

Note on '*Leucothoë walteri*' in Baltimore County

Of interest to [MNPS's 2013 'Year of the Heath'] Ericaceae discussion is the note found in Gleason & Cronquist (1991) on page 207 about '*Leucothoë walteri*' as 'disjunct in Baltimore Co., Md.'

If you hike the red trail at Oregon Ridge Park in Baltimore County you eventually come to a section¹ toward the south side of the Park that is bordered on both sides by an evergreen ericaceous shrub. Redman (1999)² in his survey of Park flora referred to this plant as *Leucothoë axillaris* var. *editorum* (having the current ITIS name: *Leucothoë fontanesiana*). And if you continue along the trail and reach Ivy Hill Pond you will also find it in a few patches along its adjacent slopes.

Much of Oregon Ridge Park was once owned by H. Lee Hoffman³ (1895-1980) a noted conservationist and first President of the Maryland Outdoor Life Federation. From 1943 to 1960, the Hoffman family owned the south section of the Park woodlands, and Hoffman established and ran a native plant nursery, which he called Ivy Hill Forest. He grew *Leucothoë fontanesiana* as part of his woodland plantings. In his professional life, Hoffman ran his own advertising business in Baltimore. And I'm certain he was successful with his connections and skills to distribute his propagated plants. It's not unreasonable to search for a connection between Hoffman's Ivy Hill Forest Nursery and occurrences in other places in Maryland, such as the Sugarloaf Mountain occurrences⁴ in Frederick County document by J.W. Roller in 1948.

Gleason & Cronquist (1991) considered *Leucothoë fontanesiana* to be a synonym of *Leucothoë walteri*. So that is how a report of a Florida hobblebush (*Leucothoë walteri*) (its current ITIS name: *Agarista populifolia*) was claimed to be a disjunctive presence in the Piedmont woods of Baltimore County.

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¹ 39.480269, -076.689142 Google Earth estimate; plants visible on leaf-off aerial photograph of 3/10/2004.

² "*Leucothoë axillaris* var. *editorum* (Fern. & Schub.) Ahles. Evergreen Fetterbush. Very rare [within the Park-C.D.], local in several colonies in upland forest along Ivy Hill trail north of Ivy Hill and at Ivy Hill Pond."

³ <http://archive.mdhs.org/library/Mss/ms002583.html>

⁴ Shetler, S.G. and S.S. Orli. 2000. *Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of the Washington Baltimore Area. Part I. Ferns, Fern Allies, Gymnosperms, and Dicotyledons*. Department of Botany, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution: Washington, D.C.