



His Father's Son

Jonathan Ertelt is a Sewanee grad who manages the greenhouses at Vanderbilt University. He has been writing reflections involving his son Sam (full name Samuel Linnaeus Ertelt) almost from the time he was born. He is about to start pursuing publication of the first 130 or so. This is one of those reflections, although more recent and not to be included in the "first collection," since Sam is now in first grade. —MPP

A little over a year ago Bonnie, Sam and I were having one of our nights out, having supper at one of our regular comfortable restaurants. This particular time Sam and I were sitting together on one side of the table, while Bonnie sat on the other. Behind Sam and me, and a little to the left, a Titans football game was being broadcast on the television. Bonnie was reporting some of what was going on, and more significantly, reporting the score.

Sam was quietly cheering "Go Titans, Go Titans." Bonnie looked at him, shook her head slightly and remarked that he certainly was his godfather's son. That wasn't exactly what she'd meant to say, but of course, I sat up in mock alarm and gave her a hard look as I said, "What?!" And of course, I shared this moment with godfather Robert. I doubt that we will quite ever leave that one alone—certainly it won't be forgotten anytime soon. But several weeks back, I think personally that Sam proved that indeed he is his father's son.

We were on our way back from a weekend in Atlanta. Our main purpose in going had been to try and catch a very large and rather nasty smelling flower (often referred to as "the corpse flower") opening up. Turned out that, although the flower spike was over 80 inches tall, we missed the actual opening of the pungent floral display by two days. Sam let us know that this was all right with him, and also picked out a somewhat curved-trunk palm as his favorite in the conservatory.

We had left Atlanta early enough that we were going to be able to get to enjoy lunch in Sewanee. We had just passed through the gates of the domain, with me dropping off my guardian angel for a brief respite. Having turned off the by-pass onto University Avenue, I caught a glimpse of a

very special, unique orange color just up from the side of the road. I couldn't believe it. I had spent all of four summers on the mountain, and done a lot of botanizing during that time. How could this have escaped my notice?

I commented on it to Bonnie, but didn't stop. We were already late for lunch, and I knew what



I'd seen, even though it had just been a glimpse of the color out of the corner of my eye. It would still be there after lunch. We went on through the campus and stopped at one of our favorite lunch spots, taking a break from driving, and from fast food. But now, having finished lunch, and having taken a stroll through the adjoining art gallery, it was time to head back to that spot.

For some reason it took two passes before I spotted it again, but there it was. There was only one other time that I had seen that particular shade of orange, and I'd been passing by in a car that time too. *Platanthera ciliaris*—the orange fringed orchid—has a light yet almost fluorescent

orange color to it that I've just never seen in another flower. I pulled over, reassured Bonnie and Sam that I'd just be a few minutes, got my camera and went over to the plant. It was almost in full bloom—a real beauty.

I was in the middle of photographing it, doing some habitat shots, some close-ups, when Bonnie called to me from the car. "Sam just spotted another one."

"What? Where?" Sure enough, about four feet away from where I was busy photographing the one in full bloom, there was another one, almost completely done blooming. I probably wouldn't have spotted it myself. Bonnie told me that they were just sitting in the car when Sam had said, "There's another one," and had pointed it out to her.

I was pretty impressed, I have to admit. And I wasn't even embarrassed that I hadn't seen it—just impressed as could be that Sam had. Not that I had any clinical doubts before, but yes, Sam is his father's son.

Lord, Sam's got good eyes, and a good sense of what things are. He's been paying attention, and he loves nature, the natural world. Thank You. One of my biggest fears is that this will be part of what he rejects as he goes through the rejecting-everything-about-my-parents phase. Lord, continue to be with him, and be with me and Bonnie, and help us instill in him such a love and awareness for Your creation that it can't be dismissed.

I know, that's looking too far into the future, and looking for trouble with it at that. So for now, thank You for a son who has at least some understanding of what I see, of the wonders of Your creation, and how special it is. Amen.

—Jonathan Ertelt, August 2004

THE PLANT PRESS

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Drawings are by Mary Priestley. The plants are orange fringed orchid, trailing arbutus, and princess pine.

From the Editor

The Sewanee Plant Press goes into its ninth year with this issue, and we've had another busy year in the Herbarium. In the spring we wrapped up the educational outreach component of a 3-year grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to the Department of Biology; this fall we enjoyed supporting Jon Evans's Plant Systematics class, and I began working with professors Ken Smith and Tom Howick and student Holly Zafian to establish protocols for a plant inventory of the Carter State Natural Area, best known as the site of Lost Cove Cave.

On Homecoming weekend, we welcomed "home" the plant collection of Sewanee alum Bruce Hackemann, which had been languishing in his attic for 30 years! Bruce concentrated on collecting members of the lily family while in George Ramseur's Plant Systematics class in the spring of 1973. His collection contains some beautiful specimens, including the most robust specimen of *Camassia scilloides* (Raf.) Cory, Atlantic camas, that we have.

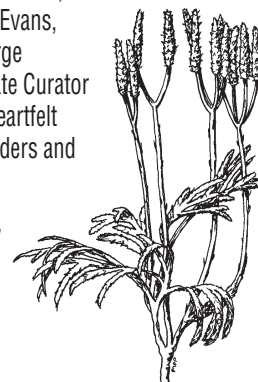
We are lucky to have two able work-study students, Erin Tyrell and Robin Burch, helping us

with processing of materials. Office manager Rachel Petropoulos keeps us all on track. And this summer we are looking forward to having a student intern working with us.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. Let us hear from you, both your observations on the natural world and on how we are doing. And if you have ideas for interesting wildflower walks or other activities that you would like us to sponsor, please let us know about them.

