

Public Is Invited

Marietta Natural History Society

Fall 2000 Newsletter

Special Program: October 5 - Night Hike!

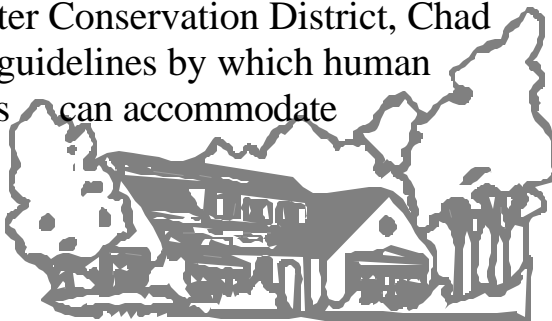
Lynn Barnhart will be our Night Hike leader. Learn about stars, planets and nocturnal wildlife. Enjoy the sights, sounds and aromas of an autumn evening. Meet at the Hermann Fine Arts Center parking lot for 6:30 PM departure. Plan to be back at 10:00 PM. Dress for possible crisp evening air.

**Living in a...
"People-logical Niche"**

*Thursday, November 9,
7:00 PM, Thomas Hall, Room 124,
Marietta College*

Presenter: Chad Amos

A wildlife specialist for the Washington Co. Soil and Water Conservation District, Chad will discuss guidelines by which human communities can accommodate and preserve wildlife.



Raptor Rehab!

*Thursday, October 12, 7:00 PM
i McDonough Auditorium, i
Marietta College*

Presenter: Mike Book

Mike Book is the Director of the WV Raptor Rehabilitation Center. He will be speaking to us about the challenges of restoring health to these special birds. Special Guest: Thunder, a mature bald eagle.



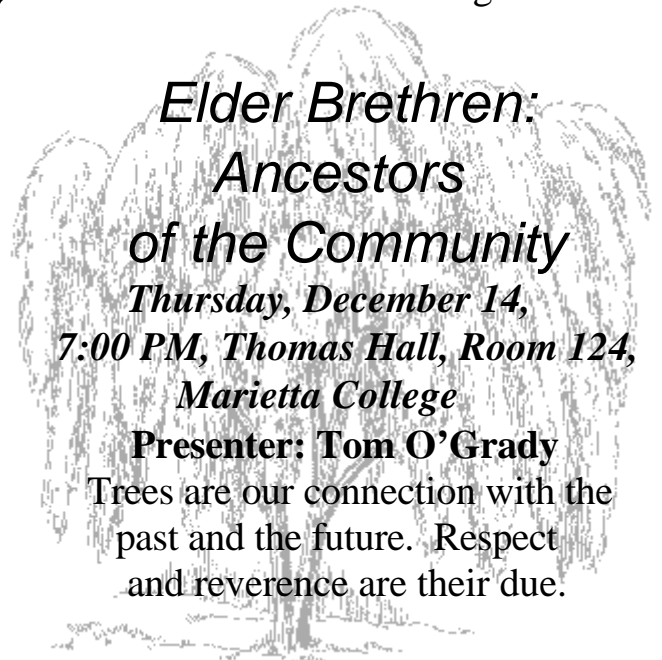
*Elder Brethren:
Ancestors*

of the Community

*Thursday, December 14,
7:00 PM, Thomas Hall, Room 124,
Marietta College*

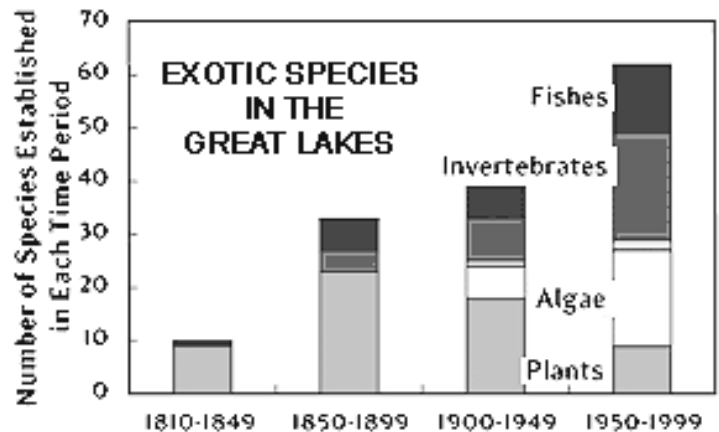
Presenter: Tom O'Grady

Trees are our connection with the past and the future. Respect and reverence are their due.





