

The Ovenbird

Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

Summer, 2010



NYFOA Refresher Course @ Lillibridge

July 17

Owl Prowl

July 24

Magical Mushrooms, **Mystical Molds**

August 7

Sala'Meander

August 28

Seedy Truth About Nuts and Berries

September 4





You can reach them on Yahoo! Groups We support our local hiking interests! Southern_Tier_Greenway_Hiking. Olean_Area_Hiking &

Get Out There And Walk!

Taking a Liking to Lichens

Looking down at the all too familiar grass stains on my pants, I realized that I have spent more time on the ground as naturalist than I have since those carefree days as a kid exploring the woods and fields. That intervening period somewhere between 12 and 50, I missed a lot of opportunity by not dropping down and exploring what appears insignificant from standing height.

So taking a cue from the old joke..."Why did the algae and the fungus get married? They took a lichen to each other." I too took a liking to lichens.

I think of lichens as charter members of the western New York development group. Essentially, when the last glacier of the Wisconsin Age retreated from our area 12-20,000 years ago, it left behind a rock and ice scoured landscape, a far cry from the lush verdant soft mounding mountains we see today.

This beautiful spot of earth was starting from scratch as it had probably done dozens of times during the millions of years of our existence. On this barren landscape, seeds and spores began to lodge themselves into rocky crevices looking for a foothold to start life. Barren rock is an inhospitable environment. It lacks soil and nutrients, it doesn't hold moisture, and provides little protection from the elements. Flora and fauna alike need suitable habitat to grow and that requires water, food, shelter, and space.

Slowly the barren rock is changed by lichens. Over thousands of years, lichens work their magic in a remarkable chemical process of converting those bare rock structures to soil, creating small bits of habitat that eventually allows plants to take hold.

To explain a bit about lichens is this excellent article prepared by Paula Flynn, extension plant pathologist; and Diane Nelson, extension communication specialist with illustrations by Pam Cates from Iowa State University, University Extension.

What are they?

The appearance of gray-green patches on the trunk or branches of a tree sometimes provokes concern. Should the growths be removed? Is the tree in trouble? These interesting and unusual growths are known as lichens. They are intriguing because they are made of two completely different organisms. Most of the

lichen is composed of a fungus. But living among the tightly packed threads of the fungus are cells of an alga. These two organisms live together and form the lichen structure. The lichen does not resemble either the fungus or the alga growing alone.

Two organisms that exist together, each providing some benefit to the other, are called symbionts. The job of the alga is to provide food. As a green plant, it's able to use sunlight to make food for the fungus as well as itself. The fungus holds up its end of the arrangement by obtaining water and minerals for itself and the alga and by protecting the algal

Where are they?

Lichens are common on trees because the bark provides a nice place to gather sunlight and grow. They do not feed on the tree or harm it in any way. Lichens sometimes grow profusely on dead branches or trees, raising suspicion that they cause disease. The reason they grow so well on these leafless branches is because they are fully exposed to the sunlight.

Lichens will grow on almost any stable and sunny surface. Besides tree trunks, other common lichen habitats include rocks, tombstones, soil and on the tundra. Lichens are tough organisms, able to survive hot or cold temperatures and able to survive with little moisture. They often grow in spots that are too harsh for most other organisms.

Lichens grow very slowly, usually just a fraction of an inch per year. The lichens commonly found on trees tend to be circular and are scattered on the bark. Each lichen body is usually several inches or less in diameter, but as



they grow together, large areas of a tree trunk can be covered. Lichens reproduce by packaging clusters of algal cells in fungal threads. These structures break off and can be blown by wind, moved by water, or transported on insects or animals. If they end up in a suitable spot, new lichens are formed.

(Continued on Page 7).....

Summer days are great times to explore in the woods. When it's hot & steamy in your garden, the meadow, or the pond, the woods will provide inviting shade. I don't know if the thermometer would say that it really *is* 10° cooler, but it sure feels like it to my skin. I love taking a nice, slow stroll through the trees, generally finding a downed log to rest on while I sip my water, or just stop to pet the dog. If the log's big enough, I'll lie on my back for a bit, and watch the treetops sway in the slightest breeze, making the blue sky and clouds peek through their canopy.

