

Public Is Invited

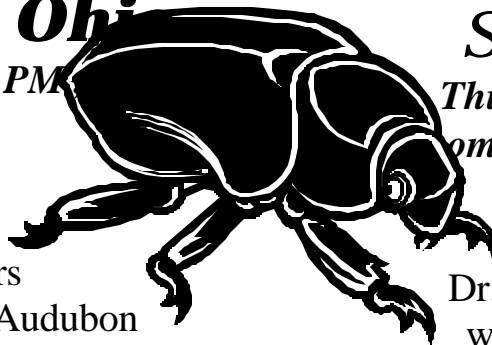
Marietta Natural History Society

Fall 2001 Newsletter

***The Biodiversity of
Southeastern Ohio***

*Thursday, October 11, 7:00 PM,
Thomas Hall, Room 124,
Marietta College*

Presenter: Paul Knoop, Jr.
Recently retired after 35 years
as Director of the Aullwood Audubon
Center and Farm near Dayton, our
speaker will provide a comprehensive
overview of SE Ohio featuring the geology,
flora and fauna that is our natural heritage.

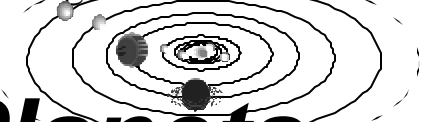


***So many Beetles,
So Little Time!***

*Thursday, November 8, 7:00 PM,
Thomas Hall, Room 124,
Marietta College*

Presenter: Dr. David Horn
Dr. Horn, Ohio State University,
will explain the importance of
beetles and why with so many species of
beetles, one is so significant that it is
being reintroduced throughout its former

range



***To the Planets
...and Beyond***

*Thursday, December 13, 7:00 PM,
Thomas Hall, Room 124,
Marietta College*

Presenter: Dr. Dean Hirschi
Dr. Hirschi, Associate Professor of Physics
and Astronomy at Washington State Community
College, will be showing us NASA pictures of the
planets, talk about some comparative geology, and
discuss some implications of planets beyond our
solar system.

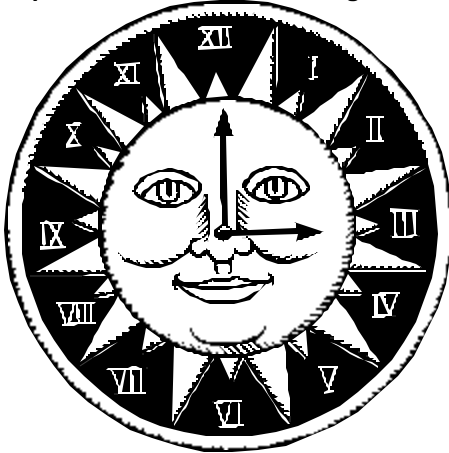
Autumn Night Hike

*Thursday, October 25, 6:30 PM,
Meet at Hermann Fine
Arts Center parking lot.
Led by Lynn Barnhart,
we'll carpool about
a ½ hour west of
town to look for
nightlife.*





The Cosmopolitan Cosmologist. Ned Wright's cosmology site offers much interesting information on about the origin, current state, and future of our universe. There's a great FAQs page ("What happened during the big bang?", "What is meant by a flat universe?", "Why doesn't the solar system expand if the whole universe is expanding?", etc.). A tutorial explains cosmological concepts at the high school level, and there is a page for late-breaking news. Find the site at <http://www.astro.ucla.edu/~wright/cosmolog.htm>



A Timely Matter. . .

Daylight Savings Time ends this year on October 28. One of the first people to see an advantage to the twice-yearly time shift was Benjamin Franklin. He proposed the idea while serving as the U.S. minister to France as a means to conserve the cost of lighting ships. Daylight Savings Time was widely adopted by many countries near the beginning of the twentieth century. It was eliminated during WWI, but during WWII the U.S. and several other countries adopted a "double" daylight savings time that consisted of a 2-hour shift. The U.S. eliminated Daylight Savings Time during the Arab oil embargo crisis of 1973-

Starry, Shooting-Starry Nights

Three major meteor shows can be observed this fall – the Orionids in October, the Leonids in November, and the Geminids in December. So you have three chances to see a spectacular evening light show.

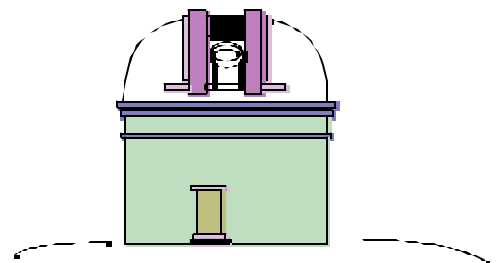
The Orionid shower extends from Oct 15 -29, with a peak the night of October 21. You can expect approximately 20 meteors an hour. The meteors will appear to radiate from a point in the constellation Orion, from which the shower gets its name. Watching the Orionid meteor shower doesn't require exertion of much energy. Just pull up a reclining lawn chair, and orient it so that your feet are pointing southward (in the general direction of the radiant) and look into the sky straight above -- it's better not to look directly toward the point of origin, since meteors coming straight at you are harder to see. While other, nonOrionid meteors may appear occasionally, if the trace of a meteor leads back to Orion, you've most likely seen an Orionid.

