



Jon Evans to Receive Trails and Trilliums Award

The Friends of South Cumberland will honor Herbarium Director Dr. Jon Evans at the annual Trails and Trilliums celebration on April 21. Founder of Sewanee's Landscape Analysis Lab and director of the Sewanee Environmental Institute (SEI), Evans was this year appointed Sewanee's Assistant Provost for Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability. In this new role he will develop, support, and lead initiatives to integrate sustainability and environmental stewardship in all university decisions.

Evans chairs the Sustainability Steering Committee, which is in the process of developing a sustainability master plan for the university. The plan will encompass a variety of goals relating to stewardship and sustainability of land, water, food, energy, and materials.

A graduate of Cornell, Evans received his PhD from Duke University. Following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in Ecology at the University of Virginia, he joined the faculty in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Rice University.

Shortly after his arrival at Sewanee in 1994, Evans became aware of the impact of the establishment of pine monocultures by the paper industry on Cumberland Plateau ecosystems. The Landscape Analysis Lab was formed to use satellite imagery and aerial photography to map the extent of pine plantations and clearcutting on the plateau. Information brought to light in that study attracted the attention of national conservation organizations. The Natural Resources Defense Council named the

Cumberland Plateau one of 12 BioGems worldwide, and in 2005 they announced an agreement with Bowater, Inc, then the largest private landowner on the plateau, to protect the plateau's natural forests.

As a result of the environmental education addendum to the university's Strategic Plan, the SEI was created in 2008, and Evans was asked to serve as



its director. The SEI functions to facilitate interdisciplinary student-faculty research and connect with outside organizations on conservation projects. In addition to undergraduate research, SEI programs include the Pre-College Field Studies Experience, the Field Study in Belize, Field School in Archaeology, and Island Ecology.

Cumberland Voices: a Conservation Vision for the South Cumberland Region, a collaboration between the SEI and The Land Trust for Tennessee, was completed

just last year. This comprehensive conservation plan is available on the web at <http://sei.sewanee.edu/news/cumberlandvoices>. According to Evans, this project "represents an exciting new type of partnership for achieving landscape-level conservation objectives in our region. Through the work of our Landscape Analysis Laboratory, Sewanee has made a long-term commitment to provide the computer mapping and scientific analyses necessary to guide future conservation decision-making on the Cumberland Plateau."

Evans will continue teaching and directing student research, and—this writer is happy to say—directing the Sewanee Herbarium. He has guided the herbarium as it emerges as an important regional herbarium in the Southeast, and it continues to be a priority with him as he juggles new administrative responsibilities with teaching and research.

Evans cherishes his relationships with colleagues and students. And his knowledge and insight as an ecologist are superb. You learn something every time you are out in the field with Jon Evans.

The Trails and Trilliums Tribute Award will be presented at Wine and Wildflowers, an evening reception Saturday, April 21, at the Monteagle Inn. For more information about Trails and Trilliums and Wine and Wildflowers, see trailsandtrilliums.org.

— Mary Priestley



Sewanee's Special Sycamore

(Editor's note: Yolande Gottfried has spearheaded the placing of a commemorative plaque at Sewanee's "Moon Tree" on Thursday, May 13. See our schedule of events, p. 3. —MPP)

On April 7, 1976, a historic event occurred in Sewanee. As part of the celebration of the nation's bicentennial, The University of the South received a sycamore seedling grown from seed carried on the Apollo 14 moon mission. As the bell tolled noon, Max Young and Earnest Baskins, along with Bob Leonard and Roy Ashley of USFS district 5, were greeted by Charles E. Cheston, chair of the Forestry Dept. and Vice-Chancellor Dr. J. Jefferson Bennett.

The seedling was officially presented at a special meeting of the Forestry Club in the afternoon, of which Sandy Sandlin (now Baird) was then president and Michelle

Mauthe (now Harvey) was secretary-treasurer.

