

River Talk

Newsletter of the Carantouan Greenway



Fall 2020

President's Message

I hope our newsletter finds you and your family well and taking every precaution to stay safe as the number of COVID-19 cases increases in our Valley communities. Although the pandemic has curtailed many of our activities, Carantouan Greenway trails are open and naturalist Marty Borko has led a few interesting nature walks. Fall is a great time to get outdoors and relieve some of the stresses of the pandemic.

For the past 25 years our goals have been to protect valuable habitat for our plants and animals, and to encourage our local communities to join us through environmental outreach programs. Unfortunately loss of habitat continues to be the primary reason for the alarming decline in plant and animal numbers, and for the imminent threat of mass extinctions. Your membership support is critical to insure that Carantouan Greenway can continue to maintain and protect our properties for the public enjoyment and to sustain all species.

Our largest expenses are fixed costs for insurance, trail maintenance equipment, and website hosting, all of which are ever increasing. Please consider a generous tax-deductible donation to support our work. If you have renewed your membership recently we thank you!

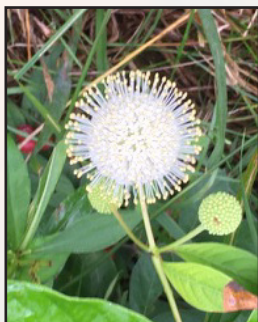
Consider making a monthly donation. Login to our website to make a secure donation: <http://carantouangreenway.org/becomeafriend.html>, click on "donate any amount". With your continued support we look forward to a successful 2021.

~ John Palmer, President

Honoring Destiny and Barry



The Carantouan Greenway has, in abstentia, dedicated a bench on the Diahoga Trail to Destiny Kinal and Dr. Barry Skeist. Both of them have been major supporters of the Carantouan Greenway, but more importantly supporters of our Greater Valley communities. They have supported the Valley Playland, connecting trails, educational programs, community gardens. They have always been generous in their time and financial support. We wish them well in their retirement from the Valley.



Not COVID

This is not the covid virus! Found at the Greenway's Wildwood Reserve it is the flowering ball of a wetland shrub called buttonbush. The yellow tips appear to be the male anthers though the references speak of an extended pistil. Nevertheless the flowers produce nutlets used by multiple species of waterfowl. The shrubs can survive in water as deep as two feet and are used for nesting by red-winged blackbirds and swamp sparrows, both being Wildwood residents.

In this issue

- Greenway Enhances Diahoga Trail
- Honoring Destiny and Barry
- Kathryn DePumpo Harding Memorial
- Not COVID
- President's Message
- Roadside Flowers
- Scary Plants

Kathryn DePumpo Harding Memorial

The Carantouan Greenway Forbidden Path, a half-mile woodlands trail in the village of Waverly, ends at the Carantouan Spring. The spring represents a historic Andaste Indian site. A new sign has been erected on the path, identifying the spring as a drinking fountain of the Andaste and their successors from prehistoric times. The sign was donated by the DePumpo and Harding families, as a memorial to Kathryn DePumpo Harding, an avid hiking enthusiast. The Forbidden Path is open to the public and the trailhead can be accessed at the junction of NY Rt. 17C and PA Rt. 220 in Waverly, NY. Visit <http://www.carantouangreenway.org/>



Roadside flowers



Chicory and Queen Anne's lace



Birdsfoot Trefoil

Ever wonder what that flower is as you drive down the road? One of the most common floral arrangements is a mixture of blue and white. The white is an umbel of tiny petals belonging to Wild Carrot, also known as Queen Anne's lace and probably the ancestor of the commercial carrot. The blue belongs to the composite known as Chicory where each blue ray consists of five fused petals. During World War II the Chicory roots were used to brew a coffee drink. The combination of the two plants stand between one to two feet tall. Lower down on the road shoulder there are often clusters of a yellow member of the pea family known as Birdsfoot Trefoil. Its fruits are alleged to resemble a birds foot. Drive safely during COVID and enjoy nature.

