

Public Is Invited

Marietta Natural History Society

Fall 2003 Newsletter



Local Rocks

I have Known

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

Presenter: Dr. Dwayne Stone

Dr. Stone, Geology Professor retired from Marietta College, will talk about some of the interesting rock types found in the Marietta area and the geology with which they are associated.



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

Presenter: Dr. Edwin Michael

Dr. Michael, Wildlife Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University, will be talking to us about the life history and ecology of our largest freshwater turtle. Twenty years of research in Canaan Valley has given Dr. Michael a unique perspective. He will be willing to autograph copies of his book *A Valley Called Canaan: 1885-2002* (available at Mother O'Riley's Books) after the program.

The Insect Planet

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

Presenter: Dr. David McShaffrey

Dr. McShaffrey, Marietta College, Dept. of Biology, will give us an ecological view of insects, particularly those found near Marietta. What are they, what do they want, how do they get it? A lot of picture and a little science.



Web Threads



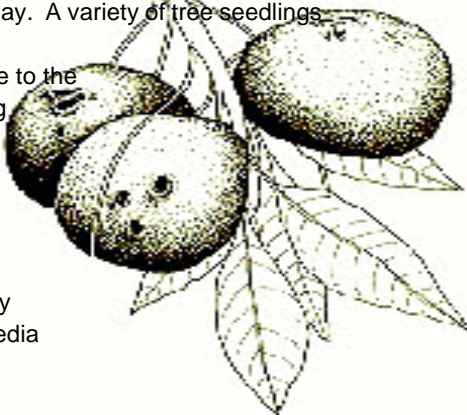
Night enlightenment. The holiday season notwithstanding, the ‘darkest’ days of the year occur in the period between the first week in December and the first week in January. At latitude 40 degrees north, earliest sunset occurs around December 8 each year, and latest sunrise occurs around January 5. Yet, the day with the least amount of daylight is the winter solstice (the first day of winter) which occurs around December 21. Why don’t all of these dates correspond? Find out at The Dark Days of Winter site at the U.S. Naval Observatory at http://aa.usno.navy.mil/faq/docs/dark_days.html.

Backyard Black Walnut Roundup


Homeowners in the Marietta area are being asked by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to donate their backyard black walnut seeds to help in the state’s reforestation efforts.

The collection program helps landowners reduce yard waste while providing valuable seed for ODNR’s Marietta State Tree Nursery. In the previous 10 years, more than 100,000 pounds of black walnuts have been collected through the program, saving the state an estimated \$150,000. Marietta State Nursery is located at 27515 St. Rt. 7, 3.5 miles north of I-77. The site will be open to receive seeds from now throughout October. Walnuts may be planted on well-drained, loamy soils as a future timber crop. For information about planting walnuts on a large scale, contact ODNR’s Division of Forestry at 877-247-8733.

More than 3,000,000 seedlings of various tree species are sold each year by ODNR for use in reforestation, wildlife habitat development, erosion control, windbreaks and other conservation projects across the state. Over the past 80 years, the ODNR Division of Forestry has planted more than a half-billion trees in Ohio, helping the state increase its forested land from 2,500,000 acres in the early 1900s, to more than 8,000,000 acres today. A variety of tree seedlings will be available for sale to the public beginning October 1 for delivery in the spring of 2004. For Further Information Contact Andy Ware, ODNR Media



Dinner with the speakers

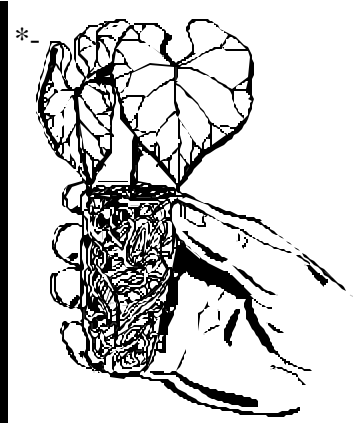


We will meet at 5:30 at the Oak Star Restaurant

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.

