

Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Fall 2012

Inside this issue:

Mary Wharton's 100th Birthday Celebration	1
A Review of the Mushroom Workshop	2
Schedule of Events	3
Donation Form	4

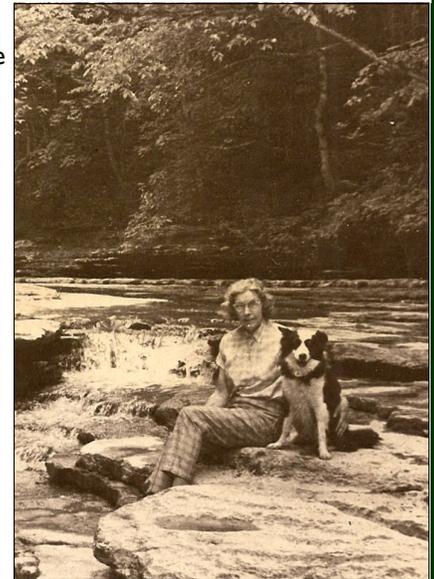
Mary Wharton's 100th Birthday Celebration

By: Beverly James, Preserve Manager

On October 13th, we will be co-hosting the fall meeting for the Kentucky Native Plant Society to celebrate the 100th birthday of our founder, Dr. Mary Eugenia Wharton. The day's events will include morning and afternoon hikes at Floracliff and Lower Howard's Creek, a nearby State Nature Preserve. The day will end with a couple of evening presentations including our featured speaker, Dr. Bill Bryant, giving a presentation on Mary Wharton. The charge for the event is \$10, which will cover all hikes and presentations.

Floracliff will also be having a silent auction which will include books, including a copy of Mary Wharton's "Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky" (out of print) and "Wildlands Philanthropy", a coffee table book with essays and photographs from natural areas all over the world, three of which are in Kentucky, one of them being Floracliff. Also included in the silent auction will be a few nicely made copies of botanical prints from Mary Wharton's collection by Mark Catesby and George Ehret.

While Floracliff typically requires pre-registration for all events, that will not be required for this event. However, all hikes will be offered to the first 15 people that sign up that day. Sign up sheets will be in our nature center. The Floracliff Nature Center is located at 8000 Elk Lick Falls Rd., Lexington, KY 40515. For more information or to get directions, please contact us at 859-351-7770 or floracliff@aol.com. Here is the schedule:



9:00 - 12:00

- Hike 1- Birds and Plants hike to the Kentucky River @ Floracliff with Mary Carol Cooper and Ramesh and Suzanne Bhatt
- Hike 2- Trees and Mushrooms w/ Beverly James @ Floracliff
- Hike 3- @ Lower Howard's Creek with Clare Sipple and Bill Crankshaw

12:00 - 1:30 Lunch break

1:30 - 4:30

- Hike 1- "Ecology of the Palisades" hike @ Floracliff w/ Brian Yahh
- Hike 2- @ Lower Howard's Creek with Clare Sipple and Bill Crankshaw

4:50 Silent auction ends, winners announced, items can be picked up and paid for before 5:00 p.m. or after presentations

5:00 - 6:00 Indoor presentations:

- 5:00 - 5:30 - Will Overbeck, ECU Biology Department graduate student- "Flora of Garrard County Encompassing the Palisades, Bluegrass and Knobs Regions"
- 5:30-6:00 - Dr. Bill Bryant, retired biology professor from Thomas More College- "Mary Wharton: Botanist, Educator, and Conservationist"

Help us save on printing and postage costs by receiving your newsletter via email and in color! Send an email to floracliff@aol.com and include your name and address so that we can make the changes.
Thank you!

A Review of the Mushroom Workshop

By: Yoni Glogower

The Floracliff Field Studies mushroom workshop was a great opportunity for lovers of nature from all backgrounds to come and learn about a surprisingly understudied topic. We began on the first day with an indoor introduction by workshop leader and mushroom expert Walt Sturgeon followed by a field excursion to search for specimens to identify.

The group that assembled had a wide range of interests. Some of us only wanted to learn how to identify which specimens might be good to eat, while others were more interested in general taxonomy and life history traits of the organisms. Walt led us through all these topics in his introductory slide show presentation. We learned about how fungi reproduce by spreading spores by either wind (ascomycetes) or gravity (basidiomycetes). The actual organism is mostly underground or embedded within some other substrate, and the part we see and use to identify them is just the reproductive structure. Thus, when you pick mushrooms, the actual organism is unharmed so long as it is broken or cut off cleanly. Walt showed us examples of a number of tasty mushrooms commonly found in the field, such as morels, chicken of the woods, goat's beard, and corn smut, which can be found growing on ears of corn! He also introduced us to other ecologically interesting specimens, such as mycorrhizal fungi which form mutualistic relationships with tree roots and aid them in nutrient uptake. My favorites were the mixomycete slime molds, which can move from place to place in dense colonies. Weird!

After lunch we drove to the northern end of the preserve to look for mushrooms in the field, armed with our new copies of *Mushrooms of West Virginia*, Walt's extensive knowledge, and the honest fire of our own curiosity. With the recent drought, our prospects were significantly narrowed (fungi like it damp and moist for the most part). However, there had been a good rain two days before and we went down the ravine to the lowest part of the preserve where things were wetter by the stream bank. Along our walk we found numerous fungi that had sprouted up overnight. There were plenty of artists' conks, small black inky caps, stationary slime molds, and *Panellis stripticus*, which glows in the dark! We also found numerous wood ears on decomposing logs by the creek. These looked like strange translucent gremlin ears that grew out of the wood to listen to the mysteries of the forest. In all, though there were no large or edible fungi to be found, there was still a wealth of smaller specimens - each mysterious and wonderful in its own way.