Greenway Enhances Diahoga Trail



Shown above are The Carantouan Greenway's president John Palmer and his wife Marilyn warming their hands after installing Joyce Kilmer's classic poem "Trees" along the Susquehanna's heavily used Diahoga Trail. This completes an agreement with United Way of Bradford County. Earlier in the year the Carantouan Greenway had posted a down-loadable tree guide and had a bench installed for the education and enjoyment of Valley residents and visitors.



SCARY PLANTS



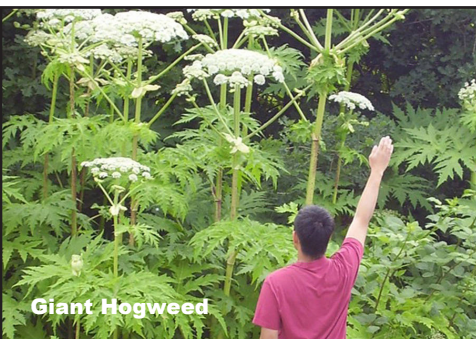
Wild Parsnip



Wild Parsnip foliage



Poison Ivy



Giant Hogweed

The COVID pandemic has been a stark reminder of how vulnerable we mere mortals are to some of Mother Nature's less friendly species. In the article below we outline some plants that can be exceptionally devious.

WILD PARSNIP What appears to be an innocent yellow wildflower can leave painful, blistering, chemical-like burns on the skin, exacerbated by exposure to sunlight. This reaction is caused by the plant's toxic sap. It can be confused with garden variety dill as both plants have similar-appearing yellow umbel flowers. They can be differentiated by their leaves. Dill has long feathery leaves whereas wild parsnip has broad leaves that are low on the stems (see photo). It is an invasive plant brought to this continent by European settlers.

POISON IVY Everyone has heard the phrase "Shiny leaves of three, let it be." That is a good place to begin identification but the leaves can sometimes be dull. That said, in an ocean of green and leaves it is often difficult to zero in on poison ivy. It is a vine; however, due to its ability to cover just about anything it encounters it can appear as a shrub. The urushiol compound found in the leaves and stems causes extreme itching and blistering of the skin. The oil must come in contact with the skin to create the itching. Scratching or opening of blisters does not spread the poison ivy, only the skin coming in direct contact with the oil. Soap and water removes the oil but a rash could prevail. One of the worst types of poisoning is from airborne inspiration of urushiol from burning poison ivy, which causes blisters in the lungs. The ivy can grow as thick vines, several inches in diameter, climbing up trees. Burning the poison ivy releases the urushiol into the air, which in turn is breathed in. With a close look these vines can be identified by the rootlets that attach the vine to the tree.

GIANT HOGWEED As indicated by its name, this huge, invasive plant can grow as high as 14 feet. It has a noxious sap that can cause severe itching, a blistering rash, and if the toxic sap gets in the eyes can actually cause blindness. As part of the carrot family it has white umbel-shaped flowers and the leaves can be as large as five feet across. It thrives in moist, rich soil particularly along riparian zones and wetlands. It is a native of the Caucasus Mountain region that was brought to America and planted as an ornamental garden plant in the early 20th century. Although not widespread locally, the more westerly counties of New York and Pennsylvania have seen more instances of this intruder. Both New York and Pennsylvania officials are working diligently to eradicate this dangerous plant. If you should spot giant hogweed you should contact the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture or NY DEC.

Friends of the Carantouan Greenway

Yes! Count me in! I believe in protecting farm and forestland, wildlife habitat and watersheds in the Penn-York Valley. I want to become a member of Carantouan Greenway!

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 Stargazer \$50/year **Renewing member** **New member**
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or P.O. Box 827, Waverly, NY 14892-0827 or on-line at carantouangreenway.org/joinonline



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