

*Public Is Invited*

# Marietta Natural History Society

## Summer 2002 Newsletter

All outings will carpool from the Hermann Fine Arts Center parking lot,  
4<sup>th</sup> and Butler Streets, Marietta College



### **Broadback Island Expedition**

*Thursday, July 11, 6:45 PM*

**Leader: Janet Butler,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

One of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge islands; we will be shuttled by boat from Newell Run to Broadback. We will observe the all-out assault of the USFWS on Japanese knotweed, an invasive, non-native plant. We may get wet feet when disembarking. Expect to find stinging nettle, so long pants would be wise. Drinking water is always a good idea this time of the year.

## All that Glitters is not Gold...

*Thursday, September 12, 6:00 PM*

**Leader: Brad Bond**

...but it might be fool's gold. We're off on a search for mineral riches. Prospectors should wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

### **MNHS Special Program**

*Tuesday, July 9, 6:30 PM*

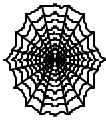
Join the Friends of the Lower Muskingum River for a tour of the new natural gas-fired generating plant built by Duke Energy north of Beverly.

## The Bridges of Washington County

*Thursday, August 8, 6:45 PM*

Field trip to two natural bridges in the county. The Small Natural Bridge is the highest and the Large or Ladd Natural Bridge is a state nature preserve for which permission is required to visit.





## Web Threads



*Arach-net.* Dr. Richard Bradley who spoke to MNHS in May, 1999 about spiders has set up a new web site to explain the Spider Survey. It includes information on how to study spiders, which spiders are in Ohio and some photographs of them as well as links to other spider sites. Visit the site at <http://www.marion.ohio-state.edu/SpiderWeb/MainPage.htm>



*Plant Scapes.* The US Department of Agriculture sponsors the *Plants Database*, a cornucopia of plant

information on the web. The database holds information on thousands of plants (big and small) — and provides information through a variety of channels such as the Gallery of pictures, Plant Topics with searchable databases on plant issues from invasive species to ethnobotany, a plant characteristics sorter for finding plants by over 100 characteristics, and Plant Tools to learn about agricultural subjects. Find it all at [plants.usda.gov/plants/index.html](http://plants.usda.gov/plants/index.html).

# Mile-a-Minute Menace by Marilyn Ort

*Polygonum perfoliatum* aka mile-a-minute, Asiatic tear thumb and devil's tail (the common names tell it all) is a native of Asia. Seeds must have been in rhododendron or holly nursery stock sent to a nursery from China in the 1930's. After the initial discovery near York, PA it had spread so quickly that within 20 years it was said to be as common as Japanese honeysuckle. It has now spread to Delaware, MD, NJ, NY, VA, WV, DC and Ohio.

Mile-a-minute is an annual with light blue-green 1-3" triangular leaves, saucer shaped encircling sheaths, small whitish flowers and terminal clusters of iridescent blue fruit each containing 1 shiny black achene. Each plant produces 50-100 seeds.

Seeds are dispersed by water in which they are buoyant and by some birds. The seeds remain viable in soil bank for at least two years.

The most memorable part of this vining plant is the many downward curving sharp barbs along the stems, leaf veins

and petioles. Growth may average 6-8"/day when water and sunlight are sufficient. Barbs enable plants to clamber up into and over about everything in their way reaching up to 30 feet during the growing season.

Mile-a-minute (MAM) was first collected west of the Alleghenies in 1980 in Boaz, WV. Once there, it spread rapidly along a railroad right-of-way, a state road, fence lines and tree lines traveling especially fast through any drainage or streamside habitat. There are a number of pastures in that area and wherever it was protected from trampling by cattle such as around clumps of shrubs or trees, it would soon engulf these clumps in just one growing season. Efforts to interest the natural resource agencies in West Virginia in controlling this invasive were fruitless – no funding, no staff, etc.

MAM has since spread over 30 miles in WV – in some cases, large continuous stands along roadways and stream terraces and in others, small patches in wooded parks or near bird feeders.