In July & August most of the birds have already hatched their eggs and the young have mostly fledged, but the migratory birds are still hanging around, not ready to head back south yet with plenty of food still available. So depending on time of day, I'll also enjoy listening to the birds as they go about their busy days. In my little patch of woods I'm most likely to hear ever-present juncos and chickadees, woodpeckers (pileated, hairy, and downy), yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and some warblers, most of which I can't identify by name. If I stay still for just a few minutes I'll see squirrels and chipmunks and if I'm really lucky a red fox will bark.

Being a clumsy person, when I walk in the woods I'm always watching the ground to try avoid the

ONE MORNING, IN THE GARDEN...

LETTURE

SHULOC ME 2000

EAT YOUR CARROTS, SWEETIE; YOU DON'T WANT TO END UP LIKE POOR, OLD UNCLE GARY,"

Margaret Shulock lives in Friendship, NY. Her "Sticks" cartoons can be seen in the Olean Times Herald. Visit her website, www.thesixchix.com to see more of her work.

many tripping hazards that woods provide. As a result, I'm likely to see whatever woodland wildflowers are in bloom. In mid-summer my woods provide me with cohosh (mostly blue with an occasional black), poke weed (be sure you don't eat that), mayapple fruits, elderberries and thimbleberries. I'll likely see oak galls, maple and ash seed clusters, and the flower heads from the long-gone leeks. In clearings I'm likely to see Queen Anne's Lace, yarrow, wild lettuce, plantain, goldenrod, and asters. If I walk along my dirt road I'll also enjoy Joe-Pye weed, hawkweed, burdock, sumac, boneset, ironweed, and more.

Over the years I've learned to identify many of our native wildflowers, but one of these days I have to get started on those grasses – they all currently escape any naming from me. I know that the only way for me to do it is to get myself a decent field guide and carry it and a magnifying glass outside with me. So if you know of a good field guide for native grasses, let me know. In the meantime, drop me an email, leave a comment on our blog, or give me a call to let me know what native plants you're seeing where *you* walk.

Treading lightly,

Peg Cherre

Seasonal Stirrings & Nature Notes

July ~ It's time to look for Monarch Butterfly eggs on the Milkweed. Take a small sample and place it in a well ventilated jar. Watch for the eggs to hatch and the larvae to emerge. Feed the larvae a steady diet of fresh Milkweed leaves and you may see it create it's cocoon. It's a beautifully jeweled case from which the adult Butterfly will soon emerge.



August ~ The Perseids is one of the best meteor showers to observe, producing up to 60 meteors per hour at their peak. This year's shower should peak on the night of August 12 and the morning of the 13th, but you may be able to see some meteors any time from July 23 - August 22. The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation Perseus. The thin, crescent moon will be out of the way early, setting the stage for a potentially spectacular show. For best viewing, look to the northeast after midnight.

September~ The September equinox occurs at 03:09 (or 3:09am) Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) on September 23, 2010. It is also referred to as the autumnal or fall equinox in the northern hemisphere. During the equinox, the length of night and day across the world is nearly, but not entirely, equal. Time to start observing the changes of the leaves and the migration of the birds.

Fun With Flowers

If you're like me, you love flowers. Perennial flowers and annual flowers. Native wildflowers and tropical exotic flowers. Sometimes even invasive alien flowers. (I admit that even as I scorn it for its wetland-destroying properties, I think purple loosestrife has an absolutely beautiful flower. For a similar color & shape in my gardens without all the nastiness, I stick with a purple blazing star/liatris.) I like to see their nodding tresses in gardens and to admire their beauty in cut flowers on my tables.

I also appreciate what dried flowers can do for us when we're decorating our holiday wreaths. Yep, it's barely summer and I'm talking about decorating that we'll not do until November. That's because if you want to dry your own flowers, you need to plan ahead, and likely start now.

It's pretty easy. Here are my simple-to-follow steps.

