

Native News

Newsletter of the Maryland Native Plant Society

January/February 2009

Volume 9 Number 1

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Upcoming Monthly Meetings

“Winter Fruits, Berries, Seeds, and Pods”

Tuesday, January 27, 7:30 pm
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room

Native trees, shrubs, and forbs provide an abundance of fruits, berries, and seeds that support a wide variety of wildlife throughout the winter months. Botany Committee members will give a presentation on the wealth of native plants throughout the state that produce fruits, berries, and seeds that last into winter. Using live material, we will discuss identification techniques, as well as habitat requirements and distribution in the state. We will also discuss their importance to wildlife.

“Winter Evergreens”

Tuesday, February 24, 7:30 pm
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room

Join members of the Botany Committee for a presentation on native evergreen plants found throughout Maryland, including pines and other gymnosperms, hollies, bayberries, and other shrubs, groundcovers and clubmosses, and numerous others. Some historical evergreens will also be included. Live material will be used, with an emphasis on identification. The natural distribution and habitat of each species will also be discussed.

Directions: Exit the Washington Beltway at New Hampshire Ave (exit 28). Go north about 2 miles. The library is the first building on the right, once you have passed under Route 29, just after the Sears store.

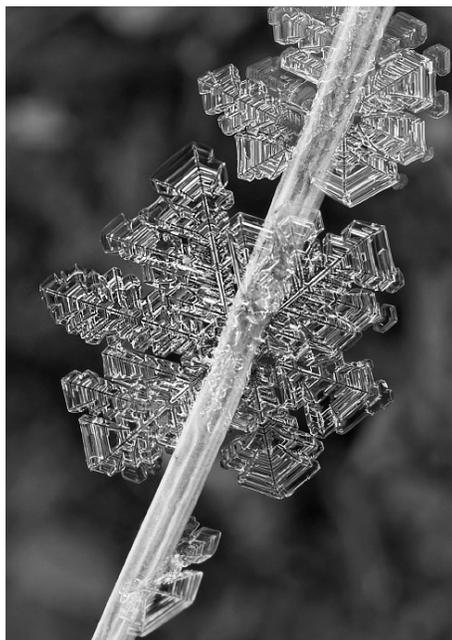


Photo above of frost crystals by Gary Fleming

Photo at right of Hoyle's Mill Diabase Area in Montgomery County by Roderick Simmons



Winter Field Trips

Civil War Fort Site – Bald Eagle Hill

Date: Sunday, January 4 **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: Mary Pat Rowan blair-rowan@starpower.net or 202-526-8821.

Winter Tree ID at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel County

Leader: Karyn Molines

Date: Saturday, February 28 **Time:** 9:30 am

Come learn the fundamentals of winter tree identification using twigs and bark features. We'll spend time indoors learning the basics, and then hike the forests of the Sanctuary.

Directions: Meet at the Visitor Center, 1361 Wrighton Road, Lothian, MD. Visit www.jugbay.org for directions.

Bring: Dress for both indoor and outdoor activities. Bring a snack or lunch, field guides, hand lens, binoculars, camera.

Contact: Karyn Molines kmolines@chesapeake.net or 410-286-2928.

Greater Baltimore Area Chapter Meeting

“The Geology-Soils-Plants Connection: A Baltimore Perspective”

Wednesday, January 21 beginning 7:00 pm at Irvine

Which plants grow where in Baltimore and the surrounding counties? Did you know that plants grow in communities and that the species in each community are quite predictable? Join MNPS' Louisa Thompson for an introduction to the role of geology and soils in determining native plant communities. Our region is exceptionally diverse, with rich soils derived from volcanic rock, limestone-enriched soils in the valleys of Baltimore County, and marine sediments in Anne Arundel County. The serpentine barrens of Soldiers Delight, Robert E. Lee Park, and much of the northwest side of Baltimore City and County are examples of a globally rare environment. We also have a variety of “poor” acidic soils with exceptionally tough plants on rocky Piedmont slopes and clayey plateaus, gravel terraces at the fall line, sandy glacial outwash plains, and ancient beaches now far inland as well as Bay shoreline beaches. Wetlands include upland depression swamps and vernal ponds, beaver marshes, floodplain meadows and swamps, fall line Magnolia Bogs, coastal plain bogs, tidal marshes, and beaches.

“Native” plants are native to their habitat, rather than following state lines or national borders. Knowing the individual tolerance ranges of plants allows you to “read” the underlying geology of a landscape and to plan a successful native plant garden. There's a lot to cover, so plan to stay until 9:00 or later.

Pennsylvania Trip Report

On the weekend of October 18-19, a group of us under the leadership of Lou Aronica continued our exploration of botanically rich sites near Harrisburg, PA. This was our third visit this year. The Box Huckleberry site in Perry County is a mixed oak and white pine forest containing a multi-acre patch of the eponymous rare evergreen shrub (*Gaylussacia brachycera*), which may actually comprise one single plant, possibly thousands of years old. The diverse shrub layer also includes Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Pinxter Flower (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*), and Black Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), among others. We continued on to Little Buffalo State Park, where we walked for a pleasant couple of hours, seeing a number of fall composites. Next stop was the restaurant at Doyle's Hotel in Duncannon, where we enjoyed good food, good music and good company.

The next day, Sunday, was the one day in the year when the PA State Game Commission allowed the public to drive the 17-mile road through Stony Valley, in Dauphin County. This is primarily a mixed oak, white pine, and hemlock forest, with an understory that includes Amelanchier (*A. laevis*, *A. arborea*, and possibly *A. sanguinea*) and Sassafras; a shrub layer that includes several *Vaccinium* species and several *Viburnums*; and a ground layer that includes Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), at least 15 species of fern, and many typical woodland herbs. On our June visit, we had been thrilled to find Purple Fringed Orchid (*Habenaria fimbriata*) and Little Club-Spur Orchid (*Habenaria clavellata*). Botanical highlights of our fall trip included Big-leaf Aster (*Aster macrophyllus* or *Eurybia macrophylla*), 2 species of Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus obovatus* and *Euonymus americanus*), Shining Clubmoss (*Huperzia lucidula*), Bluntlobe Cliff Fern (*Woodsia obtusa*), Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), and Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*). This was a stop-and-go journey, and we were fortunate to find a small wetland to explore on one of our stops. Stony Valley contains a number of diverse woodland habitats, relatively free of invasive plants, and is similar in many respects to the forest habitats we explored in Western Maryland during the last year. We hope to revisit Stony Valley again in the coming year. Watch for dates in the *Native News*.

Native News Deadlines:

Jan 25	March/April Early Spring Issue
March 25	May/June Late Spring Issue
May 25	July/August Summer Issue
July 25	September/October Early Autumn Issue
Sept 25	November/December Late Autumn/Holidays Issue
Nov 25	January/February Winter Issue

Next Mailing Party Date (White Oak Library):

Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 pm



Maryland Native Plant Society

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If you are a business you can be included on the MNPS providers list.
Please indicate the name of your business and what type of business it is:

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Membership Dues:

Individual: \$25.00/year
 Double: \$35.00/year
 Student/limited income: \$15.00/year
 Lifetime: \$250.00
 Organization: \$50.00/year

Additional Donation _____

Total Enclosed _____

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