Knowing it was only a matter of time before it made it across the Ohio River into Ohio, an annual search was carried out and in 1991, my first fears were confirmed. Two 16 sq. meter patches were found growing on the

## MNHS Publishes *the Natural View*

Enclosed is Vol. 1 Issue 1 of "A Natural View of Washington County" published by the MNHS. The same issue will be available through the first of September. Advertising paid for the venture. Please look it over, provide any comments then pass it on to a friend. If you know a site anywhere in the county or the city where they should be placed where people are likely to pick them up, please let us know. If you have suggestions for Vol. 2 (perhaps in Spring 2003), please pass them on. Thank you.

dike of a fly ash pond in the industrial complex along the river.

In spite of its obvious rampant growth, agency after agency said they were unable to try to hold a beachhead at the Ohio River because there was no funding for such an endeavor.

See Menace, page 5



# July 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 ☉	3	4 Independence Day	5 Milkweed Plants Maturing	6
Young Racoons Leave Dens						
7	8	9	10 ●	11 MNHS Meeting	12	13
Listen For Nighthawk Calls In Evenings						
14	15	16	17 ☉	18	19	20
"When Grass Is Dry At Morning Light, Look For Rain Before The Night"				Lizard Eggs Begin Hatching		
21 Look for Wasps Making Paper Nests	22	23	24 ○	25	26	27
			Mosquitos Active; Use Citronella Not Raid			
28	29	30	31			
Iron Weed And Joe Pye Weed Flowering						



# September 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Labor Day	3	4	5	6 ●	7
Beavers Insulating Lodges With Sticks And Mud						
8	9	10	11	12 MNHS Meeting	13 ☉	14
Squirrels Burying Acorns For Winter Food						
15	16	17 Dogwood Berries In Full Color	18	19	20	21 ○
Hummingbirds Fleeing Oncoming Cold Fronts						
22	23 Equinox: Autumn Begins	24	25	26	27	28
		Height Of Fall Songbird Migration				
Persimmons Ripening... But Better Be Patient!						
29 ☉	30 Fawns Have Lost Their Spots	July -- Named for Roman emperor, Julius Caesar August -- Named for emperor, Augustus Caesar September -- Latin for the number seven				

## Far and Fast

**Light-Year:** This term is a measure of distance, not time, despite the word "year" in its name. It is the distance traveled by light through the vacuum of space in one year. A light-year is equal to  $5.88 \times 10^{12}$  miles (5 trillion, 880 billion miles!), or  $9.46 \times 10^{12}$  kilometers.

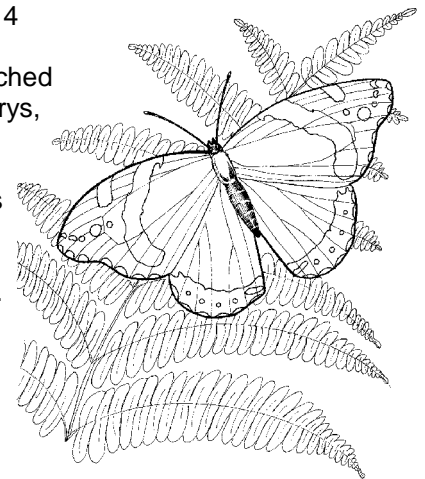
**Light Speed:** In the vacuum of space, light travels at the speed of 186,282 miles per second. The light from the sun takes 8.32 minutes to arrive at earth, while light from the Andromeda Galaxy takes 2 million years. Thus, the Andromeda Galaxy is 2 million light years away!

# August 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Recycled Paper 50% Total Recovered Fiber 20% Post-Consumer				1 ☉	2 Cicadas Abuzz In Trees	3
4 Wild Grapes Begin Ripening	5	6	7	8 MNHS Meeting ●	9	10
11	12 Perseid Meteor Shower	13	14	15 ☉	16	17 Middle Island Insect Safari 2-4 PM
Cattails Have Reached Full Height						
Jewelweed (Touch-Me-Not) Seedpods Explode When Touched						
18	19 Orville Wright Born 1871	20	21	22 ○	23	24
				Time to Make Elderberry Jam		
Goldfinches Finally Begin To Nest						
25	26	27 Songbird Fall Migration Begins	28	29	30 ☉	31
Striped Bass Seeks Cold Water						

## Butterfly Count on Middle Island

Thursday, July 4  
10 am – 1 pm  
The Island can be reached by bridge from St. Marys, W. Va. Join other butterfly fanciers on this Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge to help count and identify butterflies. Bring binoculars if you have them.



# Phases of the Moon: The "What and Why"



**New Moon** - The Moon's unilluminated side is facing the Earth. The Moon is not visible (except during a solar eclipse).



