



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Spring 2013

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Mother Nature's Child Film Screening

By: Beverly James, Preserve Manager

On Sunday, April 21st, Floracliff and The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky will be co-hosting a film screening of "Mother Nature's Child". The event will take place 2-5 p.m. at the Farish Theater in the Downtown Branch of the Lexington Public Library.

The film explores the importance of nature to a child's health and development and includes interviews with Richard Louv and David Sobel. Unfortunately, many children today do not spend as much time outdoors as their parents and grandparents. However, there are a number of organizations in Central Kentucky that are working to connect all ages to the natural environment. Following the film, there will be a discussion panel with representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Bluegrass Youth Sustainability Council, Kids Grow Kentucky, Kentucky Environmental Education Council, and Bluegrass Pride. We invite you to join in the discussion and learn about what these groups are doing. This is a ticketed event since space is limited. To reserve a seat, contact Kentucky@nature.org or 859/259-9655.

Over the past couple of years, Floracliff has been working to expand our programming options to include more programs for youth. We feel it's important that connections to nature be fostered at a young age, not only for the development of our youth, but for the future of our natural areas. We still have programs to plan and we want to hear from you. Please send your ideas and thoughts to floracliff@aol.com.



Mary Wharton Honored at Kentucky Women Remembered Ceremony

We are proud to announce that Floracliff founder, Dr. Mary Wharton, was recently inducted into the Kentucky Women Remembered exhibit at the State Capitol. On March 12th, there was a ceremony honoring Dr. Wharton along with Lois Howard Gray and Thelma Stovall. Governor Steve Beshear, Lieutenant Governor Jerry Abramson, and Chair of the Kentucky Commission on Women Madeline Abramson were present to unveil the portraits that are now part of the permanent exhibit. Past inductees include botanist Sadie Price and conservationist Sally Brown. At the ceremony, Gov. Beshear said "These honorees have made a meaningful difference throughout their years of service and have paved the way for the success of Kentucky women, both now and in the future. Jane and I are proud to recognize these individuals for this distinction and hope their influence and achievements will continue to be appreciated and acknowledged for years to come."



Oscar Gerald, friend of Dr. Wharton, stands next to her portrait in the State Capitol. Photo by Frankie Gerald.

Flora Focus: Leatherwood - *Dirca palustris*

By: Josie Miller



Leatherwood is one of the first native shrubs to bloom in spring.

Introduced into cultivation as early as 1750, Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), is a spring flowering gem of our Kentucky forests that has remained relatively unknown. In late March to early April, expect to see the one-quarter to half-inch greenish yellow blooms dangling from the branches of this slow-growing deciduous shrub. Before the leaves emerge, fuzzy bud scales help to protect the fragrant bells from harsh winter winds. As the temperatures rise into the upper 50s, small-bodied bees awaken to pollinate the flowers, which may be in clusters of two to seven.

Historically, the bark and phloem of leatherwood, also known as rope-bark, has been used to create cordage, high-quality papers, baskets, bowstrings, and fishing line. The flexibility of its bark is demonstrated by the fact that its living stems may be tied into an overhand knot without damaging the twig.

In the Bluegrass, this three to nine foot shrub is most likely to be found in the forest understory on rich, mesic, shady slopes, or as its specific name *palustris* (“of the swamps”) suggests, near moist soils and streams. *Dirca*, a reference to a mythological fountain in Thebes, also alludes to its preferred habitat. Given its affinity for shade and moisture, as well as its attractive form, leatherwood offers a unique addition to an urban rain garden. Blooming alongside spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and spring wildflowers, it is a sight to behold on a sunny hike following a cold Kentucky winter.

Flora Focus: False Rue Anemone - *Enemion biternatum*

By: Laura Baird



False rue anemone has five white sepals and deeply divided leaflets.

A true sign of spring, false rue anemone is so named for its superficial resemblance to rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*). It is a strong resemblance at first glance, but false rue anemone is generally a more robust, leafier plant.

Both plants have compound leaves with three leaflets. However, false rue anemone’s three leaflets are each deeply cut into three lobes, which is how it earned its specific name, *biternatum*. *Biternatum* translates to “twice three-times divided”, in reference to these leaves. The leaflets of rue anemone, in comparison, are notched rather than lobed. The plants can be further differentiated by their flowers. The flowers of false rue anemone are always white with five sepals (not petals), while the flowers of rue anemone usually have more sepals and can vary in color.

False rue anemone grows throughout the eastern half of the United States and can be found as far west as Texas. It forms healthy colonies and flourishes in woods with calcareous soil, such as here in the Bluegrass. It flowers mid-March through May. While the flowers lack nectar, the pollen attracts small bees that collect it and small flies that feed on it.

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Donors

Acorn:

Sharon Stubblefield

Shooting Star:

Ron Cicerello

Spicebush:

Eric Ruschman

Hike Leaders

Mary Carol Cooper

Deb White

Volunteers

Emma Anderson

Hugh Huffman

Steve Menefee

Montessori Middle School of KY

Leigh Anne Robertson

Bill Rodgers

Charles Sither

Nathan Skinner

Ashley Whaley

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.

Wednesday, April 10th @ 10:00 a.m.: Mid-week Wildflower Hike w/ Josie Miller

Floracliff Field-tech Josie Miller will lead this wildflower hike for those with some free time during the week. Highlights will likely include celandine poppies, bishop's cap, nodding trillium, bellwort, shooting stars, and more.

Saturday, April 13th @ 9:00 a.m.: Birds and Wildflowers

Join Hank Yacek and Beverly James for this hike where we will seek out spring migrants and spring ephemerals.

Saturday, April 27th @ 1:00 p.m.: Subtleties of the Forest w/ Beverly James

This hike will emphasize a variety of plants and fungi that may be easily overlooked because of their size, color, or structure. However, each one has a story and a role in the forest ecosystem.

Saturday, May 11th @ 9:00 a.m.: Herpetology w/ Zeb Weese

Zeb Weese, biologist for the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, will lead this program for all ages to find some of our native frogs, snakes, salamanders, and turtles in the pond and Elk Lick Creek.

Tuesday, May 28th @ 7:00 p.m.: Land Snails w/ Daniel Douglas (indoor program)

Land snails are very important components of properly functioning ecosystems. We will discuss basic biology, ecology, and natural history as well as biodiversity among this group of poorly understood organisms, with a special emphasis on species present at Floracliff Nature Sanctuary.

Saturday, June 15th @ 10:00 a.m.: Medicinal Plants Hike w/ Myron Hardesty

Myron Hardesty, Medical Herbalist, PA-C and owner of Weeds of Eden in Louisville, will lead this hike to discuss the medicinal properties of many of our native plants.

Other Upcoming Programs:

May 3-4: Herpetology Field Studies Workshop w/ Dr. Stephen Richter and Dr. Steven Price

June 28-29: Fern Field Studies Workshop w/ Rob Paratley

September 13-14: Kentucky Insects and Spiders Field Studies Workshop w/ Dr. James Wagner

Please visit our website for more details and to keep up with other programs that may be added: www.floracliff.org

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, April 6th, 10 am - 1 pm

Saturday, June 1st, 10 am - 1 pm

(We will not be having a volunteer day in May due to a scheduled program.)

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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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.
Thank you!



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

Address correction requested