Chair Chris Partain for organizing the workshop.

~ Kirsten Johnson

Coming Events

SUMMER & FALL FIELD TRIPS

These are the field trips scheduled at press time. For up to date news of MNPS field trips and activities please see our website, www.mdflora.org and find us at meetup.com. Unless otherwise indicated, MNPS field trips are generally geared to adults. Please see the information provided for individual field trips, some of which may welcome children. If you have questions, feel free to contact the field trip leader.

September 2 ~ Sunday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Civil War Fort Sites in Washington, DC: Fort Stanton
Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica

September 22 ~ Saturday, 9:30 AM
National Museum of the American Indian Gardens
Looking at the gardens on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution horticulturist Christine Price-Abelow and a Cultural Interpreter will talk about the Native American planting techniques, ethnobotanical uses and the garden's overall design concepts.

September 30 ~ Sunday
2012 Annual MNPS Conference Field Trips
September 30th field trips are part of the 2012 Annual MNPS Conference, but are open to non-conference participants. Pre-registration is required. Register online at www.mdflora.org.

Towson University Field Station
Leader: Roland Roberts
Located along the Gunpowder River, the Towson University field station features a mixed hardwood forest and lush riverside vegetation.

Robert E. Lee Park
Leaders: Dwight and Kirsten Johnson
This trip will explore the rare serpentine plant community of the park, located just north of Baltimore City. The walk will be about two miles over rocky trails. Cancelled if there is rain.

Marshy Point by Canoe
Leader: Bob Stanhope
Join the first director of the Marshy Point Nature Center for a canoe trip on Dundee Creek, known for submerged aquatic vegetation, tidal fresh marshes, nesting Bald Eagles and as a nursery for the fish in the Chesapeake Bay. Canoes, paddles, and PFD's supplied for $10 each. Maximum: 28 participants.

North Point State Park
Leader: Charlie Davis
Over half of North Point State Park, Black Marsh, has been designated a State Wildlands. Black Marsh is considered to be one of the finest examples of a tidal marsh on the Upper Chesapeake.

October 7 ~ Sunday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Civil War Fort Sites in Washington, DC: Fort Dupont
Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica

BOTANY QUIZ

1. This member of the Poppy Family has one of the largest and most striking flowers of all our spring ephemerals. Its 8-16 petals are creamy white, and its single leaf protects the flower from wind.

2. This spring-blooming plant is popular in gardens, but in the wild it's found mainly on rocky cliffs and ledges where its red and yellow flowers dangle gracefully, attracting hummingbirds. Later in the summer, the leaves are home to the larvae of leaf-mining flies (*Phytomyza* spp.), which create interesting whitish tracks while doing no harm to the plant.

3. In early spring, the greenish yellow flowers of this dioecious understory shrub appear before its leaves. When crushed, the leaves have a pleasant lemon-spicy odor. This is the host plant for one of the swallowtail butterflies, and its fruit feeds birds and small mammals in the fall.

4. Identify the *Monarda* species pictured here.

Far left photo: Ginny Yacovissi
Middle & right: Carol Bergmann

Coming Events

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Many MNPS members have thought of the monthly meetings in Montgomery County–usually at the Kensington Library, Knowles Avenue, in Kensington–as the regular meetings of the Maryland Native Plant Society. MNPS's other chapters hold monthly meetings as well; all the meetings known at press time are listed chronologically. Please see www.mdflora.org for details.

August 21 ~ Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Western Mountains Chapter
Location: Appalachian Laboratory, Frostburg
Speaker: Stephen Keller, Assistant Professor of Biology, Appalachian Lab

August 28 ~ Tuesday, 7:30 PM, doors open at 6:30
Conservation of Serpentine Ecosystems: Soldier's Delight and Beyond Montgomery County
Location: Kensington Library
Speaker: Dr. Marla S. McIntosh, Professor of Urban Forestry, University of Maryland, College Park
Serpentine sites are inhospitable habitats for most plants. However, rare and unique species have evolved that are adapted to these globally rare hotspots of biodiversity. Learn about the importance of these fascinating ecosystems and find out about international efforts to conserve them.

