



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Fall 2013

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Venerable Trees Workshop - October 12th

The Bluegrass Region is characterized by its rolling hills, black fences and barns, horses and very large old trees. Many of these trees were here before the founding of Lexington, and some may be as old as 500 years. Today, these venerable trees are disappearing as development and agricultural practices limit their habitat and as more trees succumb to advanced age. Bur oaks, blue ash, chinkapin oaks, Shumard oaks and shellbark hickories, along with a few other species, characterized the Bluegrass at the time of European settlement, and a small number of these presettlement trees still live today.

Central Kentucky today consists of a thriving metropolitan area surrounded by highly productive farmland. The venerable trees that remain are tucked into odd places around Fayette County, and are still common on some farms.

This workshop will take a detailed look at the lives of these ancient trees, from birth to death. We will consider what is known about the trees of Central Kentucky prior to and at the time of European settlement. We will visit ancient trees in Floracliff and at several locations around Lexington.

We will examine the entire life history of old trees, from germination and establishment to maturity, old age and death. Workshop participants will come away from this experience with a deeper understanding of how trees grow, why some trees live to great age, and what we can do to promote a vigorous urban forest and conserve our natural heritage.

The workshop will be led by Dr. Tom Kimmerer and Floracliff Preserve Manager Beverly James. It will be a full-day workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$30/person and pre-registration is required. Please call 859-351-7770 or email floracliff@aol.com to register.



Photo by: Dr. Tom Kimmerer

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!

The past month at Floracliff has been an active one for insects. In early September, we hosted the local Wild Ones Chapter for a caterpillar hunt. We found a variety of caterpillars, such as the double-lined prominent (left), which blends in well with the elm leaves its feeding on. We've also found at least 20 monarchs feeding on milkweed near the nature center. They have found the nature center to be a good place to pupate as we have found 18 chrysalids on the building, lights, and railings (right). In mid-September, Dr. James Wagner led the Kentucky Insect and Spider Field Studies Workshop at Floracliff, where we learned the characteristics of the most commonly found Orders and started an insect collection for the nature center.



Fauna Focus: Old man of the Woods (*Strobilomyces* sp.)

By: Josie Miller



It has been a great year for observing fungus at Floracliff. In mid-July, we added a new species to our list. Smokey-gray and covered with woolly scales and shaggy margins, the Old Man of the Woods (*Strobilomyces* sp.) appeared in the shade of a 375-year-old chinquapin oak.

As is the case with most other members of the bolete (*Boletaceae*) family, Old Man of the Woods is an ectomycorrhizal fungus, and one of the few we have observed at Floracliff. The vegetative portion, or fungus body, resides underground where it forms a fungal (Greek *mykes*, fungus) association with the outside (Greek *ektos*, outside) surface of the roots (Greek *rhiza*, root) of a member of the plant kingdom. In the case of Old Man of the Woods, the association forms in mixed coniferous and hardwood forests. The fungus body consists of microscopic threads of hyphae that develop into a cobweb-like net of mycelium. By forming an association with the roots of a host plant, the fungus increases the plant's ability to uptake water and nutrients, and in return the plant provides the fungus with carbohydrates produced through photosynthesis. Because the fungus body is not visible, it is important to remember to tread lightly on the forest floor to avoid harming members of the fungal kingdom.

The fruit body is the reproductive portion of the fungus, thus it is only seen pushing through the forest leaf debris when conditions of nutrition, humidity, temperature and light are suitable for spore dispersal, and thus reproductive success. The hymenium, or spore-producing reproductive tissue of boletes consists of a layer of tubes in which spores are produced. This surface appears similar to a sponge, and in old man of the woods is grayish-white when young, becoming nearly black with age. When bruised, the pores stain red, then black. The flesh of the cap also starts out whitish, and upon exposure stains orange-red, then black.

Flora Focus: Clymene Moth (*Haploa clymene*)

By: Laura Baird



One of the most striking moths to visit us this summer was the clymene moth, *Haploa clymene*. It is a common, medium-sized moth with a distinctive appearance- white with a bold dagger-like pattern. At rest, the moth takes on a triangular shape, hiding its creamy yellow hind wings marked with a black spot. Its head and abdomen are both orange. The species is diurnal, meaning it is active both day and night.

The caterpillar is a dark, spiny little creature with double yellow stripes along both sides. It feeds on oaks, willows, and herbaceous plants in the *Eupatorium* genus such as boneset and thoroughwort. The caterpillars we see now will hibernate through the winter and emerge again when the weather warms up. They will continue to feed until they mature next spring or summer. There is only one generation of clymene moths every year.

Haploa clymene is one of only six *Haploa* species in North America. All species can be easily recognized by their orange bodies and their simple, high-contrast wing markings of black (or dark brown) and white. *Haploa* caterpillars are all dark and spiny with yellow striping and can be found feeding on many of the same plant species.

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$5 per person or \$12 per family unless otherwise noted. Most hikes 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 to strenuous in difficulty due to narrow trails, uneven terrain, and change in elevation, and distance.

Saturday, October 5th @ 1:30 p.m.: Trees and Mushroom

This hike will cover the identification and natural history of some of our most common trees and their relationships with fungi. We may even find some mushrooms and identify those, too!

Saturday, October 12th, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.: Venerable Trees: The Lives of Ancient Trees in the Kentucky Bluegrass w/ Dr. Tom Kimmerer (\$30)

This will be a full-day workshop held at Floracliff, Hamburg, and Elmwood Stock Farm. See page 1 for more details.

Saturday, October 19th @ 10:00 a.m.: Fall Colors w/ Laura Baird and Josie Miller

This hike is not limited to the fall colors of leaves, but whatever captures the attention of Floracliff Field Technicians Laura and Josie, including flowers, seeds, insects, mushrooms, and more.

Saturday, November 9th @ 10:00 a.m.: Long Hike

Join us for our annual long hike, when we will head down to the Kentucky River then over to Elk Lick Falls. This hike will cover about 4 miles and is limited to 10 people.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, October 5th, 10 am - 1 pm

Saturday, November 2nd, 10 am - 1 pm

Saturday, December 7th, 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!

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Donors

Shooting Star:

Dennis Chambers
Becky Faulconer

Spicebush:

Down to Earth Garden Club
William Elwood

Hike/Program Leaders

Betty Beshoar
Jennie Condra
Heather Housman
Janet Lensing
Rob Paratley
James Wagner

Volunteers

Marley Allen
Hugh Huffman
Jacob Moody
Charles Sither

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

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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.

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Amount enclosed _____ Date _____

- \$5 - \$49 acorn
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- \$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.
Thank you!



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Address correction requested