1. **Gather the flowers.** Cut the stems long – at least 6". I don't think it matters what time of day you cut the flowers, as long as you make sure that they don't have excess moisture from dew or rain on them. It's also important that you cut the stems BEFORE the flowers are fully opened. Those flower

heads will open a bit more while they're drying, and if you wait till they're fully opened to cut them, they'll be past their prime once they're dry.

2. Strip the excess leaves. This isn't an

absolutely critical step, but it does make for both shorter drying times and less mess later on. In fact, if you start stripping leaves and see that the stalks are tender enough that they're being damaged in the process, just skip this step all together. I always retain some leaves near the flower head, to be sure I don't damage the flower or the stalk.

3. Gather the stalks. How many stems per bundle? It all depends. Like grandma said when you asked about her how much flour she put in her homemade bread, it's all about the feel. On average, I'd say 10-12 stalks per bundle. For very fine-stemmed flowers add a few more; for thick-stemmed ones, a few less. Now that you have vour bundle, hold those stems together with a rubber band. Just twist the band around the cut end of the stems enough times so it's fairly tight. Those stems will shrivel some as they dry out and the rubber band will get a bit looser, so account for that in the number of times you initially wrap the bundle.

4. Hang the bundle.

There are any number of ways you can hang your dried bunches. I think the easiest way is to partially unbend a metal paper clip (I like the big ones for this), leaving a

hook at both the top and bottom of the clip. I slip one hook into the rubber band, and the other end over a metal hanger. Your flowers are now hanging cut end up, flower end down. One hanger can accommodate 4-6 bundles. Then just hang the whole thing in a dry, dark place. If they're hung where

there's any light, the flowers will open too much, and lose their color.



5. Wait. This is the easiest step of all. Go have fun with your family, take a vacation, read some good books, take lots of great hikes, come to several Nature Center programs, cook some great meals. In general, just forget about what's hanging in your basement, closet, or attic. Until November. That's when you'll let us know what you have ready for us to use!

So what kinds of flowers work well? Lots of things dry beautifully – be creative and experiment! For our wreaths we're mostly interested in bright colors. A few great examples are coronation gold or paprika (red) yarrow, pearly everlasting, all colors of statice (made to be dried), baby's breath, lavender, hydrangea, and celosia are a few great ones. Sometimes just leaves are wonderful, too, for example lamb's ear and Russian sage. Although often not as brightly colored as would be ideal, seed pods can be really interesting: poppies, honey locust, Siberian iris, and lunaria (silver dollar plants) are just a few lovely ones. Brightly colored fruits, such as rose hips, also add wonderful touches of color.

So in your outdoor travels in yard and woods this summer, think about what you might try drying. Be sure you don't pick protected plants, and ask us if you have any questions. We'll look forward to working with your materials in November!

Happy Feet!



The wildlife must have wondered what was happening on Saturday, June 5, when 150 runners and walkers took to the hills as part of **Woods Walk**

& Trail Run, 2010. Our fourth year hosting this event was very successful, all because of our <u>wonderful</u> volunteers! Our runners' comments included "Excellent!!! Great people!!" and "Volunteers were awesome!" We couldn't agree more. At the risk of missing some folks, we'd like to publicly acknowledge all the wonderful volunteers who made this day terrific.

Chris Piaggi & Carol Bradley cochaired the Trails Committee. I can't even begin to count the number of miles those two covered on foot designing, grooming, marking, and unmarking the trails! They were helped by Rosemary McNamee and her family, Hank & Marcia Storch, Bob & Donna Weber, Jeff McMullen, Wendy Brand, and Mike Canada - who also graciously loaned his gator for the last week's many tasks along the trails. Emily Mulherin, Elly Van Curen, Denise McCoy, Roy and Heather, Dorfmeister, Galen, Julian, & Adrian Ziaggi were at various posts along the trails to help make sure

Marcia Storch is the intrepid chair of the Sponsors & Advertisers Committee. She single-handedly made several dozen contacts with local businesses and individuals to solicit sponsors and ads, making Woods Walk & Trail Run a great fund raiser for the Nature Center as well as a fun

everyone stayed on

course.

wellness event for runners & walkers alike. She also didn't hesitate to help out on the Trails, at the Finish Line Arena, and elsewhere.

