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Newsletter of the Halton / North Peel Naturalist Club

Volume 46, Number 2

November-December 2011

Club Activities

Indoor: Meetings begin at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month, October to June at St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams, unless stated otherwise.

Tuesday December 13 at 6:30 – Note earlier start time: Our annual pot luck dinner.

Bring your choice of tasty edibles to this popular annual social get-together. Members are invited to show slides after we eat. Bring a CD or memory stick with no more than 10 images if you wish to participate. Please let Don Scallen know at dscallen@cogeco.ca if you plan to do this.

Tuesday January 10, 2012: To be announced. Contact Don Scallen for an update in December at dscallen@cogeco.ca.

Tuesday February 14, 2012: The plants and animals of Churchill Manitoba, the

"Polar Bear Capital of the World". Freyja Forsyth of Credit Valley Conservation spent seven months in Churchill and came away with a deep appreciation of the natural history of this northern town. Churchill has become a major eco-tourism destination, not only because of bears, but also because it is a great place to see arctic birds. Perhaps you will be inspired to visit Churchill after attending this meeting.

Tuesday March 13, 2012: Canada's katydid of the bogs: boreal love calls and elastic energy. Glen Morris, Professor (emeritus) of Zoology at the University of Toronto will regale us with stories about the only katydid found solely in Canada. The males of this grasshopper-like insect broadcast mating calls beyond the range of human hearing. Morris, who studied these 100% bona fide Canadian bugs for decades, discovered that the calls are made with "elastic energy" a sound production mechanism that is shared with katydids in the Amazon. Not sure what "elastic energy" is? Neither am I, but we can find out in March.

Outdoor: Trips begin at the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) parking lot at Guelph and Mountainview Road, Georgetown unless stated otherwise. If you would like to meet the group at the trip site, please speak to the trip leader.

Saturday November 26: Late Flowering Plants Survey Hike. Bill McIlveen will be leading this tenth annual survey to find and identify any flowering plants that are still blooming late in the season at sites around Halton Hills. Meet at 1:00 pm. at NEC.

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President's Message

Hello and welcome to members new and old,

We had a truly spectacular fall this year, and still the colors seem rich as we head into November. It is a great time of year for walking in the woods or exploring wetlands. We had a good outing in October to Scotch Block Reservoir, where water levels were extremely low allowing mud flats to develop and attract shorebirds. The avian visitors to these local wetlands change almost daily as waves of migrants pass through, so it is always a good place to check.

Our next two meetings will feature the creativity of our club members, with artistic creations on display in November and culinary delights to savour at our annual pot luck in December. Both these events will be fun so do try to join us. One of the highlights in December is the Christmas bird count, which is a great way to see and learn about wintering species in the area. Experienced and novice birders are invited to come along – just dress warm!

Best wishes to all, Fiona Reid

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4T1
Charity registration number 869778761RR0001

Executive

President: Fiona Reid (905) 693-9719
Past President Andrew Kellman (905) 681-3701
Vice President: Don Scallen (905) 877-2876
Secretary: Anne Fraser (905)-877-1844
Treasurer: Janice Sukhiani (647) 408-9515

Appointments

Membership: Valerie Dobson (905) 828-1729
Newsletter: Gerda Potzel (905) 702-1681
Ontario Nature Representative: Vacant
Public Relations: Vacant
Webmaster; Andrew Kellman
Crozier Property Steward Marg Wilkes
Hardy Property Steward Ray Blower

Membership for one year: \$30 Single; \$40 Family
The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club is an affiliated member of Ontario Nature.

www.hnpsc.com

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Tuesday December 27: Christmas Bird Count. The annual Christmas Count for Halton Hills will take place in the standard survey area around Halton Hills. The area will be divided into smaller areas with participants assisting experienced leaders. This is a great way for beginners to learn their birds. A \$5 participation fee is requested to help cover the costs of management, organization and publication of the results by Bird Studies Canada. The fee does not apply to people counting only at their feeders – see below for details. If you would like to join in any aspect of the count, please call Bill McIlveen at (519) 853-3948 or (905) 867-9294 (cell) or email wmcilveen@sympatico.ca



Happy Holidays!

Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

In September 2011 I began my second stint as your Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club representative on the Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee. Our focus is the fourteen forest tracts in Halton Region.