The Leonid meteor shower will occur between November 14 - 20, with the maximum activity on November 17. The maximum rate is typically in the 10 -15 meteors per hour range. The Leonids are notable for a breath-taking display once every 33 years that can produce several thousand meteors per hour (sorry, this last happened in 1998-1999). The radiant (point of origin) for the shower will be the "sickle" of the constellation Leo. To best observe the Leonids, pull out your reclining chair again (this time you may need a mug of warm tea as well), and arrange it so that your feet are pointing south. For the reasons stated above, don't look directly at the radiant, but rather keep your gaze about 30 - 40 degrees above or west of it.

The Geminids will be visiting us between December 9 -19, with a peak of activity on December 13 -14. I bet by now you can guess from which constellation comes the radiant of the "Gemini" -ids.

The Geminid meteors are considered to be moderately fast but relatively bright in comparison those of other meteor showers. We can expect about 80 meteors per hour. To view the meteors, you'll probably want to first equip your recliner with some blankets, and then arrange it so that your feet are facing westward. Look straight upward early in the evening, but shift your gaze to about 45° above the horizon by the wee morning hours.

For much more information about these and other meteor showers, visit the *Comets and Meteor Showers* web site at <http://comets.amsmeteors.org/index.html>.



October 2001


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 A	3	4	5	6
Beautiful Large Orb Weaver Spiders Spinning Webs			Red Velvet Mites Search For Insect Eggs			
7	8	9	10 X	11 MNHS Meeting	12	13
Fall Deep Blue Asters Are "New England Asters"			Great Blue Lobelias Still In Flower			
14 Juncos (Snow-Birds) May Arrive	15	16 Δ	17	18	19	20
Collect Wildflower Seeds For Planting Next Year						
21 Peak Orionid Meteor Shower	22	23 E	24	25	26	27
			Late Fawns May Still Be Nursing			
28 Daylight Standard Time Begins	29	30	31 Halloween	Oct 28 is when clocks "fall backward"		
Autumn rains bring fall fungi. Over 250 species of puffballs are known, and many emerge in October. Look for some as large as grapefruit in lawns in this area.						

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).

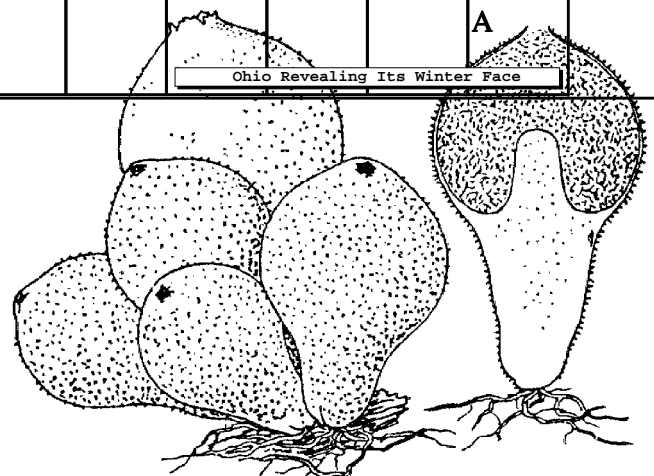


November 2001

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bird Silhouette Indicates Bird Feeder Watch Days 				1 A	2	3 ☘
				Did Your Halloween Pumpkin Survive?		
4 ☘	5	6	7	8 MNHS Meeting X	9 Carl Sagan's birthday	10
Have You Purchased Bird Feed?						
11	12	13	14	15 Δ	16	17 ☘ Peak Leonid Shower
Nocturnal Insect Chorus Growing Thin				Look For Evening Grosbeaks And Pine Siskens At Feeders		
18 ☘	19 Turkeys Getting Nervous ...	20	21	22 E Thanks-giving	23 Take Hike To Walk Off Pumpkin Pie	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 A	
Ohio Revealing Its Winter Face						

December 2001

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
sun slightly above horizon. Look for a tiny 'bite' at 'bottom' of sun by 4:20. About 15% of the sun will be blocked by 5:00 sunset.						1 ☘
2 ☘	3	4	5	6	7 X	8
Live Christmas Trees Can Be Donated to Cemetery			Tree Sparrows Arrive			
9	10	11	12	13 MNHS Meeting	14 Δ Geminids	15 ☘
Suet Provides Nutritive Boost For Birds			Aquatic Animals Beginning Dormancy			
16 ☘	17	18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22 E
Have you Taken Down And Cleaned Bird Houses?						
23	24	25	26	27 Pasteur Born 1822	28	29 ☘
Feed Bird Feeders To Feed Birds						
30 ☘ A	31	 Recycled Paper 50% Total Recovered Fiber 20% Post-Consumer				



Marietta Has Champion Oak

by Marilyn Ortt

A tree more common to this area at the time of settlement than now is the swamp white oak. As the name implies, the species is especially adapted to growing on ill-drained sites.

