



Plant Awareness—Reaffirming the Herbarium’s Mission

Last year’s publication of the Flora of the Domain was a milestone. Nearly two decades ago, we started by mounting and databasing the plants collected by Prof. George Ramseur’s students in the 1950s. Shortly thereafter, development of an inventory of the plants of the Domain began in earnest. Maybe six or eight years ago, interpretation joined collection. Prof. Jon Evans and students—both undergraduates and post-baccalaureate fellows—began analyzing the collection, noting plant distribution and abundance, and identifying plant communities. We continued searching for new plants, concentrating on formerly under-collected families to fill in gaps in our documentation. Writing followed scrutiny and final plant collections. All culminated in the 2016 publication of the flora in the journal *Castanea*, for which we were subsequently awarded the Windler Prize (see related article).

Meanwhile, our outreach to the community continues. The *Sewanee Plant Press* is now in its 21st year. We have published books—*What If Trees Could Walk?*; *Fiery Gizzard*, *Voices from the Wilderness*; and *A Trail Guide to Shakerag Hollow* (as well as spring wildflower guides currently out of print). We produced two posters on the wildflowers of Sewanee, and we sponsored The Search for the Big Trees. We have a blog—the Goings-on of the Sewanee Herbarium—and curator Yolande Gottfried writes the weekly Nature Notes column for *The Sewanee Mountain Messenger*. We give presentations to garden clubs and host

groups in the herbarium; teach classes for the Tennessee Naturalist and Native Plant Certification programs; and lead wildflower and nature walks year-round. Every week, a small group meets for a morning of herbarium-sponsored nature



journaling, sharing what’s happening in the natural world, and taking note of our observations and reflections.

Last year, we engaged members of the ATO Fraternity in restoration of the environs of the historic ATO Spring, identifying wildflowers and other native plants that have persisted in the face of onslaught by invasive shrubs and vines and ubiquitous beer cans. The young men have fought the invasives and cleaned up the spring, and University Ranger Sandy Gilliam is building a retaining wall to protect the area from

erosion. At Commencement weekend this past May, the University chancellor and chaplain, along with fraternity and faculty representatives and Herbarium Curator Mary Priestley, took part in a ceremony recognizing the importance of the spring to the University community.

The Herbarium has begun reaching out to other University departments, beginning with the grounds crew, the hands-on stewards of our campus landscape. Last fall, a few brave men participated in a herbarium-sponsored “Out On a Limb” nature journaling exercise. It was followed this spring by a hike for the crew in Shakerag Hollow, a hike for Physical Plant Services department heads to Piney Point, and a walk in Abbo’s Alley that was open to all PPS employees. These were made possible by the support of PPS Director Mike Gardner and Superintendent of Landscape Planning William Shealy, who have encouraged employees to take part in these outings and allowed them to do it as part of their workday.

All of the Herbarium’s outreach efforts have been focused on raising plant awareness—realization of the beauty, wonder, and importance of plants. Thanks in part to us, Sewanee is a more ecologically aware community. More people know more plants by their names and understand why they are special. And more have discovered a meaningful connection to this green world that forms the basis of life on earth.

We invite you—scout leaders, garden club members, teachers, University

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Plant Conservation Alliance Making Strides

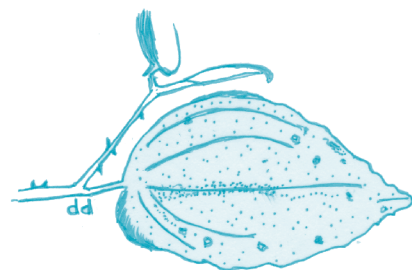


Dr. Jon Evans attended the Tennessee-Alabama-Georgia (TAG) Plant Conservation Alliance Meeting held at Relection Riding in Chattanooga on May 17–18. This meeting represented the first combined meeting of the plant alliances from these three states and highlighted the botanical significance of the juncture of these states, which spans the southern Cumberland Plateau, as a global hotspot for temperate plant biodiversity. The meeting celebrated our shared natural heritage and discussed strategies for working together to promote plant conservation across state borders. Evans serves on the steering committee for the Tennessee Plant Conservation Alliance (TNPCA) which met on the second day of the meeting. The TNPCA is planning to promote several projects this year including the development of a training program for plant safeguarding, a review of historical records of rare species, and collective efforts to conserve several targeted federal and state listed endangered plant species including the white fringeless orchid and running clover.

—Jon Evans

Shelby Meckstroth, C'17, Wins McCrady Prize for Plant Research

Shelby Meckstroth's honors thesis, "The Amelioration of Grazing and Sand Burial Through Physiological Integration by a Clonal Dune Plant," has been successfully defended and approved by the Biology Department. Shelby worked on this project with Dr. Evans during her senior year as an ecology and biodiversity major. She presented this research both as a talk at the biology honors symposium and as a poster at Scholarship Sewanee on April 28. Her poster was awarded the McCrady prize as the top poster in the biological sciences.



—Jon Evans

Domain Flora Paper Awarded Windler Prize!