Sustainability Festival

The Athens Area Sustainability Festival is Sat Oct 11 (10 AM - 6 PM) and Sun Oct 12 (noon - 5 PM) at the Athens County Fairgrounds. Solar and wind power; alternative transportation; preservation; local artists, musicians and performers; and much more. Dinner Sat at 7:00 PM with local grown foods: \$10 / person. Limited to 60 people. Call



MNHS
Board of Directors
 Diane Mitchell
 Marilyn Ort
 Elsa Thompson

Newsletter Editor
 Steven R. Spilatro

Suggestions, Comments or Contributions for the MNHS Newsletter?
Send them to the editor:
 625 5th St
 Marietta, OH 45750
 374-8778

October 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bird Silhouette Indicates Bird Feeder Watch Days			1 DAB Town Meeting 7:00 PM WSSC	2 	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 MNHS Meeting	10 	11
Have You Filled Your Bird Feeders?			Milkweed Pods Are Plump			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 
Watch For Arrival Of White-Throated Sparrows			Any Monarch You See Is Headed For Mexico			
19	20	21 Peak Orionids Shower	22	23	24	25 
Daddy Longlegs Spiderlings Dispersing						
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	
First Heavy Frost Will Turn Ferns Brown						



December 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Suet Provides Nutritive Boost For Birds	2	3	4	5	6 
Witch Hazel Still In Flower? -- Last Shrub To Blossom						
7 	8 	9	10	11 MNHS Meeting	12	13
Last Faint Calls Of Meadow Crickets On Warm Days						
14 Peak Geminids Shower	15	16 	17 100th Anniver. Wright Brothers 1st Flight	18	19	20 
21 	22 Winter Solstice	23 	24	25	26	27 Louis Pasteur Born 1822
Hibernating Mammals By Now Dormant						
28	29	30 	31 "All things near and far are linked, so thou can'st not pluck a flower without troubling a star." Francis Thompson			
Grey Squirrels Now Breeding						

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 Watcher's Digest (373-5285).



November 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
A nearly complete lunar eclipse will occur on November 9.						1 
2	3	4 Election Day: Make Your Vote Count	5 Peak Taurids Shower	6	7	8 
9 	10	11	12	13 MNHS Meeting	14	15
Late Migrating Red-Tailed Hawks Moving						
16	17 	18 Peak Leonids Shower	19	20	21	22 
23 	24 	25	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29
Bare Trees Reveal Bird And Hornet Nests						
30 	Orion, Cassiopeia and other winter constellations arrive in December.					



Plant a Milkweed ---- Feed a Monarch

As you enjoy the fall foliage in southeast Ohio, keep an eye peeled for the seed pods of common milkweed plants. Their large opposite leaves on sturdy stems will be around for awhile, and when you spot the 'bumpy' pods on top, pick a few to plant for monarchs.

Milkweed is the only species upon which female monarchs lay eggs and plants are becoming more scarce each year. If you don't have a sunny space in a corner of your lawn to plant the seeds, perhaps you can pass them on to someone who does.

Just placing a pod a couple of feet off the ground and letting the breeze take care of dispersal will work, but if there are specific sites you want milkweed to grow, it is

more efficient to clean the fluff off the seeds and plant them, shallowly please. Try to avoid much ground disturbance in that area in the spring – the plants will appear when conditions are right and they seldom take a chance on a late frost.

Milkweed is sometimes described as a 'coarse' plant – and truly there is nothing subtle about it. The sweet fragrance emanating from clusters of beautiful flowers and the opportunity you will be providing for such beautiful butterflies more than outweigh the lack of delicacy of the stalk. After all, if the leaves weren't so large, monarch caterpillars might run out of food before reaching the chrysalis-making stage of life.

