



SOLIDAGO

The Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society



Volume 6, No. 4

December 2005

Hamamelis virginiana - Witch-hazel

Plant of the month - November

A new "plant of the month" is highlighted on FLNPS' website (www.fingerlakesnativeplantsociety) every month. (See web site for color photos).

by Sarah McNaull

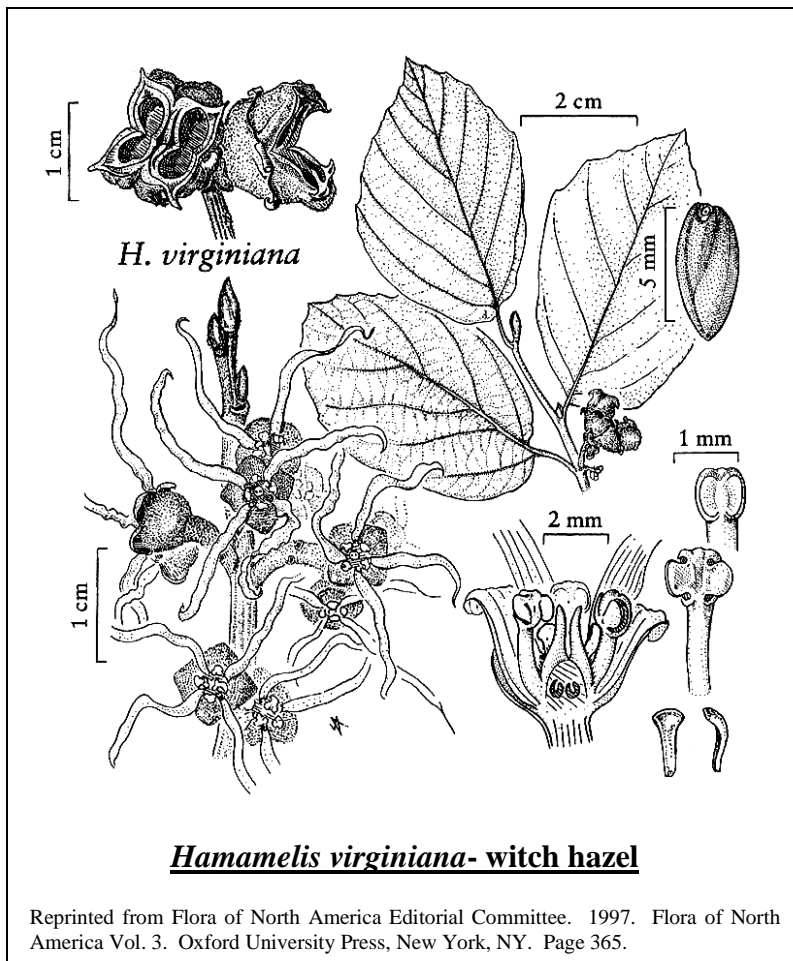
Our native witch-hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*, is native from Nova Scotia & Quebec west through southern Ontario, Lower Michigan and southern Wisconsin and south to Florida and Texas. It is found most commonly on streamside banks and in the understory in moist woodlands. Witch-hazel is a multi-trunked, scraggly tree that grows to 35 feet tall with an arching habit that, to me, is most striking in the mid to late fall. Then, you will either see its soft glow of bright yellow flowers, or its golden foliage (or both at the same time) and if you are lucky you will find one with spicy-scented flowers. Its flowers are four-merous and measure up to an inch across. They form fruits which do not ripen until the following fall. The fruit are easily collected, as is growing them from seed. Seeds can often take a year or more to break dormancy, so be patient if you want to propagate some this way. Be sure to store the capsules

in a paper bag, as they pop open forcefully. Seeds can be expelled up to twelve feet from their parent!