Judy Patton & Sue Stevens cochaired the Finish Line Arena Committee. In addition to cooking some wonderful salads, they made arrangements for Sprague's turkey sandwiches, Subway's mega-sub, and all the other delicious food. They were helped by Marilyn Hale and the First Presbyterian Church of Portville, Betsy Price, Pat & Rich McNeil, June Eaton, Kay Anderson, Alice Frost, Melissa Nix, Sheilah & Robert Taylor, Dave Povdock, Dave Michie and his Boy Scout troop, Joellen Beatty, and Tonya Reisman. While I'm mentioning Tonya, the entire Reisman family -Tonya, Jeff, Austin, Matt, & Justin are HUGE volunteers for this event. They do everything from mow our fields and paths to serving food, setting up tents & tables to post-event trail clean up. This year Tonya enlisted her extended family, from granddad Francis Shields to cousin Andy Barrett to help, too.

Wendy Brand not only did her usual great job as Publicity Chair, but she served as Event Chair on Saturday when Peg couldn't be there. Nice job, Wendy!

Vicki Schmidt chaired the Safety & Aid Stations Committee, making sure that everyone on the trails had access to water & snacks, and that they were all accounted for at each station - a critical component of good tracking. Vicki had help from Mike & Brian Grosso, Theresa Schueckler, Mary Eich, Ray Carlson, Nick Vaczek, Joe & Betty Leo, Mikki & Alex Cole, Joyce Ermer, Rich McNeil, and Jack Hawley. The entire Schmidt family - Dan, Courtney, & Erica, along with Colleen Kent and our own Susan Avery, kept time for our runners. Thanks also to the Portville Fire Department which was on hand in case of emergencies.

Mike Ermer, chair of the Tents & Grounds Committee, made all the arrangements for our big tent, tables & chairs, as well as parking for all the cars that day. He was assisted by Jim Pomeroy, Dave Poydock, and Joyce & Alex Ermer.

Sarah Larson, chairing the On-Site Registration Committee, made sure that everything went smoothly for 150 people to check in. Cecily Higgins and Jean & Rob Walk helped her stay organized.

It's only possible for us to have the great 10K and 10 Mile trails that we do because of the cooperation of adjoining landowners. Thanks to Jim & Sue Clancy, Joel & Laurie Warner, Sandy & Connie Wolfinger, Harry & Beverly Lawler, Ed & Jerry Reisman, and RAM Forest Products for allowing us one-day access to your property.

Just to make the day even nicer, Angela Cousins had activities for children, Dave Shemeld led our Guided Nature Walk, Dana Boser gave free massages, Mark Baker was on hand with his birds, and Jack Camus took lots of pictures for us.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!



Can You Help? We Need...



A Field Guide to Wildflowers (Peterson) (2)

Box of Large Latex Disposable Gloves

Aquatic Collecting Net—D Frame

Replacement Sweep Nets Muslin 16" Diameter (2)

Replacement Sweep Nets Poly Mesh 14" Diameter (2)



Thank You to Our Dedicated Volunteers



It's been a hectic brush clearing, trail marking, bird watching, tree planting, teacher training, kid leading kind of spring! And you think your honey-do list long!

We want to thank CeCe Fuoco from Genesee Valley Elementary and Tammy Kokot from Almond Library for inviting us to present our nature literacy program to their students and patrons.

We're very grateful to NYS DEC environmental education staff for facilitating successful teacher workshops reaching over 60 participants this spring.

Thanks to Tony Zambito and Lauren Prisco from St. Bonaventure for offering the opportunity to conduct a nature walk at the University's Earth Day celebration. You should have seen those college kids playing Hawk and Mouse in the forest. Just goes to show their a kid in everyone one of us waiting for the invitation to ditch the age



appropriate behavior and snuggle down behind a tree to mimic survival behavior of our forest rodents!