The range of swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) is primarily north of the Ohio and Potomac Rivers. It is found throughout Ohio in swamps and bottomlands especially in the glaciated part of the state. The scientific name refers to the contrast between the green top of the leaf and the whitish pubescence on the under-surface of the leaves.

The acorns commonly occur in pairs and take only one season to mature, as is the case with other species of the white oak group.

According to Dean and Chadwick, authors of "Ohio Trees", the wood is "heavy, strong and tough, and used for similar purposes as the true white oak, such as furniture, cabinet work, flooring, cooperage, ties, fence posts and fuel". Surely it must have been sought out by early builders and could probably be found today in area homes built before one went to a store to buy lumber.

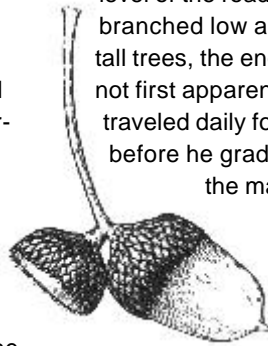
With over 200 years of draining, building up, and other landscape modifications, it is difficult to picture where low areas in the Marietta area may have been originally.

The area around Pioneer Field and between Phillips School and Pike St. is part of an old swale that is still prone to hold water. Several volunteer swamp white oaks are still growing in that area; more have been removed over the years.

On the other side of town along the river, Muskingum Drive has been raised over the years to try to keep it above flood level. A natural drainage system lies between the Ohio Department of Transportation building and the current County Health Department building. Growing

on land owned by Washington County between these two buildings and along Muskingum Dr. is a marvelous, huge swamp white oak.

Jim Noe was the first to recognize what a huge tree it is. Since it is growing from below the level of the road, is branched low and is among other tall trees, the enormity of the tree is not first apparent. The road is one Jim traveled daily for a number of years before he gradually became aware of the majesty of this tree.



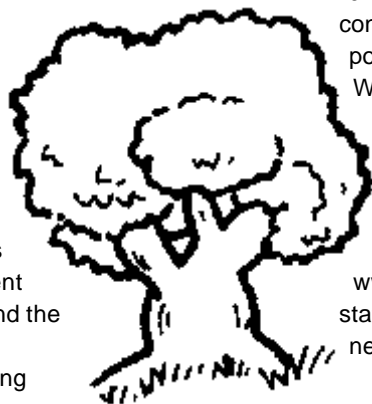
Jim reported his observations and the tree was measured as required for Ohio's Big Tree standards – circumference 282 inches, height 75 ft., and the average crown spread of 106.8 ft, for a total of 383.7 points.

After the information was sent to the Division of Forestry – Ohio Department of Natural Resources, an unofficial notification came in January of 2000 – unless a larger one is nominated before the next list is published this is the State Champion Swamp White Oak Tree!

In August, the vital statistics were sent to the American Forestry Assn., which coordinates the national champion tree compilation, and as of the closing date for trees to be nominated, the Marietta Swamp White Oak is the unofficial **National Champion!**

Jim is to be congratulated for his power of observation. We should all be alert to such possibilities.

A listing of Ohio's champion Big Trees can be found at www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/ODNR/Landownerast/btcell2.htm.



How are Tree Dimensions Measured?

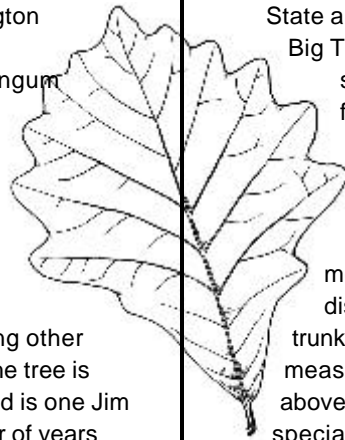
by Steven R. Spilatro

State and National Champion Big Trees are determined by summing points awarded for three measurements – circumference, height, and average crown spread.

Circumference is a measure of the total distance around the tree trunk. Standardly, the measurement is taken 4½ feet above the ground; however, special circumstances must be dealt with in appropriate ways. For example, if the tree grows on sloping ground, the measurement is taken from the uphill side of the tree. If the trunk branches below the 4½ foot mark, the largest stem is measured. The measurement should be taken with a tape measure (estimating diameter and then converting to circumference can cause a point deduction.) One point is awarded for each inch of circumference.