The leaves of witch-hazel emerge in spring with a reddish tinge, before turning green. They are 6" or less in length, more than half as broad with scalloped margins. There is a lot of variation in individual plants, so some are better for your garden than others. Horticulturists tend to appreciate the ones that lose their leaves while the flowers are still in full bloom. If you want to have a specimen witch-hazel in your landscape and are a good propagator you could find your favorite plant, flag it, and then return in spring and take some cuttings. My favorite specimens are along Station Road in West Danby, where they lean out over the road, growing on the edges of rock ledges, and along the Abbot Loop in the Danby State Forest.

Witch-hazel has been used by humans for some time. The bark is distilled to produce the witch-hazel astringent that can be purchased in drug stores. It is used for insect stings and abrasions. Home made ointments can be used to help with varicose veins and

damaged blood vessels under the skin. Witch-hazel branches are also used as a tool for dowsing for water. Cardinals and ruffed grouse eat the seeds, and its leaves are a favorite of early instar gypsy moth larvae.



Hamamelis virginiana- witch hazel

Reprinted from Flora of North America Editorial Committee. 1997. Flora of North America Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. Page 365.

Asian witch-hazels, *H. mollis*, *H. x intermedia* (*H. japonica* x *mollis*) bloom in the late winter. They have been selected and bred to come in a wide array of colors, from deep reds to burnt oranges to bright yellows and for scented flowers. *Hamamelis vernalis*, native to the Ozarks, blooms in the early spring, and is known for its bright yellow, strongly scented flowers and compact habit.

Forest Invasive Plant Control: What management strategies provide the most biological success?

Has your organization been controlling forest invasive plants for at least two years? If so, you probably have information about invasive plant management that would be beneficial to share. As a Cornell University graduate student in the Ecology and Management of Invasive Plants Lab, I am researching approaches organizations use to control forest invasive plants in the northeast. I will use this information to discover what is and is not working for invasive plant management. Ideally, the results of this study will help everyone better control invasive plants.

So, if your group controls forest invasive plants in the northeast and is interested in participating or knows of an organization which should be contacted please let me know. In order for the conclusions to be accurate, it is important that most of the organizations managing forest invasive plants are surveyed. Participation is simple, just complete a telephone interview and mail survey. Hope to hear from you soon.

Charlotte Acharya
Cornell University
157 Biotechnology Bldg.
Ithaca, NY 14853

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
January 13th, 2006

In order to keep this newsletter lively, interesting, and informative we need your words, drawings, and photographs. Letters and questions to the editor are always accepted. Please send your articles, stories, drawings, photos, trip reports, information on relevant upcoming events, etc. to David Werier, editor (email and address noted in box above). The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday January 13th, 2006**. Thanks for your help in making this newsletter possible.

THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Steering Committee Members

- Nat Cleavitt:** President
- Rosemarie Parker:** [redacted] Secretary and Assistant Newsletter Editor
- Krissy Faust:** ([redacted] [redacted]) Projects (chair)
- Sarah McNaull:** [redacted] Treasurer
- David Werier:** ([redacted] [redacted]) Newsletter Editor
- Anna Stalter:** ([redacted] [redacted]) Outings & Education (chair)
- Susanne Lorbeer:** Outings and Education
- Bob Wesley:** Outings and Education
- Joe O'Rourke:** Web meister
- Alice Grow:** At large
- Mark Inglis:** ([redacted] [redacted]) At large
- Navina Hamilton:** At large

Send all correspondence regarding the newsletter to: David Werier, Editor, [redacted]
[redacted]



Caulophyllum giganteum - giant blue cohosh
photo by David Werier

Can not wait for spring! - Come to the FLNPS Winter Solstice Celebration (see next page for details)

Finger Lakes Native Plants Society - Winter Solstice Celebration.

THE EVENT - December 14th 7PM

Please join us for this annual event celebrating the coming of winter in a plant related way. This event is open to members and non-members. There will be live music and plant decorations to create a festive atmosphere. Events scheduled include a member night slight show, native plant seed exchange, native/naturalized plant snacks, plant quiz, book table, door prizes, and more. So come to enjoy the activities or simply gather with others interested in the plant world.