Tennessee received four "Moon" seedlings from the Forest Service for use in commemoration of the bicentennial year of the USA—two loblolly and two sycamore. Their seeds had been carried on the Apollo 14 flight launched from Cape Kennedy by NASA on January 31, 1971, which returned to earth on February 9 after nine days in space and 34 orbits around the moon.

A loblolly each went to the Forestry School at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and to AEDC, the latter because of their contributions to the space program. A sycamore was designated for the Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area, a State Bicentennial Park near Elizabethton, TN, and another for The University of the

South, owing to the forestry program at the school.

This joint NASA/USFS PROJECT came about because the Apollo 14 Command Module Pilot Stuart Roosa, a former U.S. Forest Service smokejumper, had a strong interest in forest resources. Roosa carried about 400-500 seeds in small containers in his personal kit as he orbited the moon in the Command Module while Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell walked on the surface.

Unfortunately, the containers burst during the decontamination process upon return to Earth, and it was thought that the seeds would not germinate. But they did, and in a few years there were about 450 seedlings available, some from cuttings. All requests

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Spring Calendar of Events

**Roark's Cove—Sat., March 31, 9:30 AM—
Yolande Gottfried**

A private property at the base of the plateau is being made available for a wildflower walk to see some species not seen on the upper plateau, such as Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and possibly some early shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), as well as trilliums and much more. Meet at the Sewanee Inn to carpool or caravan to the site of this easy to moderate walk.

**Shakerag Hollow—Sun., April 1, 1:30 PM—
Mary Priestley**

This is Sewanee's "Mecca" for wildflower lovers, and the flowers should be nearing their peak. Meet at the Green's View parking lot (past the golf course). 2 miles, moderate to strenuous, with one fairly challenging incline.

**Shakerag Hollow—Sat., April 14,
9:30 AM—Yolande Gottfried**

A walk in Sewanee's premier spring wildflower area is planned in conjunction with the Sewanee Earth Day Celebration to be held at the Community Center. Meet at the Green's View parking lot (past the golf course). 2 miles, moderate to strenuous, with one fairly challenging incline.

**Carter State Natural Area (Buggytop)—Sun.,
April 15, 9:00 AM—Mary Priestley**

This walk is part of the schedule of events for Tennessee State Natural Areas Week. The cave entrance itself is a "must see" and there should be many wildflowers of interest along the way. Meet at the parking lot at the trailhead on TN Hwy. 56 (Sherwood Road) for this strenuous, 4-mile roundtrip hike.

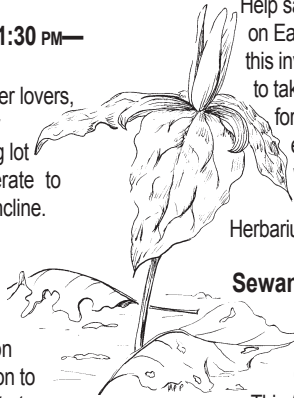
Trails & Trilliums—Fri.—Sun, April 20-22

Celebrate Earth Day by attending the many activities planned for the 9th "perennial" Trails and Trilliums

event, including Wine and Wildflowers, an evening reception April 21 at which herbarium Director Jon Evans will receive the Trails and Trilliums Tribute Award. T&T is sponsored by the Friends of the South Cumberland and held at the Monteagle Assembly. Go to trailsandtrilliums.org for more information.

**Garlic Mustard Pull—Sun., April 22—
Jon Evans and Mary Priestley**

Help save the earth—or at least the Domain—on Earth Day by joining in an attempt to control this invasive exotic plant that is threatening to take over some sensitive areas of our forest. Meet at Morgan's Steep at 1:30. No equipment is necessary, but work gloves would be a good idea for this effort that is co-sponsored by the Sewanee Herbarium and the Sewanee Outing Program.