We kicked off May with some serious work on the trails at both properties. Board member Bob Weber marked the Eshelman Loop with large red "E"s and Wendy Van Curan, Preston Van Curan, Marilee Patterer, Sharon Barnes, Yvonne Wright, Joe Wright, and Joellen Beatty marked the entire trail system at Lillibridge with 4" white circles. The trail marking should help visitors year round stay on the property and avoid getting lost. Additionally, Bob Weber and Bob Wood corrected intersections on the Eshelman Property.

Some folks chuckle about people getting lost on site, but just a few short weeks ago, we did lose several teenagers at Lillibridge much to the chagrin of their teachers. Teenagers and trail signs... perhaps they couldn't see the trees for the forest.:)

Students made their way back to the pavilion following the white trail markings and the leftover trail markings from Woods Walk.

A huge number of folks were involved in preparing the trails for this years Woods Walk, many mentioned on the previous page. For those who went uncounted, clippers and chainsaws in hand, we are so very grateful for your efforts.



May kicked off Adopt A Tree with the program reaching over 900 children. None of which would have been possible without the help of our volunteer naturalists who taught everything from poop to water pollution! Thanks to Joellen Beatty, Lissa Mulherin, Reann Ehmen, Emily Mulherin,

Marcia Storch, Paul DesNoyers Mike Grosso, Brian Grosso, Nick Vaczek, Carol Bradley, Sarah Dominsky, and Peg Cherre.





Ted Georgian brought his environmental sciences students from St. Bonaventure University in May, along with the help of Barbara Casey, planted nearly 100 trees and shrubs along the riparian way bordering Coon Branch on the Eshelman Property. This helps restore the creek bank, previously used by the cows as a walking path, creating habitat for amphibians, small mammals, and birds; and improving the water quality of the creek.

Thanks to Jeff Reed and the Cattaraugus County Bird Club for yet another successful series of guided bird walks in May. Even with the early leafing out of the trees obscuring their view, they had some exciting sightings from the unusual Cape May Warbler to the unexpected variety of Cuckoos.

We rolled though June with 14 Adopt A Tree sessions with 35 groups over 11 days.... Whew!

Nick Vaczek provided his expertise leading the annual tour of the historic chestnut cabin.

Thanks for helping!

Pfeiffer Nature Center & Foundation

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Thank You & Welcome to New & Renewing Members

Mar 1-Jun 15, 2010

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In Memory Of

Vicki Lynn Hollister

by Donna Digirolamo

We are grateful for your generosity and support! Kind acts and thoughtful gifts such as these assist us in fulfilling our Mission. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift from these lists, please bring it to our attention and we will happily correct our oversight.



Create a Lasting Tribute

You can honor your family and friends in ways that will have lasting impacts on Pfeiffer Nature Center and therefore the local community. Gifts can be either memorials or tributes to the accomplishments of someone still with us, and all gifts will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

Gifts to the Kay Pfeiffer
Gerkin Endowment Fund

are maintained and managed separately from our operating funds. The principle in this fund is retained exclusively for investments and income generation, with only interest and dividends available to support our ongoing activities. Check with your financial or legal advisor to name Pfeiffer Nature Center in your estate planning.

Gifts may be made specifically to our sugar bush expansion project. We will plant sugar maples on our Eshelman property annually. While donors will not be able to identify "their" tree, they will have the benefit of knowing that their gifts provided a source of ongoing income. Maple seedlings are \$35 each.

Gifts of any size may be made to the Nature Center to honor or memorialize relatives, friends, or pets. With no minimum donation, this option provides giving opportunities for all.

We hope you'll make a gift soon!

Pfeiffer Nature Center Mission

- To preserve the integrity of the old-growth forest
- To provide an area for scientific research
- To promote community-based nature study programs for grade school, high school, college and adult students
- To further natural resource stewardship

Yes, I'd Like to Become a Member of Pfeiffer Nature Center

Membership Levels and Benefits

All members receive a subscription to *The Ovenbird*, our quarterly newsletter, delivered to your home.