MEMBER NIGHT SLIDE SHOW

As part of the solstice celebration we will be having a slide show presented by members. We need your help to make this happen. Each interested individual will have a short period of time to show slides/digital images of native plants (or plant related topics) but please contact David Werier () before the event to let him know you are bringing images to share.

BRING NATIVE PLANT SEEDS

Please bring your native plant seeds to our Solstice Celebration. Bring your extra native (at least native to NE North America) seeds. Label them with species name, collection location (indicate cultivated source, if applicable), and any known cultural requirements.

NATIVE AND NATURALIZED PLANT FOODS

Here is your opportunity to bring a dish to pass for the Solstice Celebration. As always we encourage dishes made from plants that are part of the local flora either native or non-native. Please also bring a small placard indicating what is in your dish. This is a good chance to gather some of those pesky invasives if you haven't already. We will be offering prizes.

DECORATE

If you are interested in helping to setup and decorate for this event please contact Rosemarie Parker () or Alice Grow ().

New Edition of the Peterson Fern Guide

New England Wild Flower Society (NEWFS) is delighted to announce the publication of the completely revised second edition of the 1956 Cobb classic *Peterson Guide to Ferns of Northeastern and Central North America* rewritten by Cheryl Lowe and Elizabeth Farnsworth for the Society, now available at www.newenglandwildflower.org, and soon to be widely distributed through publisher Houghton Mifflin.

Framingham, Massachusetts, New England Wild Flower Society (NEWFS), the nation's oldest organization devoted to the conservation of native plants announced the first major revision of the classic Peterson Field Guide: *Ferns of Northeastern and Central North America*, by Boughton Cobb. Rewritten by NEWFS staff, Cheryl Lowe, Horticulture Director and Dr. Elizabeth Farnsworth, Senior Research Ecologist, Houghton Mifflin cites a September 26th, 2005 publication date, with NEWFS signing celebration and lecture following on December 3rd, 2005, 1 p.m. -

3:00 p.m. at Garden in the Woods Museum Shop, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA. www.newenglandwildflower.org or 508-877-7630.

The 304-page guide includes 100 color photographs, many from the Society's botanical image collection. The 200 beautiful black & white drawings by co-author Farnsworth and the late Laura Louise Foster provide the details needed for clear identification and inspiration. The comprehensive revisions reflect tremendous horticultural and botanical changes of the past half-century especially in the naming of ferns and our understanding of their relationships. Proceeds of books purchased at the Society bookstore or online at www.newenglandwildflower.org support plant conservation in New England. Beginning September 26th, the book will be widely available online and at bookstores and garden centers everywhere, in time for gift shopping for the naturalist and gardener.

"It was the gorgeous New England Wild Flower

continued on page 5

An occasional column to introduce interesting FLNPS members who don't tend to give lectures, thus are not as likely to be known to other members.

Member Portrait: Julie Hardin

by Rosemarie Parker

If you have a poorly performing plant in your woodland garden, catch Julie Hardin at a FLNPS meeting for lots of helpful suggestions. Julie is always willing to chat about plants. Her chats take the form of a series of detailed questions. "What about a particular location fosters the growth of this species, while similar spots nearby have none? What do different types of evergreen needles do to soil?" Lots of questions that I've never even thought about, like "when someone says 'humusy soil,' do they mean acidic (evergreen) or deciduous humus?" And Julie loves to make humusy soil. Her composting area is large, well organized, and turns out some truly wonderful stuff. She usually even has separate piles going for acid-loving plants. Thus she has happy plants.

Julie says her love of nature began when she was young, as she lived in the country and spent a lot of time observing outdoors. Ithaca was a great atmosphere for learning natural history, as excellent field people at Cornell were putting out educational tools for the schools. She still has copies of Cornell Nature Study Leaflets (1896-1904) and the Handbook of Nature Study (1922) written by names like Bailey and Comstock, people her mother knew. But in high school, a rude opinion ("Women don't do ornithology!") from well-known ornithologist P.P. Kellogg sent Julie on a 20-year foray into French literature. When she later got

interested in canoeing, her love of nature reasserted itself, and teaching French took a back seat.