**Sewanee's Special Sycamore—Thurs.,
May 3, 11:45 AM—Sewanee
Herbarium and the Forestry
Club**

This American sycamore was grown from native seed carried on the 1971 Apollo 14 moon mission (see article elsewhere in this issue for more details). A commemorative plaque will be placed at the tree, to be unveiled at the noon hour, at which the seedling was originally received on April 7, 1976. The ceremony will be followed by a lunch cookout at Snowden hosted by the Forestry Club. Gather at the sycamore, across from Woods Labs on the greenhouse side, surrounded by a low stone wall.

All times are CDT. Wear appropriate shoes on all of these walks. Risks involved in hiking include physical exertion, rough terrain, forces of nature, and other hazards not present in everyday life. Picking flowers and digging plants are prohibited in all of the above-mentioned natural areas.

THE SEWANEE PLANT PRESS

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CALENDAR

Yolande Gottfried

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Drawings, by Mary Priestley, are of toothwort, sycamore, and toadshade trillium.

For more information on these or other Sewanee Herbarium events, please contact Yolande Gottfried at the Herbarium (931.598.3346) or by email at ygottfri@sewanee.edu. Directions are available on the Herbarium website, lal.sewanee.edu/herbarium/, under the calendar of events.

Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium

The Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium support the work of the Herbarium: education, research, and conservation. A \$10.00 annual contribution would be very much appreciated. The date of your most recent contribution is printed on your address label.

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Special Sycamore, continued from page 2

were not able to be fulfilled due to scarcity and high demand, so receiving these four seedlings requested by Tennessee was a real honor.

A sycamore is an outstanding choice for this project—a very large, long-lived tree that can grow from a tiny seed. It is one of the tallest angiospermous trees in North America (to 50+m) and can have the greatest trunk diameter (to 4+ m). It can live to 500-600 years of age. The scientific name, *Platanus occidentalis* L., probably comes from the wide leaves (platanus) and its distribution in the western hemisphere (*occidentalis*). Its common name comes from the European sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus* L., which has a similar leaf shape, whose name comes, in turn, from the Middle Eastern sycamore fig, *Ficus sycomoros* L., from the Greek, *sykomoros*, mulberry (Flora of North America, Vol. 3, p. 359).

It is an easy tree to identify because of the bark which flakes off in large, light-colored patches and the round fruits or “buttonballs” which remain on the tree through the winter, then fall apart in the spring and with their fluffy bristles are carried away by wind and water. It is also unusual in that the base of the petiole or stem of the leaf almost completely surrounds the winter bud. Its most common habitat is rich bottomlands along rivers and lakes, but it can be found in a large variety of places including early tree succession in old fields.

When over 100 years old, the base of the trunk is often hollow, and settlers used the trees as barns or even temporary homes, as do animals such as racoons, opossums, and squirrels. They were also used as roosts by chimney swifts in great numbers (before there were great numbers of chimneys!). The fruit was a favorite food of the Carolina parakeet, now extinct.

Stuart Roosa retired as a colonel in the Air Force in 1976, when many of these trees were being planted. He passed away in 1994. Some day these trees may be the only living things on earth that have “been to the moon”.

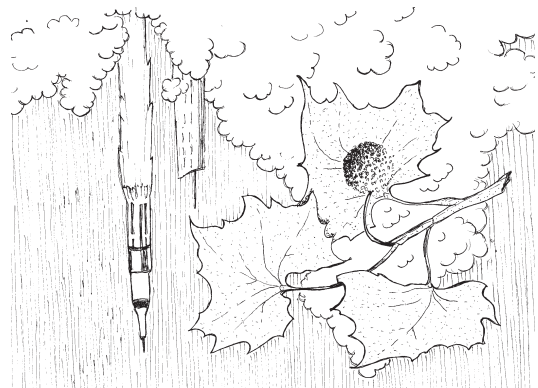
— Yolande Gottfried

For more, see nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_tree.html and starryskies.com/The_sky/events/lunar-2003/moon.trees.html.

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