2003 MNHS Membership

Norm & Gert Baker	Joan & Than Knowles	FamilyRichard Stoltenberg
Lynn Barnhart	Joyce Kronberg Family	Charlie & Teresa Stone
Lynn Beardmore	Doug LaVasseur	Jay & Joan Stowe
David & Janet Becker	Beth LePore	Barbara Tabor
Brad Bond	Marilyn Logue	Rose Marie Thomas
Ava Bradley	Marshall & Betty Lowe	Elsa & Bill Thompson
Gary and Gloria Brown	Kurt Ludwig	Bill & Julie Z. Thompson
Shirley Brown	Kevin, Peggy, Nathan & Jacob Malcomb	Ruth Thorniley
Christine Broyles	George McCarty, MD	Cynthia Ting
Craig & Caroline Butler	Jon & Kim McGrew	Almuth Tschunko
Chris Chmiel	Dave McShaffrey & Ann Delleur	Diane Vezza
Bob & Argyle Clarke	Laurie Meagle	Gene & Melanie Wagner
Wes Clarke	Maggie & Steve Meyer	Anita Wall
Patrick & Harriet Collins	James Miller	Pat & Fred Wood
Del & Carolyn Crandell	Dr. & Mrs. James Mills	Rosemarie Zimmer
Beverly & Grey Dilworth	Diane Mitchell	Student memberships
Herma Eddy	Dr. Scott Moody	Sponsored by the
Janine Eddy	Tom & Laurie Munc	Marietta College
Tom & Sharon Fenton	Jim & Gwen Noe	Department of Biology
Margaret Fredericks	Jean Nuss	Josh Arnold
Mark & Betty Gatewood	Joanne O'Brien	Rosemary Dawes
James Gnagy, Jr.	Marilyn Ort	Jennifer DeGain
Mary Grubert	Stan & Cathy Piekarski	Laura Fitzsimmons
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Nancy Habel	Robert & Caroline Putnam	Beth Jamison
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Dan & Gillian Harrison	Mickie Richardson	Sarah Lane
Dave Hawkins	Roy Snediker	Nicole Lewis
Jay & Kim Henry	The Spilatro Family	Kevin Mudrick
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Anne Jacoby	Pat Stewart	Saket Waghmode
Tanya Jarrell	Stewart-Whistler	Jacob Weingart
Elin & Art Jones		Anne Marie Woofter
Flo Kim		
Jane King		
Paul Knoop, Jr. William,		



Visit the MNHS web site to find information on upcoming programs, Nature Walks, special programs, and back issues of the MNHS Newsletters in PDF format. Viewing the back issues requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader plugin, which can be downloaded free from a conveniently provided link.

Links are provided to web resources on Washington County flora and fauna. These include information about Fall Fauna, Box Turtles and Butterflies of Washington County prepared by Dr. David McShaffrey of Marietta College. Also, you can see the entire list of Native Vascular Plants of Washington County compiled by Diane Mitchell and edited by Marilyn Ort. There is also a link to a new (and still under construction) Marietta City Trees web site.

Find our Home page at <http://mcnet.marietta.edu/~biol/mnhs/mnhs.html>

Name not on list? Oops!
Please call 373-3372

Oriental Bittersweet: An Invasive Cousin by Marilyn Ortt

One of the most troublesome invasive plant species in the northeast has been oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). A native of China, Japan and Korea, it was introduced in this country shortly before the Civil War. By the early 1900s it was spreading in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Massachusetts. By 1970 it was reported from all states east of the Mississippi and a few to the west.

Its spread was rapid in part because as late as 1967, it continued to be planted as a highway and home ornamental. (Another case of "highway wildflowers" run amuck). Its popularity was due to the lack of domestic insect and disease pests, its speedy growth rate and the huge number of fruit that remained on the stem when used in dried flower arrangements. Now read that last sentence again. All the reasons for its popularity are also reasons it has become such a pest - no limiting factors, grows fast and effective seed dispersal - those dried arrangements will eventually be discarded and there shall be new oriental bittersweet plants.