For some years, Julie worked at White's nursery in Mecklenburg, a nursery that did a lot of design work in the Ithaca area. She says that it was a great place to learn while working, because the owner had 60 acres where you could trace the trends in landscape plantings, and view mature specimens, not just saplings. Julie herself runs Summer Shade Nursery out of her back yard in T-burg, where an eclectic collection of imported and native woodland plants thrive under mature trees. Her current project, though, is a book of sorts (she can't decide if she will ever publish it). She is writing about growing "wildflowers" in this region, explaining what shade plants grow well here (native or not) and why some desirable plants just won't do well. She hopes to cover "what I didn't understand when I started growing wildflowers."

Julie once told me that she just has all this information in her head about how to grow native plants, and really wants to pass on the knowledge to others. I hope she publishes her musings for the benefit of local gardeners like myself, but suspect there will never be an end to questions that intrigue Julie and send her back to her bookshelf to research just one more chapter.

Favorite reference: For this region, Wiegand & Eames, Flora of the Cayuga Lake Basin (1926)- "especially the last pages, looking at where things grew gives clues to conditions for finding them now". Also loves Kudish, Adirondack Upland

Flora: an Ecological Perspective (1992) because of the detailed descriptions of growing conditions.

Summary quote: "Don't write all that down. Just say I had a lot of fun!"



Julie Harden

photo by Rosemarie Parker

Winter Rosettes

by Barbara Barol

Not long after I came to Ithaca in 1960, I met Amy Grace Mekeel whose family, the Mekeels and the Owens, had been in the Tompkins County area since the early days of the nineteenth century. On a very cold winter day in about 1963, I went to visit Amy Grace at the farmstead of the family farm on Colegrove Road near Jacksonville. Amy Grace had magazines on her radiator that she gave us to warm our feet. At that time she was retired and was in her late seventies.

As a friend of Amy Grace Mekeel, after her death in 1976 I received a copy of her theses for a Master of Arts degree from Cornell. The title of it is, "The Identification of Plants in the Rosette Condition." I had not known until seeing the book that Amy Grace was a botanist or that she was Cornell's first woman instructor. During World War I when many men were in the service, Amy Grace got the appointment to her position.

Amy Grace was petite and attractive in appearance, as well as friendly and cheerful in manner. A Quaker lady, she wore old fashioned garb in the winter time – a long black coat and a round flat-crowned black hat. In every other way, Amy Grace was not old fashioned.

About a year ago, I made a list of plants named in "The Identification of Plants in the Rosette Condition," that I knew were natives. This spring and summer I noted that some of them were in my yard. In October, Krissy Faust, Cornell Plantations gardener,

came and looked at them and positively identified what I saw.

In the Introduction to her thesis Amy Grace wrote that rosettes are "mats or clumps of green leaves, stemless, after the fashion of the dandelion, which come up to utilize the fall sunshine," and that in 1919 there are in the area, "at least 120 plants which show this form in autumn." She added that, "Rosette plants are all perennials or biennials."

The native plants in my yard corresponding to ones described in her master's thesis as having rosettes and identified by Krissy are wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), barren strawberry (*Waldsteinia fragarioides*), and cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*). Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) presents a good example of a winter rosette described on page 40 of Amy Grace's master's theses: rosette often large; leaves ovate-lanceolate, margins entire but usually at least one leaf shows an obtuse angle on one or both edges; plants covered by long white hairs; rootstock short and thick; biennial; meadows and waste places. This description fits plants I know.

Amy Grace Mekeel's master's thesis has been a source of enjoyment for me over the years. Winter rosettes are a symbol and encouragement to me that, despite the snow and ice – well, you know what I mean – spring will arrive again.

[Editors note: *Potentilla recta* as well as the common weedy variety of *Rudbeckia hirta* are not native in New York.]