From the Herbarium staff, which includes Director Jon Evans, Director *emeritus* George Ramseur, and Associate Curator Yolande Gottfried, a heartfelt thanks to you, our readers and supporters.

—Mary Priestley,
Curator



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Calendar of Events

Winter Trees and Early Spring Flowers

Sat., Feb. 12, 1:30 PM, George Ramseur and Yolande Gottfried

Retired botany professor George Ramseur will discourse on identification and characteristics of trees in winter on the Shakerag Hollow trail while Yolande leads the annual search for the first hepatica of the year. Meet at Green's View for this moderate 2-hour walk that may include a steep rocky section of the trail.

Fern Walk

Sun., Feb. 27, 1:30 PM, Jon Evans

Dr. Evans of the Sewanee Biology Department will lead a short walk to an area that features most of the fern species on the Domain (including a

few less common ones). These ferns are still green even in winter! Meet at the Equestrian Center parking lot for this moderate hike that may include some off-trail walking.

Watercolor Workshop

TBA, Bob Askew

Bob, a noted local watercolor artist, will conduct this workshop for any interested persons on doing watercolor using botanical subjects. Some basic materials will be supplied, but bring your own if you have them. The workshop will be held in Woods Labs room 121 on the Sewanee campus. Enter through the main door across from the library and follow the signs.

Wildflower Identification

Sat., March 5, 10-11:30 AM, Mary Priestley

Get a jump on learning to identify wildflowers in this early spring workshop. Become familiar with some of the basic plant identification terminology, and try out the key that we have devised especially with Sewanee's wildflowers in mind. The flowers will probably be small, but they promise to be beautiful. Meet in Woods Labs room 121.

For more information on these or other Sewanee Herbarium events, get in touch with Yolande Gottfried at the herbarium (931.598.1798) or by email at <ygottfri@sewanee.edu>.

Sewanee Spring Wildflowers

You may know of some of Sewanee's prominent families—the Kirby-Smiths, Elliotts, Polks, and others. But have you met the plant families that figure most prominently in our spring flora? If not, this might be just the time to get acquainted.

Thanks to a generous gift from one of our Friends, the Herbarium has produced a booklet devoted to our abundant spring flora, organized by families. The approach is to group plants according to their relationships to each other, a sort of "who's kin to whom—and why."

And which families are these? Probably the lily and buttercup families dominate the spring flora, followed closely by mustard, heath, and parsley. Altogether, 33 plant families are described, including

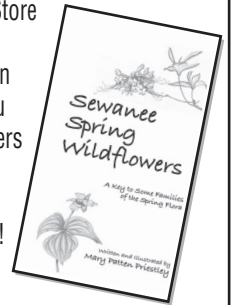
general field characteristics of each family and descriptions of some of the family members.

Family characteristics provide the basis for a deeper understanding of wildflowers. For instance, why are strawberries and blackberries practically first cousins, whereas blueberries are closely related to azalea and mountain laurel? How can you identify a member of the mint family in the field—even if it has no fragrance? And how is it that such diverse wildflowers as larkspur, doll's eyes, and columbine are classified together in the same family?

The booklet is organized differently from most wildflower guides. First, it includes only those plants in our local flora. Second, it is organized so that a person can systematically work through to

identify an unknown wildflower and then read a bit about what makes it unique and why scientists have grouped it into a particular plant family. Line drawings, an illustrated glossary, and a dichotomous key help in quick identification.

Sewanee Spring Wildflowers is available from the University Book and Supply Store in Sewanee (931.598.1153). While you are there, ask for an inexpensive hand lens, so you can more easily see tiny flowers and structures. Then you will be all set for spring treks into Shakerag Hollow and beyond!



Membership Application/Renewal

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.

Name and Address (if different from that on the mailing label on the back):

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Plateau Ephemeral Pond

Jennie Murray wrote in response to Jon Evans's article on the ecological importance of ephemeral ponds in the most recent issue of the newsletter. We wanted to share Jennie's delight in the life in and around the pond near their home. —MPP

Dear Mary,

I have been intending to write and tell you how much I enjoyed the Autumn issue of *The Sewanee Plant Press*. We have a large plateau ephemeral pond on our property at Natural Bridge. Over the years, we have considered making it into a pond, but the sound of the salamanders in February and the congregational songs of the toads in summer have totally changed our minds.

Last year, we were invaded by crows, who must have eaten their weight in eggs and salamanders. It worried me, but then I decided I was witnessing survival of the fittest in my backyard.

It is truly an experience to be there when the toads have their "debutante ball." We have seen them clinging to the trunks of trees, and watched their throats pulsing. The "Sing" goes on for about 24 hours; then all is quiet once again . . .

—Jennie Murray



News from the LAL

The Landscape Analysis Lab, which uses GIS technology for mapping, shares space—and sometimes undertakings—with the Herbarium. Among our projects, we are currently working with Brett Scheffers, C'05, to locate and map ephemeral ponds in our 7-county region of the Cumberland Plateau. We want to see the effect of land use on the persistence of these ecologically significant wetlands across the Plateau. Are we losing ephemeral ponds? If so, what is the cause?

Closer to home, we are in the early stages of creating a database of GIS map coverages of the University Domain. The University Archivist, the Office of Domain Management, the Department of Forestry and Geology, and the Sewanee Outing Program are involved, and we expect more departments to come on board as work progresses. Our objective is to map sites of ecological, historical, archaeological, and recreational significance. Members of the University community will be able to use these maps in teaching, research, and land use planning.

—Kevin Willis, LAL Fellow

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