September 19 ~ Wednesday, 7:00 PM
New Pests and Diseases of Maryland's Forests
Baltimore Chapter
Location: Irvine Nature Center, Owings Mills
Speaker: Bud Reaves, Forester and Arborist, Anne Arundel County
Pests and diseases are a normal part of any ecosystem. However, some of these pests and pathogens are newly introduced and pose novel and challenging threats. Bud Reaves will discuss the new pests and diseases of Maryland's forests and tell us what steps are being taken to combat them.

September 25 ~ Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Native Oaks of Maryland
Montgomery County
Speaker: Christopher Puttock
Location: Kensington Library

October 16 ~ Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Western Mountains Chapter
Location: Appalachian Lab, Frostburg
Speaker: Wade Dorsey, Savage River State Forest Manager

October 17, Wednesday ~ 7:00 PM,

A Bee's Eye View of Pollination
Baltimore Chapter
Location: TBA
Speaker: Sam Droege, Biologist
Look at native plants from the perspective of a key slice of life that is tied to these plants…bees. Regionally, there are over 400 species of native bees and many are only found on the flowers of specific plants. Why 400? Why not just one kind of bee? The complexity of color, architecture, and phenology of native flowers is a clue to that relationship.

October 30 ~ Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Oak Hybrids of Our Region
Speaker: Rod Simmons
Montgomery County
Location: Kensington Library
Rod Simmons, current MNPS Board member and former President, will share his knowledge of the hybrid oaks found in Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia.

November 14 ~ Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Winter Oak Identification Workshop
Baltimore Chapter
Location: Irvine Nature Center, Owings Mills
Speaker: Cris Fleming
2012 is the MNPS Year of the Oak. This month, educator extraordinaire Cris Fleming will lead an oak-focused identification workshop with specimens of twigs, barks, and fruit to help participants learn different techniques of identifying oaks in winter.

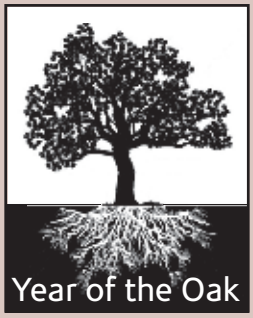
November 27 ~ Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Oak Tree Anatomy
Speaker: Richard Murray
Montgomery County
Location: Kensington Library
As an arborist practicing in lower Montgomery County, Richard finds that 90% of his work with Oaks involves only a handful of species. He will profile these trees, revealing overlapping features of other Oaks and trees in general. Among other things, we'll investigate protection wood, branch attachments, and touch on bark and root elements.

Answers to botany quiz: 1. *Sanguinaria canadensis*, Bloodroot. 2. *Aquilegia canadensis*, Wild Columbine. 3. *Lindera benzoin*, Spicebush 4. A. *Monarda punctata B. Monarda clinopodia C. Monarda didyma*

Become a member, join online: www.mdflora.org.

Marilandica

A Publication of the Maryland Native Plant Society



In this Issue

Maryland Native Plant Society
PO Box 4877
Silver Spring, MD 20914

Maryland Native Plant Society

You can also join on-line on our website www.mdflora.org

Member 1 _____

Member 2 _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Co _____ Zip _____

Phone (S) Day _____ Eve _____ Cell _____

Email _____ ❑ I do not wish to receive emails

Annual Membership Dues

❑ Individual $25	❑ Organization $50
❑ Double $35	❑ Lifetime $350
❑ Student/Limited Income $15	
❑ Optional Donation $	
Total Enclosed $	

Make checks payable to: Maryland Native Plant Society or MNPS

Maryland Native Plant Society
PO Box 4877
Silver Spring, MD 20914

www.mdflora.org