**Waxing Crescent** - The Moon appears to be partly but less than one-half illuminated by direct sunlight. The fraction of the Moon's disk that is illuminated is increasing.



**First Quarter** - One-half of the Moon appears to be illuminated by direct sunlight. The fraction of the Moon's disk that is illuminated is increasing.



**Waxing Gibbous** - The Moon appears to be more than one-half but not fully illuminated by direct sunlight. The fraction of the Moon's disk that is illuminated is increasing.



**Full Moon** - The Moon's illuminated side is facing the Earth. The Moon appears to be completely illuminated by direct sunlight.

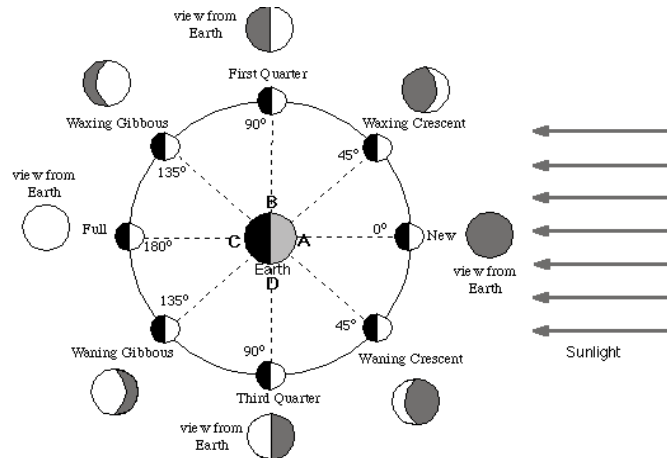


**Waning Gibbous** - The Moon appears to be more than one-half but not fully illuminated by direct sunlight. The fraction of the Moon's disk that is illuminated is decreasing.



**Last Quarter** - One-half of the Moon appears to be illuminated by direct sunlight. The fraction of the Moon's disk that is illuminated is decreasing.

The diagram below shows how orientations of the moon and sun relative to the earth cause the phases of the moon we observe (Figure by Nick Strobel, [www.astronomynotes.com](http://www.astronomynotes.com)). If the drawing were to scale, the moon would be half this size and the diameter of its orbit would be 22 times larger.



It is a misconception that, since the moon always shows the same face to earth, it is not rotating. In fact it does rotate, once per orbit of the earth. Prove it to yourself. Place an apple (the earth) and an orange marked with an 'X' (the moon) on a table. Now revolve the orange around the apple. You will see that you must rotate the orange in order to cause the 'X'-marked side to always face the apple. If it didn't rotate, different sides of the moon would face the earth at different times. Images and text to left are from U.S. Naval Observatory Astronomical Applications Dept., [http://aa.usno.navy.mil/faq/docs/moon\\_phases.html](http://aa.usno.navy.mil/faq/docs/moon_phases.html).

## Pick Your Favorite Month

The month was originally defined as the time between one new moon and the next, a time period that is now referred to as a 'synodic' month. However, the lunar cycle does not correspond with the earth's solar cycle (the number of new moons and the dates of their appearance change from year to year). To provide consistency, the modern calendar was established with a fixed number of months, each with a set number of days, in order to equal the 365 days in a year (or 366 in a leap year).

Astronomers also describe other types of months. The 'sidereal' month derives from the actual period (27.3 days) of the moon's orbit around the earth as viewed from a fixed position in space. The orbit of the moon is slightly elliptical (the *apogee* is the point in its orbit where it is closest to the earth, and *perigee* is the farthest point) and the time period from perigee to perigee is called the 'anomalistic' month (27.5 days). The 'Draconic' month refers to the periodic intersection of the moon's orbit with the plane of earth's ecliptic around the sun. The 'tropical' month is the period from one lunar equinox to the next. See the Hermit.org web site at [http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse/why\\_months.html](http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse/why_months.html), for a more detailed and well illustrated explanation of the various types of lunar months.

## MNHS Member Honored

Congratulations to Brad Bond, member of MNHS for receiving Civitan Person of Year Award. Brad has lead MNHS field trips in the past (and will again this September) and contributed to the newsletter.

MNHS

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**Menace, con't.**

Ohio's Noxious Weed law only identifies the offenders; it offers no course of action by the state. The plants now cover over 30 acres with an unknown number of outliers mostly in the immediate area. Creative thinking wasn't happening – what better place to establish a line than a wide river with an industrial site behind it?