Student/senior \$10 1 \$5 off program admission coupons
Individual \$25 1 \$5 off program admission coupons
Family \$35 3 \$5 off program admission coupons
Conservator \$100 4 free family program admissions
Patron \$250 Same as Conservator, invitation to wine & cheese reception, 1 tree planted

Guardian \$500 Same as Patron, plus 1 decorated fir holiday wreath

Benefactor \$1,000 Same as Guardian, plus unlimited free program admissions

Additional Donation \$_____

All members also receive discounted admissions and gift shop purchases at many other nature centers. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by NYS Tax Law.

Lichens (Cont.)

What types are there?

Not all lichens are the same. In fact, scientists have identified as many as 20,000 different kinds of lichens. The color and growth habit are used to identify and classify lichens.

Foliose lichens—gray-green and commonly found on trees. They have slightly raised, leaflike lobes. When moistened,

they become somewhat rubbery and can be removed.

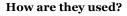
Crustose lichens—colorful and commonly found tightly clutching rocks or

tombstones. Some are an attention-getting bright orange or yellow.

Squar comm flatter

Squamulose lichens—less common form made of flattened, pebble-like units.

Fructicose lichens—another less common form that consist of branching tubes.



Besides being fascinating in their own right, lichens serve

other functions in nature. They provide homes for a number of insects. Lichens are a part of the diet for animals such as caribou, mountain goats and deer. More than 50 species of birds use lichens in their nests.

People have learned to use lichens in a number of ways also. Some lichens are edible, others are used in making antibiotics, and many can be used in making dyes that range in color from warm brown to brilliant violet. Rocks with lichen growth are popular choices for rock gardens. Because lichens are extremely sensitive to air pollution, their absence can be used as a measure of how much an area is polluted. When there are too many harmful substances in the air, lichens die.

Want to know more about lichens?

If you're curious about lichens and want to learn more, a good place to start is with the American Bryological and Lichenological Society. The Web address is

http://www.abls.org/. You can find information about upcoming forays, meetings, and articles focused on studying and identifying lichens. The Society also sponsors a lichen exchange where participants can acquire lichens from different geographic regions.

So if you are still able to get down and touch the earth, do so. There are absolutely marvelous encounters there for you to enjoy. Trust me, these little worlds provide a better understanding and appreciation of the big world we wander.



Pfeiffer Nature Center and Foundation

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Pfeiffer Nature Center where science, art, and nature come together! Non Profit Org. US Postage PAID Permit #5 Portville, NY



Hours of Operation

Office, 14 S. Main St. Portville:

Generally Tue-Wed, 8am to 3pm; other times by chance or appointment

Lillibridge Road Property:

Trails open to non-motorized usage dawn to dusk, 7 days a week, year round.

Yubadam Road Property:

Trails open to non-motorized usage dawn to dusk, 7 days a week, year round EXCEPT during hunting season Oct —Dec , when all trails are closed.

Staff is available for questions, tours, and programs as scheduled or by prior arrangement.

Check our website or call for the most up-to-date information and upcoming programs:

www.PfeifferNatureCenter.org 716-933-0187

Come To Our Annual Friend Raiser!

Last year we tried something different to bring together volunteers, staff, and supporters of the Nature Center. We held a picnic after hours in the Lillibridge Pavilion and welcomed 20+ folks who enjoyed one another's company, great food, a pleasant walk, and a spectacular evening of lovely weather and a sublime sunset. It gave each of us an opportunity to fully appreciate and share what we love about the Nature Center.

If you've enjoyed Pfeiffer Nature Center, we invite you to bring along a friend and a picnic basket and hopefully take in a wonderful evening at Lillibridge. The leaves will be tipped with color, the air crisp, and woods full of life preparing for the upcoming winter. BYOB & Picnic Basket. Ice cold cider and a fire provided.

Mark Your Calendar!

Wednesday

September 22 6 PM-8 PM

Lillibridge Pavilion



Be sure you don't miss out on any of our exciting programs! Simply write programs@PfeifferNatureCenter.org with the subject line **Count Me In** and we'll add you to our e-mail distribution list.