Ecosystem Assessment. The White House Office of Science and Technology has commissioned reports of the health of the nation's ecosystems. Reports focus on croplands, forests, oceans and coastal areas. Future reports will cover population centers, rangelands and freshwater systems. The reports describe the status of native and exotic species, physical conditions, chemical contaminants and more. The graph to the right shows the encroachment of exotic species into the Great lakes. The reports can be found at www.us-ecosystems.org.



The Apiarian Way. Interested in bees? Check out CyberBee.Net, maintained by an entomologist at Michigan State University. This site is abuzz with information for bee keepers and other bezy-buddies (sorry). Lots of links to other bee sites at www.cyberbee.net.

Bee Eaters. OK, bees don't whip you into a frenzy? How about bee-eating plants? The Carnivorous Plant FAQ site explains how these innovative predators trap and digest bugs, where they grow, how to maintain specimens, and much more. You can learn here about *Nepenthes* pitcher plants (many from Africa) large enough to trap frogs, rats and birds. Find it all at www.sarracenia.com/faq.html. [Also, stop by the Marietta College Biology Department and view the Newsletter Editor's collection of carnivorous plants, including two *Nepenthes* species.]

The BookWorm



Some Recent Acquisitions on Natural History at the Washington County Public Library

Warner Shedd. **Owls aren't Wise and Bats aren't Blind: A Naturalist Debunks Our Favorite Fallacies About Wildlife.** And flying squirrels aren't capable of real flight and opossums don't "play dead." Oh my! So many common beliefs that are scientific misconceptions. This book straightens the record for over 30 North American species and will be cherished by nature lovers. Call # 591.5.

Tom Rumer. **Unearthing the Land; the Story of Ohio's Scioto Marsh.** The Scioto Marsh in Hardin County was once an immense swamp, teeming with vegetation and wildlife, and like so many of Ohio's wetlands, was drained in the 19th century for farmland. *Unearthing the Land* is a century's view of former natural ecosystem altered by the "progress" of agriculture.

William Souder. **A Plague of Frogs.** This book investigates recent reports of widespread deformities among frogs, including missing, extra and deformed legs, and other developmental abnormalities. The author takes us into the workings of EPA labs and government hearing rooms as he investigates the science and politics behind efforts to understand these troubling observations.

Kenneth Carpenter. **Eggs, Nests, and Baby Dinosaurs; a Look at Dinosaur Reproduction.** The Discovery Channel not being around to film it live, Carpenter draws upon a wide variety of evidences to speculate about dinosaur courtship, sexual behavior, nesting, egg laying and infancy. While most of Carpenter's proposals cannot be presently verified, this is an interesting combination of imagination and science. Call # 567.9

October 2000

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 MNHS Plaque Dedica- tion	5 E	6	7 Fall Foli- age Tours Sched- uled
Have You Filled Your Bird Feeders?						
8 Fall Folia- ge Tours Sched- uled	9	10	11	12 MNHS Meeting	13 A	14 Great Blue Lob- elias Still In Flower
Watch For Arrival Of White-Throated Sparrows						
15	16	17	18	19	20 X	21 Orion Meteor Shower peaks
Red Bats Are Migrating In Evening						
Collect Wildflower Seeds For Planting Next Year						
22 Marietta Arboretum Dedication	23	24	25	26	27 Δ	28
Great Time For A Canoe Trip						
29	30	31 Halloween	Sunday Oct 29— Daylight savings time ends; clocks "fall backward"			
Protect Preying						
Mantis Egg Cases						
Fall Foliage Tour on Oct 7 (10 AM - 6 PM) and Oct 8 (12 - 5 PM). Drive-It-Yourself Fall Foliage Tour on Oct 8 (1 - 5 PM) starts at Marietta Recycling Center.						

Bird Feeder Watch Time Again

It's almost time again for the Winter Bird Feeder Watch. Here's a great activity for parents and kids. Participants record species and number of birds at their bird feeders every other weekend from November to mid March. You don't have to watch every weekend; all data collected can be used. If you want to participate, contact our feeder watch coordinator, Ava Bradley (373-5790) or Bird Watchers Digest (373-5285).