New Edition of Fern Guide

-continued from page 3

Society member magazine on ferns that gave me the idea to revise the book", said Frances Tenenbaum, doyenne of garden publications at Houghton Mifflin. "First published in 1956, The Peterson Fern Guide was still the number one book of its kind-nothing came near it-but I saw that after 5 decades some updates would be welcome". Tenenbaum's titles include award-winning plant publications by NEWFS and William Cullina, including *Wildflowers*, *Native Trees*, *Shrubs*, and *Vines*; *Understanding Orchids*, and dozens of garden classics produced over a multi-decade career. Naturalists and gardeners alike will appreciate this exhilarating new look at the life of ferns in a compact size now including updated taxonomy (scientific classification and naming), sections on habitats and conservation, a glossary of botanical terms and a full chapter on gardening with ferns.

"I grew up with the Boughton edition of the Peterson Guide to Ferns; this is how I learned the ferns" says author and illustrator Elizabeth Farnsworth. "To be asked to overhaul this definitive work to keep it useful for perhaps another 50 years was a huge honor." Dr. Farnsworth, NEWFS botanist and fern expert is a Bullard Research Fellow at Harvard University. She has also directed a five-year project to produce the Society's 110 Conservation and Research Plans – strategies for conserving the rarest plants of New England. The upcoming NEWFS' Flora of New England will feature her illustrations both in print and online.

As Horticulture Director at NEWFS' Garden in the Woods in Framingham, Massachusetts, Cheryl Lowe, co-author of the new edition, worked to create one of the great native plant gardens in America.

-continued on page 8

Composite Trip Report

by David Werier



Photo by David Werier

This past September 11th, I led a fall composite walk. A number of people joined me for what turned out to be a sunny warm day. I led people to the headwaters of Six Mile Creek through an old field covered with many beautiful composites. Below is a list of the species I had noted during an earlier visit to the same site. Some of these we did not see during the actual walk.

Achillea millefolium var. *millefolium* - common yarrow
Ageratina altissima var. *altissima* - white snakeroot
Arctium lappa - greater burdock
Bidens cernua - nodding beggar-ticks
Bidens connata - purple-stem swamp beggar-ticks
Bidens frondosa - devil's beggar-ticks
Carlina vulgaris - carline thistle
Cichorium intybus - chicory
Cirsium vulgare - bull thistle
Doellingeria umbellata var. *umbellata* - flat-topped aster
Eurybia divaricata - white wood aster
Euthamia graminifolia - flat top fragrant goldenrod
Eutrochium maculatum var. *maculatum* - spotted joe-pye-weed
Hieracium scabrum - rough hawkweed
Oclemena acuminata - whorled aster

Prenanthes altissima - tall rattlesnake root
Rudbeckia hirta var. *pulcherrima* - black-eyed Susan
Rudbeckia laciniata var. *laciniata* - green or cutleaf coneflower
Solidago altissima - tall goldenrod
Solidago bicolor - white goldenrod
Solidago flexicaulis - zigzag goldenrod
Solidago gigantea - smooth goldenrod
Solidago juncea - early goldenrod
Solidago nemoralis - old field goldenrod, gray goldenrod
Solidago rugosa var. *rugosa* - wrinkle-leaf goldenrod
Symphyotrichum lanceolatum var. *lanceolatum* - white panicle aster
Symphyotrichum lateriflorum var. *lateriflorum* - calico aster, small white aster
Symphyotrichum novae-angliae - New England aster
Symphyotrichum pilosum var. *pringlei* - Pringle's aster
Symphyotrichum prenanthoides - crooked-stem aster, zigzag aster
Symphyotrichum puniceum var. *puniceum* - purple-stem aster
Symphyotrichum urophyllum - white-arrow aster

Carolina Jerusalem Artichoke Pickles

From the book "Smoke and Spice" by Cheryl and Bill Jamison.

Submitted by Dawn Dybowski

Jerusalem artichokes have nothing to do with the Holy Land or artichokes. These tubers, sometimes known as sunchokes, are kissing cousins to the sunflower. The knobby little fists taste slightly sweet and offer a pleasant crunch. You can find them fresh in well-stocked produce sections from winter through spring.

