



Elk Lick Echo

A Newsletter of Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

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Winifred W. Haggart, pictured here in 1951, was a close friend of Mary Wharton and the benefactor of the nature center.

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Spring 2011

Open House for the Winifred W. Haggart Nature Center

In January, we officially moved into our new headquarters at the Winifred W. Haggart Nature Center. We will be celebrating this milestone on **April 16th** by having an Open House celebration. There will be a variety of hikes offered as well as indoor programs on herps and raptors. Those wanting to attend the 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. hikes will need to pre-register as space is limited. However, the indoor programs and nature center tours will not require registration. Guided hikes to Elk Lick Falls will be offered throughout the day. The current schedule is posted below. Changes or updates will be posted on our website, www.floracliff.org. The nature center is located at 8000 Elk Lick Falls Rd in southern Fayette County. If you need directions or would like to register for a hike, please contact us at 859-351-7770 or floracliff@aol.com. Carpooling is encouraged since parking spaces will be limited. We hope to see you there!

Schedule of events:

9:00 a.m. - "Ecology of Spring Ephemerals" hike w/ UK herbarium curator Rob Paratley

9:00 a.m. - "Wildflower Folklore" hike w/ Floracliff field tech Laura Baird

10:50 a.m. - Welcome

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Hands-on herpetology program w/ biologist Chris Carpenter

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. - Raptor program w/ Eileen Wicker of Raptor Rehab of Kentucky

1:30 p.m. - "Wildflowers and Birds" hike w/ native plant enthusiast Mary Carol Cooper

1:30 p.m. - "Stream Ecology of the Palisades Region" hike w/ aquatic biologist Ryan Evans

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - a few informational booths and activity tables

Floracliff to treat ash trees this spring

While the Emerald Ash Borer has not been confirmed at Floracliff, reported infestations are getting closer. This spring, we will be taking precautionary measures by using Tree-age to treat select trees within our forest to protect them from EAB. This will be done to both preserve the tree canopy in priority areas and to make the trails safer for our visitors. Current research has shown that regular treatment may only need to be done through the peak infestation, then can decrease over time.

Over the next few years, this could be a very costly project for Floracliff. We ask that you consider a donation. You can "adopt" a large tree for \$50 or a small tree for \$25. Please specify with your donation that you would like it to go towards treating ash trees. If you would like more information about this project, please call us at 859-351-7770. Thank you!



Dead ash trees after EAB infestation. Daniel Herms, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org

Flora Focus: Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)

By: Laura Baird



The bell-shaped, lilac flowers of Jacob's ladder form clusters at the top of the plant.

Jacob's ladder is a common wildflower found throughout Kentucky and the eastern U.S.. It earns its name from its ladder-like leaves, which are pinnately compound with five to nine opposite leaflets as the "rungs" to its ladder. The delicate, bell-shaped flowers are blue or lilac and cluster at the top of the plant when it blooms in late spring. Our native Jacob's ladder is also commonly called creeping Jacob's ladder because of its sprawling nature, false Jacob's ladder (despite being in the genus *Polemonium*, alongside other species of Jacob's ladder) or Greek valerian, although it is unrelated to true valerians.

Regardless of the name, several species of Jacob's ladder are popular plants for shady gardens because the plant retains its pretty flowers for many weeks and its foliage remains attractive all summer. One threat to the well being of Jacob's ladder as a garden plant, however, is the common housecat. The scent of the plant's foliage is said to attract cats, which may happily roll in the plant as if it were catnip and crush its delicate structure. The apparent joy the plant brings cats is so strange that witch hunters once thought Jacob's ladder was only planted by witches to bring pleasure to their feline familiars.

Flora Focus: American Bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*)

By: Amy Haynes



The creamy, bell-shaped flowers of the bladdernut bloom in April.

American bladdernut is a member of the bladdernut family, Staphyleaceae. The shrub grows 3-10 feet tall in rich, moist woods and can usually be found on steep slopes. Stems grow upright with a pair of buds at the tip which causes a fork in the stem. Often suckers form dense colonies that can either be close to the main trunk or farther away. Leaves are trifoliate, opposite, and toothed. The bladdernut has graceful clusters of white flowers in spring and pale green, inflated, bladder-like capsules all summer. Some say the capsules look like Japanese lanterns. The capsule encases several large black seeds that mature in September.

Fifty species of trees and shrubs belong in this family, two of which are native to North America. The American bladdernut occurs in the central and eastern United States, all over Kentucky, and most frequently in the Bluegrass. A couple of distinct features of the shrub make it stand out. Twigs are mottled with green-brown lenticels and bark is green-brown and streaked. The aesthetic features of this shrub make it enjoyable to look at not only in the field, but also in the garden.

Many thanks to those who donated in the last quarter:

Donors

Acorns:

Claire Carpenter

Shooting stars:

Jean R. Moore
Gabriel Popkin

Scott Wilmoth

Spicebush:

Richard and Elizabeth Dirksen
Tom and Laurie Kuhlman

Hickories:

The McReynolds Family
Foundation

Old Oak Trees:

Crutcher Family Foundation
Lexmark International

Volunteers

Paul Harp

Montessori Middle School of
KY

Charley Sither

Hike Leaders

Jim Drahovzal

Schedule of Events

All events require advance registration. Cost is \$5 per person or \$12 per family/vehicle unless otherwise noted. Most programs last 2-3 hours. Call 859-351-7770 to register or for more information.

Interpretive Hikes

Saturday, April 2nd @ 1:00 p.m.: Wildflower hike w/ Martina Hines

Martina Hines, an ecologist with the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, will lead this wildflower hike during the peak blooming period. Hiking level is moderate.

Saturday, April 9th @ 1:00 p.m.: Native American Uses of Spring Wildflowers w/ Amy Haynes

Native Americans used many of our plants for food, medicine, fiber, ceremonies, and much more. Floracliff field tech, Amy Haynes, will discuss many of these uses with a focus on what's in bloom.

Saturday, April 16th 8:30 a.m - 4:30 p.m: Open House Celebration!

Please see page 1 for details.

Saturday, May 14th @ 8:30 a.m.: Bird hike w/ Hank Yacek

Spring migrants and other birds will be identified by sight and sound on this hike led by Hank Yacek. He will also discuss which birds to expect in various habitat types. If you have a pair of binoculars, bring them along. Hiking level is moderate.

Saturday, May 21st @ 9:00 a.m.: Herpetology Program w/ Zeb Weese

Zeb Weese, eastern regional preserve manager with the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, will lead this program to find some of our native frogs, snakes, salamanders, and turtles in the pond and Elk Lick Creek. He usually brings a snake with him just in case we don't find one. This program is one the entire family will enjoy! It's also very popular, so early registration is encouraged. Hiking level easy to moderate.

Weed Warrior Days - free!

Saturday, April 2nd, 10 am – 1 pm

Saturday, May 7th, 10 am – 1 pm

Saturday, June 4th, 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!

Private Appointments

Private tours can be scheduled for small groups interested in visiting Floracliff. Interested parties can contact Beverly James by calling 859-351-7770 or email floracliff@aol.com to schedule an appointment.

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

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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