November 2000

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Bird Silhouette Indicates Bird Feeder Watch Days				1	2	3	4 E
Watch For Garden Spider Egg Cases							
5 ☘	6	7 Election Day: Make Your Vote Count	8	9 MNHS Meeting	10	11 A	
Look For Witch Hazel Flowering In Woods							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 ☘ X	
Look For Taurid Meteor FireBalls							
Nocturnal Insect Chorus Growing Thin							
19 ☘	20	21	22	23 Thanks- giving	24	25 Δ	
Brown Creeper May Have Arrived For Winter							
Bare Trees Again Reveal Wildlife And Landforms							
26	27	28	29	30			
Good Time To Root Fertilize Trees							
Squirrels And Chipmunks Prepare For Winter							

December 2000

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 ☘
3 ☘ E	4	5	6	7	8	9
Great-Horned Owls Tune Up For Mating Season						
Live Christmas Trees Can Be Planted In Park Or Cemetery						
10	11 A	12	13	14 MNHS Meeting	15	16 ☘
Dandelion Flowers Persist In Warm Weather						
17 ☘ X	18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23
Turkeys Travel In Flocks						
24	25 Δ	26	27 Pasteur Born 1822	28	29	30 ☘
31 ☘	↑ Partial Eclipse of Sun on Dec 25! Approximately 50% eclipse around noon. Observable only in North America.					

London's Natural History Museum Boasts a collection of 68 million (that's right, million) animal and plant specimens, collected over a period of 300 years.



Recycled Paper
50% Total Recovered Fiber
20% Post-Consumer

Deadly Feasts

With arrival of autumn, forest and field plants provide an abundance of food for animals and people. Most people are well aware that many fruits and berries eaten by wildlife are not suitable for human consumption. However, carelessness can result in 'rashness' — or worse. Here are a few plants and plant parts to avoid as you forage this fall.

Horsechestnut and Buckeye (*Aesculus* spp.)

Toxic parts: Mature nuts and young sprouts. The large brown mature nuts are pretty to look at and comforting to caress, but don't consider eating them. Both have proven lethal to children, although horsechestnut appears to be the most toxic. Symptoms include inflammation of mucous membranes, vomiting, stupor and paralysis.



Horsechestnut

Red Oak (*Quercus*)

Toxic parts: acorns, young shoots, and leaves. Ingestion of a large quantity of any part of the oak is necessary to cause human poisoning. While acorns of white oaks are edible, those of red and black oaks require extensive leaching of tannins to make them palatable, so it's best to leave them for the squirrels.

Deadly nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*)

Toxic parts: entire plant, especially unripe berries. This plant is a tenacious inhabitant of fields and poorly tended gardens, as demonstrated in the Newsletter Editor's yard. Distinctive in its green viney stem, arrow-shaped leaves, and purple mature berries, the poisons contained within cause rapid heartbeat and nervous system depression. As deadly as its name implies, the toxic substances can be absorbed by handling the leaves and berries — but apparently not as effectively as ingestion, as suggested by the Newsletter Editor's continued presence.

Nightshade



Oak

Jimsonweed



Pokeweed

Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*)

Toxic parts: the entire plant, especially the seeds. A person would have to be very hungry to fight through the hard, prickly fruit to collect enough of the hard, dry seeds to comprise a meal, but very few are necessary to cause severe poisoning. Symptoms include delirium, incoherence, coma, and death.

Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)

Toxic parts: The purple stem, leaves and berries, and fleshy root. Also a common field and yard inhabitant, the very young green shoot is reportedly edible. However, as the plant matures it becomes very toxic, betokened by formation of a purple pigment in the tissues. Common symptoms include intestinal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, and weakened pulse and respiration. Fatalities have been reported.

Marietta Arboretum Dedication October 22, 1:00 PM; west end of Sacra Via Park

Join fellow Marietta residents in celebrating establishment of the Marietta Arboretum located in Sacra Via Park. The arboretum features thematic groves focusing on native species, flowering trees, wood-workers' favorites, and trees with unusual foliage and bark. We will be unveiling a plaque, provided by friends and Sewah Studios, that honors MNHS board member and City Tree Commissioner Marilyn Ortt for her service to Marietta's city trees. Hope you can join us for



Natural History Plaque

To Be Dedicated
Wed, Oct 4, 6:30 PM

The Natural History Plaque funded as a joint project of the MNHS and the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge will be installed on the Ohio River levee on the upriver side of the fountain. The plaque was made by Sewah Studios and has text and artwork to remind us of the importance of the Ohio River as a habitat for living organisms.

Please join us in celebrating
this important event!