3	cups cider vinegar	1	medium onion, sliced and pulled
2/3	cup water		into individual rings
2/3	cup light brown sugar	5	small whole dried chilies,
1	tablespoon pickling salt		preferably cayenne or pequin
1	teaspoon whole allspice, bruised	5	whole cloves
1/2	teaspoon ground turmeric	2	teaspoons mustard seeds
3	pounds Jerusalem artichokes, well	2	teaspoons celery seeds
	scrubbed but unpeeled, sliced about		
	1/4 inch thick		

Makes about 5 pints

Sterilize 5 to 6 pint jars according to the manufacturer's directions.

In a large saucepan, combine the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, allspice, and turmeric. Bring the syrup to a boil and boil for 3 to 5 minutes.

With clean hands, snugly pile the artichoke slices and onion rings into the sterilized jars, leaving about 1/2 inch of space at the top. Add a chile, a clove, and equal portions of the mustard and celery seeds to each jar.

Ladle the hot pickling liquid over the artichokes, covering the artichokes but leaving about 1/2 inch of headspace. Seal.

Process the jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Let the pickles sit for at least a week, and preferably several weeks, before you indulge.

[Editor's note: Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is native further west and is fully naturalized in New York.]

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Financial Statement for Fiscal Year September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005

Report presented by Sarah McNaull, Treasurer

EXPENSES:

POSTAGE:	\$587.04
COPYING:	\$562.17
OFFICE SUPPLIES:	\$120.70
SPEAKER STIPENDS:	\$73.00
OTHER (includes snacks):	\$150.34
DONATIONS:	\$75.00
ROOM RENTAL:	\$135.00
EVENTS:	\$180.60

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,883.85

INCOME:

MEMBER DUES:	\$2,089.00
DONATIONS:	\$968.98
DIVIDENDS:	\$0.60

TOTAL INCOME: \$3,058.58

NET (TOTAL INCOME - TOTAL EXPENSES):

\$1,174.73

BALANCE FORWARD: \$ 5,122.38

TOTAL AT END OF FISCAL YEAR:

\$6,297.11

FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

December 14th (Wednesday) - Winter Solstice Celebration - Celebrate the changing of the seasons with other plant enthusiasts at our annual solstice celebration. We will have live music, native/naturalized plant foods, our seed exchange, member night slide show, plant quiz, and more. See page 3 for more information.

January 11th (Wednesday) - Edible Plants - by Nancy Kaiser

February 8th (Wednesday) - Managing Invasive Plants in the Six Mile Creek Natural Area.

A presentation by members of Six Mile Creek Invasive Plants Advisory Committee (SCIPAC). This group has been meeting for several months and will soon present an invasive weed management plan to Ithaca's Natural Areas Commission. Learn more about this effort to protect our beloved wildflower preserve and its environs, and find out how you can get involved.

March 8th (Wednesday) - Wetland Restoration by Paul Ferman an ecologist from Buffalo

April 12th (Wednesday) - Cliff Ecology by Doug Larson

All presentations are from 7-8:30 pm at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building, 615 Willow Ave. and are free and open to the public.

New Edition of Fern Guide

-continued from page 5

Over the past decade, she guided the culture and display of 1,500 native plant species and cultivars including a large collection of New England and other North American ferns and fern allies featured in the book. Lowe also lectures on behalf of the Society, appearing on PBS' Victory Garden, HGTV's People Places and Plants Television, and Martha Stewart Television, and writes for numerous Society horticultural publications. "Growing ferns in a garden is a rich opportunity to

appreciate the changing character of ferns over the seasons," writes Lowe. "Ferns offer textures and forms that transform the character of a place in different seasons and changing light." Together with the botanical writing and illustration of Elizabeth Farnsworth, and images from Lowe, William Cullina, and the NEWFS photography collection this is an invaluable guide at the intersection of botany and horticulture. You will 'meet' some of the world's most evocative plants in this easy-to-use and beautiful 'new classic' guide.