On the second day of the workshop we traveled to the Red River Gorge. The forest there has different tree species than Floracliff and also had more recent rain. We noted a great difference in the types of fungi there. Walt went into rapid-fire identification mode, naming both common and scientific names for almost every specimen we found--almost as quickly as we could bring them to him! We found dead man's fingers, a toothed jelly fungus, cheese polypore, and reishi, a medicinal mushroom. We caught sight of some raspberry slime as well, which was also creepily delicious looking. I really liked the witches butter fungus myself, all crinkled up and appearing to be the cousin of the wood ears we saw back at Floracliff, though yellow. One major difference between our findings at this site and Floracliff is that we found mycorrhizal fungi, including species from the *Russula*, *Amanita*, and *Boletus* genera. Once the rain picked up we hurried out at a faster pace, though we were all secretly happy for the fungi all around us whose thirst would be slaked by the downpour.

Overall, the workshop was a great success, both for providing us the introductory knowledge to identify fungi on our own and for stirring up enthusiasm for the topic within the community. Hopefully this momentum will lead to the creation of a Mycological Association chapter in Kentucky where even more people in the area can be introduced to the strangely whimsical world of mycology.



Walt Sturgeon discusses *Amanita cokeri*.
Photo by Kevin Lutes, <http://kevinlutesphotography.com/>

Yoni Glogower is an undergraduate student at Earlham College who worked on a summer research project with the University of Kentucky at Floracliff. The project focused on bush honeysuckle and was funded by the National Science Foundation.

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Volunteers

Emma Anderson
Yoni Glogower
Charles Sither

Program Leaders

Roberta Burnes

Mike Compton

Ryan Evans
Carey Ruff
Rob Paratley

Donors

Acorn:

Patricia Donohue

Patricia Tuttle

Shooting Star:

Chris Barton

Ramesh and Suzanne Bhatt

Bluegrass Pride

Eric Ruschman

Laurance Simpson

James Stratton

Chris Westover

Spicebush:

Down to Earth Garden Club

Hickory:

Charles Sither

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$5 per person or \$12 per family unless otherwise noted. Most programs last 2-3 hours. Call 859-351-7770 or email floracliff@aol.com to register or get more information.

Programs and Hikes

All hikes are rated moderate in difficulty due to narrow trails, uneven terrain, and change in elevation.

Saturday, September 29th @ 1:00 p.m.: Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants

Preserve Manager Beverly James will be leading this hike to Elk Lick Creek discussing popular garden plants that have become invasive in Central Kentucky. We'll also see many native plants along the way that can have desirable ornamental attributes and make great alternatives. Hiking level is moderate.

Saturday, October 13th @ 9:00 a.m.: Mary Wharton's 100th birthday celebration/ Kentucky Native Plant Society Fall meeting

See page 1 for details.

Saturday, October 20th @ 10:00 a.m.: Tree Identification and Natural History

Join Preserve Manager Beverly James on this leisurely hike to Elk Lick Falls and Elk Lick Creek with stops along the way to discuss the natural history of our native trees as well as how to identify them by their leaves, bark, and fruit. Hiking level is moderate.

Saturday, November 10th @ 10:00 a.m.: Long Hike

This hike has no particular theme, just a goal of seeing more of the preserve than we cover on our other hikes and it features a stop along the Kentucky River. The hiking level is rated difficult due to the length, which is 4 miles, but there is an opportunity to only do half the hike. For the past two years, this has been a popular hike, so early registration is encouraged.

Saturday, December 1st @ 1:00 p.m.: Winter Tree Identification

Preserve Manager Beverly James will cover how to identify common trees of the Bluegrass region by their bark, buds, leaf scars, and other characteristics. Hiking level is moderate.

Workshops:

November 3-4: Conifer Workshop - In this workshop led by Rob Paratley, we will survey the families of living conifers, including some Southern Hemisphere and East Asian conifers that we don't often see in our region except as occasional ornamentals or in indoor conservatories. Important Northern Hemisphere families will be treated in detail, covering all genera and many important species. We will learn identifying characteristics, adaptations, and utility of many of these, including pine, hemlock, fir, spruce, Douglas-fir, larch, cedar, juniper, false-cypress, arbor-vitae, cypress, incense-cedar, redwood, giant sequoia, bald-cypress, dawn redwood, yew, and torreyia. We will review conifer evolutionary history, some controversial new ideas about their evolutionary relationships, and take a tour of many of the world's conifer-dominated forest systems. We will visit the Lexington Cemetery to look at their collection of conifers. On the second day, we will travel to the Daniel Boone National Forest to look at native conifers.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, October 6th, 10 am – 1 pm

Saturday, December 1st, 10 am – 1 pm

Volunteer activities will involve assisting with the removal of exotic plants from the preserve. This is part of an ongoing effort to protect our native species and we rely on the help of volunteers. Please call ahead to register and receive more information at 859-351-7770. If you are interested in helping out on any other day, give us a call and we can work something out!

**THE MARY E.
WHARTON NATURE
SANCTUARY AT
FLORA CLIFF**

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Lexington, KY 40522

Phone: 859-351-7770
Email: floracliff@aol.com
Web address: www.floracliff.org

Floracliff is a non-profit organization. We rely on support from community members like you. Please support preservation in your region.

Yes! I would like to contribute a tax-deductible gift to Floracliff.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed _____ Date _____

- \$25 - \$49 acorn
- \$50 - \$99 shooting star
- \$100 - \$299 spicebush
- \$300 - \$499 dogwood
- \$500 - \$999 hickory
- \$1000+ old oak tree
- other

Please make checks payable to Floracliff and mail to:
Floracliff, P. O. Box 21723, Lexington, KY 40522.



**P.O. Box 21723
Lexington, KY 40522**

Address correction requested