Often the height of big trees is determined by comparison to an object of known height, such as a nearby building. However the height of Marietta's swamp white oak was determined using a 'clinometer', a simple device that measures angles. By knowing the angle of a line of sight to the top and the distance to the tree being measured, the height of the tree can be easily calculated. One point is awarded for each foot of height.

Average crown spread is the average of the breadth of the upper tree branches at the widest and narrowest cross-sections. The easiest way to do this is to transpose the positions of the crown down to the ground, and take the measurements there. The measurements of the widest and narrowest diameters of crown spread are added together and then averaged. A quarter (1/4) point is awarded for each foot of average crown spread.



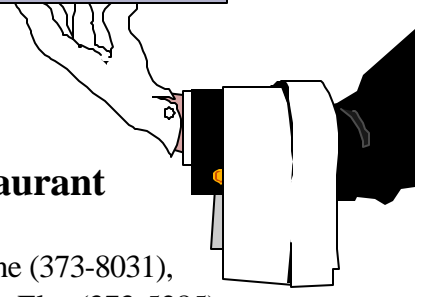
2001 MNHS Membership

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Baker
 Lynn Barnhart
 W. B. Bond
 Ava Bradley
 Caroline Butler
 Tom and Sharon Fenton
 Janine Eddy
 Mary Grubert
 Gillian Harrison
 Dave Hawkins
 Dawn Inabnet
 Anne Jacoby
 Tanya Jarrell
 Elin and Arthur Jones
 Flo Kim
 Jeffrey & Betty King
 Joyce Kronberg
 Tom LaFramboise
 Douglas & Ethel-Marie
 LeVasseur
 Marshall & Betty Lowe
 Kurt Ludwig
 The Malcomb Family
 Dave McShaffrey
 & Ann Delleur
 Laurie Meagle
 Mr. and Mrs. James Mills
 Diane Mitchell
 Susan Moellendick
 Tom & Laurie Munc
 Jim & Gwen Noe
 Janet O'Brien
 Marilyn & Kathy Ortt
 Stan & Cathy Piekarski
 Bob Scott Placier
 Anna Prince
 Roberta Louise Reese
 Steve, Jane, Michael
 & Daniel Spilatro
 Tom Steckel
 Stewart-Whistler Family
 Richard Stoltenberg
 Jay & Jo Ann Stowe
 Barbara Tabor
 Marilyn M. Taylor
 Elsa and Bill Thompson
 Bill & Julie Z. Thompson
 Ruth Thorniley
 Almuth Tschunko
 Diane Vezza
 Gene and Melanie Wagner
 Anita Wall



Dinner with the speakers WW New Location & New Time WW

We will meet
 at 5:30 at the
 Oak Star Restaurant



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.

Cinnamon Vine or Air Potato: – a problem by any name by Marilyn Ortt

Also known as Chinese yam, *Dioscorea batatas* or, in more recent treatments, *Dioscorea oppositifolia*, is an invasive, non-native plant species. This herbaceous, perennial vine of the yam family was introduced into the United States as an edible food source and has since spread into at least 23 states ranging from Vermont to Georgia west to Oklahoma and Kansas. This native of China is most aggressive in southeastern states where it is very common in yards of old homes and along creeks.

In Ohio, it grows readily from large underground tubers that increase in size each year. Air potato will easily escape into low open or wooded areas. Although it is more rampant from Meigs County southward in riparian areas along the Ohio River, it is nonetheless present in Washington Co. in the same habitat. It seems to be spreading northward more aggressively in recent years possibly in response to global warming. A northward movement of several species of plants and animals has been noticed during the past several decades.

The 'potato'-like structures known as bulbils that form in the axils of the deeply-veined heart-shaped leaves during late summer and fall are buoyant so they spread readily into other riparian zones during periods of high water. The bulbils remain dormant through the winter and then can root and establish a new plant the following spring. This method of asexual reproduction is very effective and allows this species the opportunity to do vast harm to the integrity of good riparian zones. Seed from the small spikes of white flowers produced in June and July does not seem to form in our area.

The species can form a thicket of growth on the surface of the ground or climb in dense tangles up to 30 ft. in surrounding vegetation. In rich streamside soils, the counterclockwise twining vines can grow 15 feet in a single year. If you know where this species is growing near a woodland or riparian habitat, do the health of our planet a favor and remove it. [graphic:



Invite a Friend to Join the Marietta Natural History Society

Wood Thrush — Individual \$15
River Otter — Family \$25
Monarch — Friend \$50

Why not give a gift membership?

Mail check to address given below

Benefits of Membership

- └ Monthly programs
- └ Field trips
- └ Quarterly newsletter
- └ Educational experiences
for kids and adults
- └ Conservation Projects

The MNHS Mission

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



Marietta Natural History Society
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