2000 MNHS Membership

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Baker	Dave McShaffrey
Lynn Barnhart	& Ann Delleur
Bill Bennet &	Laurie Meagle
Rebecca Phillips	Jim and Marilyn Mills
Brad & Bar Dee Bond	Diane Mitchell
Ava Bradley	Susan Moellendick
Barbara Bradley	Laurie Munc
G.E. Brown	Jim & Gwen Noe
Chris Broyles	Janet O'Brien
Caroline & Craig Butler	Marilyn & Kathy Ortt
Wes Clarke	Stan & Cathy Piekarski
Pat, Harriet, Leah	Robert Scott Placier
& Daniel Collins	Bob & Caroline Putnam
Diane Dudzinski	Roberta Reese
Nancy Ezzard	Russ & Anna Lou Reid
Tom and Sharon Fenton	Herbert & Nancy Smith
Roland and Margaret	Steve, Jane, Michael
Fredericks	& Daniel Spilatro
Janine Eddy	Tom Steckel
Mary Grubert	Richard Stoltenberg
Dan & Gillian Harrison	Jay & Jo Ann Stowe
Karen Hunsaker	Barbara Tabor
Dawn Inabnet	Marilyn Taylor
Anne Jacoby	Elsa and Bill Thompson
Elin and Arthur Jones	Bill Thompson
Flo Kim	& Julie Zickefoose
Jane King	Ruth Thorniley
Jody Kohler & Jim Wright	Tanya Troutner-Jarrell
Bill, Joan & Than Knowles	Almuth Tschunko
Joyce Kronberg	Diane Vezza
Douglas & Ethel-Marie	Melanie & Lawrence
LeVasseur	Wagner
Kurt Ludwig	Anita Wall
The Malcomb	The Whistler Family
Family	



Ornamental Grasses Don't Mind Garden Borders

by Marilyn Ortt

Ornamental grasses have become quite popular again in the past few years. As attractive as they may be, it is impossible to predict which ones may turn into the multiflora rose of the future.

Few species are aggressive from the very beginning. Individual plants usually are fairly benign until critical density of the species becomes established with sufficiently different genetic makeup to kick off another Alien Invasion.

This is what apparently happened to eulalia, fountain grass, plume grass, - like terrorists in general, it has several aliases. Watch for the scientific name *Miscanthus sinense* and then avoid!

Miscanthus is a warm season clump grass from Asia. When a single plant is planted, the clump will grow in diameter each year producing more and more flowers.

Apparently this species does not self-pollinate so even very large clumps may not produce seeds. Grasses are primarily wind-pollinated so if plants of different origins (that is, not a clone of the first) are located near enough to each other, it could be the beginning of trouble.

For about 30 years I watched a couple clumps of *Miscanthus* on a roadbank in front of a home along S.R. 26. The clumps grew larger over the years but no new clumps were formed. Several years ago, this species began showing up in ornamental grass collections in local nurseries. At about the same time, work was done on an electrical substation across the highway from the seemingly harmless original clumps. Within a few short years, *Miscanthus* has become the dominant plant in a several acre site, apparently growing from seed.



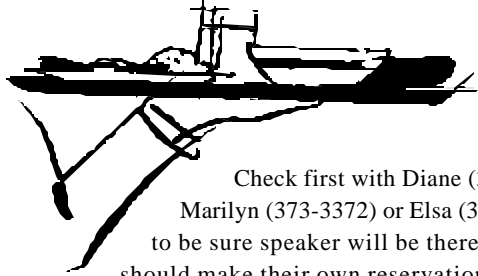
Miscanthus sinensis

Miscanthus is now common along U.S. 50 through Wood County east of Parkersburg and has now advanced into Ritchie County to the east. The rapidity with which this has occurred is especially impressive and was no doubt aided by erosive effects of heavy rains as well as guardrail work by the Department of Transportation.

The seeds apparently require some bare ground (a tiny piece will do) in the open in order to germinate. *Miscanthus* could become a serious agricultural weed but the bulldozer must be its best friend wherever the seeds are available. Since this is a deep-rooted species, plowing would only fragment the rhizomatous roots so that many more clumps would grow. Once established, eradication would be difficult if not impossible.

There are a number of native warm season clump grasses such as big bluestem (or turkeyfoot), little bluestem and Indian grass. These are lovely grasses that would complement any sunny area without raising the concern of invasive, non-native species that will become a management problem in the future.

**You can have
Dinner with the speakers
5:00 at the Levee House**



Check first with Diane (373-8031),
Marilyn (373-3372) or Elsa (373-5285).
to be sure speaker will be there. Members
should make their own reservations.



The MNHS Vision

- ! To foster awareness of and sensitivity to our environment and its biodiversity
- ! To provide a place where people with these interests can gather for information and activity
- ! To create a presence in our community representing these ideas



**Marietta Natural History Society
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