The Southern Appalachian Botanical Society (SABS) and the editorial board at *Castanea* have announced that our paper, "The Vascular Flora of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee," has won the 2017 Richard and Minnie Windler award for systematics. The award was established in 1990 at the annual meeting of the SABS by Dr. Donald R. Windler of Towson University as a memorial to his parents.

The Flora paper documents the presence of 1,118 taxa for vascular plants on the Domain. To put this in perspective, that number represents 39 percent of the total vascular plant taxa for the entire state of Tennessee! Sewanee has the highest documented plant species diversity of any college campus in the United States.

This Flora contains several new state records (*Agrimonia microcarpa*, *Carex rugosperma*, *Rubus longii*, and *Viburnum alabamense*), 74 new Franklin County records, and two potential new species! Eighteen taxa on the Domain are listed as protected either at the state or federal level, including the federally listed endangered *Clematis morefieldii* and state listed endangered *Diamorpha smallii*, *Silphium brachiatum*, and *Symphytotrichum pretense*.

The high plant diversity on the Domain reflects the broad range of habitats that can be found on our 13,000 acres. The Flora is the first publication to describe the plant communities of the Domain and will now serve as a reference for all future scientific research and management conducted on University land.



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Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium

The Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium support the work of the Herbarium: education, research, and conservation. A \$10 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):

Amount enclosed: \$10 Other: \$ _____

Please mail checks (made payable to The University of the South) to:

Attn: Gift Records
The University of the South
735 University Avenue
Sewanee, TN 37383



Others who might like to receive *The Sewanee Plant Press*: _____



Summer 2017 Calendar of Events

As we go to press, our summer calendar is incomplete. Please check the *Sewanee Mountain Messenger* for news of all herbarium events.

Botanical Drawing

**Sat., July 22, 9:30–11:30 a.m.,
Mary Priestley**

Participants will spend the morning working on a careful drawing of a single botanical specimen, such as a herbaceous plant, a leafy twig, or a single flower or fruit. Emphasis will be on spending some quality time with a member of the botanical world, really seeing what you are looking at. We will include a few botanical terms to enhance your appreciation and help you understand exactly what it is that you are drawing. Paper and pencils will be supplied, but bring your own materials if you wish. Meet in the Sewanee Herbarium, room 169 in Spencer Hall on the Sewanee campus.

Foster Falls

Sat., July 29, 9 a.m., Mary Priestley

This has long been a favorite spot for late season wildflowers that thrive in the open sun, such as blazing star and numerous asters. Meet at the Foster Falls parking area for this one- to two-hour easy walk in the power line right-of-way above the gorge with optional short but steep trek to the bottom of the falls and back to see some trees and ferns. Call the South Cumberland State Park

Visitors' Center for directions (931.924.2980). Want to take a dip after the walk? Bring your suit! Foster Falls is also a wonderful place for a picnic.

Nature Journaling. A nature journaling group, sponsored by the Herbarium, meets Thursday mornings, 9–11. We are meeting in the pavilion at Lake Cheston for the summer. An informal gathering, participants share observations and writing, and sketch plants or other natural objects. Everyone is welcome. Get in touch with Mary Priestley for more information.

All times are CST or CDT.

Wear appropriate shoes on all 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 natural areas. For more information on these or other Sewanee Herbarium events, please contact Mary Priestley at marypriestley@bellsouth.net. Directions are available on the herbarium website, sewanee.edu/offices/herbarium, under the calendar of events.

Would you like us to arrange an activity—a walk, a talk, or something else—for your group? Just let one of us know.

THE SEWANEE PLANT PRESS

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*Drawings, from nature journals, are by
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HERBARIUM PUBLICATIONS

Fiery Gizzard: Voices from the Wilderness
What If Trees Could Walk?
Guide to Shakerag Hollow

HERBARIUM BLOG

sewaneeherbarium.wordpress.com

SEWANEE

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department heads, and community leaders—to engage with us. Might your group like to take a botanical walk in the woods? Check out the plants growing around one of our reservoirs—or around your school playground? Learn how to press and mount plants? Or go out on a limb and explore nature journaling—maybe try some drawing or writing and find a deeper connection to something in nature?

If so, give us a call. We would love to know what you're curious about ecologically or botanically and how we might help satisfy that curiosity. We think you will find that as people's knowledge

of the plants of this beautiful place is deepened their appreciation will be renewed.

—*Mary Priestley*

Domain Flora, continued from page 2

The Flora would not have been possible without the many years of collecting by our Herbarium curators: Mary Priestley and Yolande Gottfried. Special thanks goes to co-author Callie Oldfield, our herbarium post-baccalaureate fellow this past year, who put in countless hours formatting the 31-page paper and conducting many of the floristic analyses. Alfie Sidik also contributed greatly to this work when she was a student. My colleague, Dwayne Estes at Austin Peay University, was extremely helpful as another set of eyes to confirm our voucher specimens. Finally, we are grateful to

Nick Hollingshead for his database management expertise over the years and his help in making the Sewanee Herbarium one of the first fully databased herbaria in the southeast.

We have already found eight new species for the Domain since the Flora was submitted, so stay tuned for an “additions to the Domain flora” paper!

—*Jon Evans*