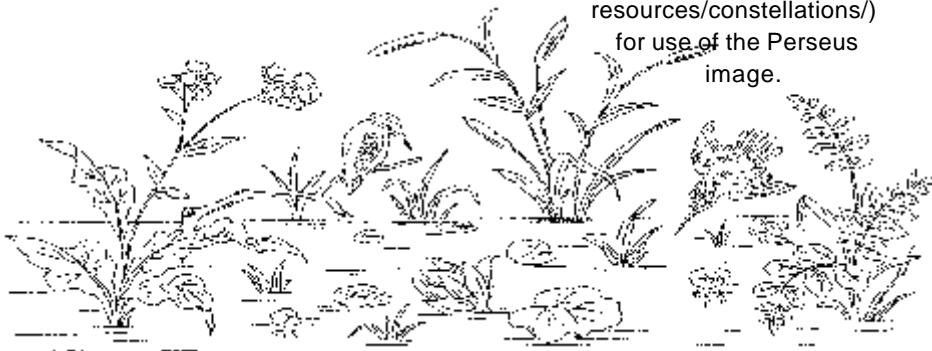
MAM has been found along roadsides, edges of dense woods and thickets, utility ROWs, clearcuts, pastures, streambanks, plant nurseries, damp areas and even in fairly open woodlands. If it becomes established in disturbed areas within woodlands, the dense growth of several plants will inhibit tree regeneration. It can smother multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle. Although these are major invasive species, this type of biocontrol is not desirable – it also smothers sumac, elderberry, blackberry and other native species.

I am not the first to urge that a federal fully funded exotic pest control program be established. For 8 years possible control methods have been tested on a small scale while trying to work with agencies and corporate representatives. Meanwhile, although still relatively limited to one site in Washington Co., MAM has only increased its population in Ohio during the past eleven years.

Some competitive planting might help but too often in the name of neatness, everything is mowed to ground level creating fine habitat for an annual invasive species.

One long-term possibility is biocontrol by 3 species of insects that currently look promising, of a total of 80 species collected feeding on MAM in China by the Forest Health Technology Enterprise Team of the USDA Forest Service. This control may be far in the future but should also serve to emphasize the need to try to control the spread of MAM until that time.

Or, perhaps, we could promote the Chinese medicinal use of the plant species they call tomcat quills for dysentery, abscess and poisonous bites – there will be no lack of material.



## SUMMER-FALL activities at *the Wilds*

**September 27-28 — Fall Migratory Bird days**

Saturday – birding programs, day and night hikes, kid crafts, and fun with birds. \$2 parking fee only!

If you have questions about these activities, contact Al Parker, Conservation Educator at the Wilds at [aparker@thewilds.org](mailto:aparker@thewilds.org) or call 740-638-2116.

## Perseid Meteors due to Arrive in August



The Perseid meteor shower will be appearing in our summer sky between August 12 to 14. This is one of the most well known meteor shows, rarely failing to be impressive, with a convenient summer-time occurrence.

The event and its intensity is associated with the travels of comet Swift-Tuttle, which has a period of about 120 years. Apparently, multiple trips of the comet through the solar system have created an uneven distribution of meteors along its orbit. As is true for other meteor/comet associations, meteor activity is most intense when the comet is nearby.

Thus, particularly impressive displays were observed in the early 1860s and early 1980s. This year we might expect a maximum rate of about 80 meteors per hour.

The meteors will appear to radiate from within the constellation Perseus. The radiant– the apparent point of origin– will be toward the northern region of the constellation, about midway between Perseus and the constellation Cassiopeia. Begin observing around 10 PM. To best observe the Perseids, sit in a recliner with your feet pointing somewhere between the southern and eastern horizon. Look straight up; it's best not to look directly at the radiant; this way you will better see the meteors arriving at a greater angle that have longer traces. When you see a meteor that appears to trace back to the constellation Perseus, it is likely a Perseid. (Thanks to the StarGate Constellation Guide (<http://stardate.org/resources/constellations/>) for use of the Perseus image.

**Suggestions, Comments  
or Contributions for the  
MNHS Newsletter?**

**Send them to the editor:**

625 5<sup>th</sup> St  
Marietta, OH 45750  
374-8778

# 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



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