The native bittersweet is fairly unassuming - many plants germinate in woodlands but with insufficient light and nothing to twine about, many soon perish unless there is an opening in the canopy. On woods' edges, if trees are small enough in diameter, the woody stem will twine around the trunks growing high enough to capture sunlight. As leaf-fall exposes trunks of trees that have been hidden all summer, the orange and red fruit of bittersweet may be seen. While not common, bittersweet is not rare either and it has long been the custom to bring a few sprigs inside to decorate the Thanksgiving table. Actually, the difficulty of obtaining a few sprigs is

sufficient protection for the rest of the plant even if you should be fortunate to have some on your land. An alternative is to buy bittersweet sprigs. If this is your approach, please make sure you are getting the native species.



How to distinguish between the two species? Both have small, greenish flowers but their position on the plant is a helpful characteristic. The oriental species has numerous short branches with fewer flowers in the leaf axils whereas the native has more flowers at the ends of longer lateral branches. Bittersweet is most apparent when in fruit and the fruits will, of course, be in the same position as the flowers were.

Differences in leaf shape and capsule color are apparent when specimens are side by side but to say that the oriental has rounder leaves and a less vivid color doesn't help much when faced with a single specimen.

The different growth habits of the native and the oriental bittersweet species explains why one is acceptable and the other is a serious problem. Whereas the native species usually develops only one stem which twines around whatever is available to get to sunlight, the oriental spreads vegetatively by underground roots that form new stems which can cover the ground, climb over rocks and other plants up to 30 ft. high. Host plants are harmed by girdling bittersweet stems and lose vigor due to shading. Plants often are found in fence lines where birds have paused after having ingested the seeds.

Planting the native species to an arbor or even a dead tree is ideal because you won't have to worry about the stem girdling a live tree. Make sure you get both the male and female plants so the pollen is available when the female flowers

open. Foresters have identified oriental bittersweet as a serious pest and in many areas, especially around deserted homes where it has become well-established, it is a problem for neighbors.

If you are still unconvinced, I will close with a quote from a Massachusetts resident: "I have watched (oriental) bittersweet grow from a spot of orange at the bottom of my neighbor's field, avidly sought and carefully preserved by visitors, to an unprintable plague which has marched forward by several feet a year, blanketing and killing every bush and tree in its path". That is the bitter bittersweet.

Splatter Graphs?

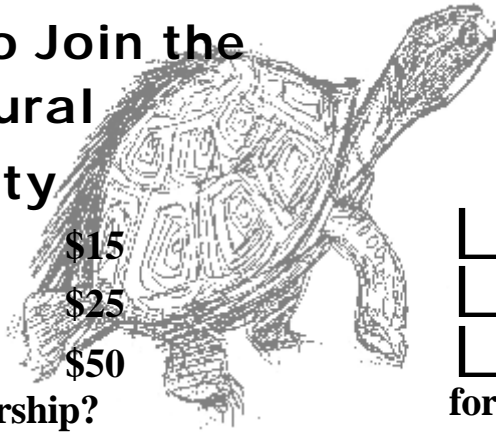
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has been concerned about declining bird populations in the U.K. for some time. Environmental, urbanization, or agricultural changes are possibly at the root, but some members have suggested that an apparent decline in insects may be involved.

In order to test the idea, the society is asking members to attach small plastic patches to the windshield of their cars to sample insect density. These 'splatometers' would be removed after logging a set distance of travel and sent in for analysis—software is being developed so that scanners and computers can be used.

The methodology is new and the ability to distinguish insects is unproven, and thus may not reveal if an insect population decline exists. However, the methodology is certainly novel and may reveal regional variations and form a baseline for future comparisons. *Science* 301: 165 (2003)



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?

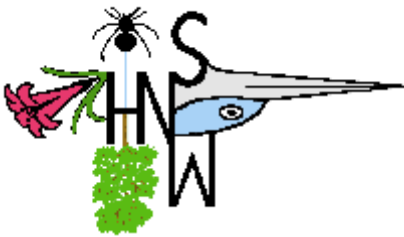
Mail check to address given below

Benefits of
Membership

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

The MNHS Mission

- | 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



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