The Committee is comprised of representatives from a trail-riding association, Niagara Escarpment Commission, Halton Sportsmen's Association, Oakville Cycling Association, Conservation Halton, three citizen representatives, and me, representing a naturalist's views. The Committee dissolve each time there is a municipal election and re-convenes afterwards for a three-year term.

This year has been designated by the United Nations as the "International Year of Forests". In honour of this, 5,000 trees will be planted within the Region of Halton.

Hardwoods will be harvested this winter in the Cox Tract. Trees have been marked by a professional forester and our Committee will visit this Tract prior to harvesting to view the condition of the trees to be cut.

The price of hardwood and softwood remains low: (\$215.00/1,000 board. feet) standing. Even so, the revenue from the cutting will augment the capital budget which covers annual expenses. These expenses include forest health monitoring, trail management, grooming the roads of the main tracts in winter, parking lot replacement, trail management, guide books, and signage.

I thoroughly enjoy serving on this Committee and will forward details as happenings occur.

by Marg Wilkes, October 30, 2011

New Plants to Watch For in Our Area

In the past few summers, I found two plant species that were new to me on various roadsides where I happened to be. Since then, I have learned their identities and a bit about their characteristics so that information is being shared here because they may become more abundant in our part of the world. Both species are fairly well-confined to roadsides where de-icing salt and other vagaries prevent most other species from growing. By coincidence, both species are noticeably aromatic. These two species are described in turn below.

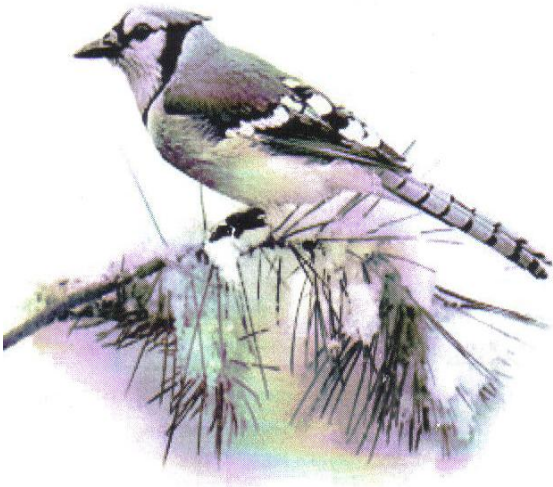
Jerusalem Oak Goosefoot (*Chenopodium botrys*)

Jerusalem Oak is an erect annual native to the Mediterranean region that grows to about 60 cm. Stems are densely hairy with most hairs being stalked and glandular. The leaves are dull green, somewhat glaucous with blades from 1 to 7 cm long, elliptic to ovate in shape. The lower leaves in particular are often

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Figure 1. Jerusalem Oak (*Chenopodium botrys*) growing at Highway 7 near Trafalgar Road, Georgetown, Ontario. October 12, 2011.



Christmas Bird Count

Do you watch the birds at your feeder all winter? The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club (HNPNC) invites you to help with the Halton Hills 20th Annual Bird Count.

The Club would appreciate your assistance in collecting data by recording and reporting the number and species of birds you observe on **December 27th**.

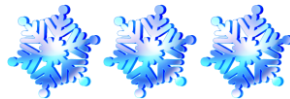
Report **ONLY** birds observed on **December 27th**.

Report the location where you made the observation (Location could be "backyard on Princess Anne Drive" or "Cedarvale Park")

If observations were recorded in more than one location, please keep multiple lists (For example, report 3 Blue Jays in Cedarvale, 10 Gold Finches in backyard).

If you are not certain which bird you have seen, don't guess, do your best to describe it or do not include it.

You may report your observations by **December 31st**, in one of two ways: E-mail your observations to wmcilveen@sympatico.ca (If you are interested in learning the results for our area, please indicate so in your e-mail). Or if you do not have email, phone Bill at (519) 853-3948



Coalition the Niagara Escarpment on "Take a hike" t-shirts

This holiday season, tell your friends to take a hike...on the Niagara Escarpment of course! Purchase our limited edition t-shirt today for only \$25 (plus S+H), you'll be helping CONE keep our Niagara Escarpment protected and green. These shirts have been made from 100% organic cotton and without the use of chemical pesticides, bleaches or dyes.



Contact CONE today to order your t-shirt in time for the holidays at (905) 257-4585 or cane@niagaraescarpment.org or 193 James Street South, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 3A8

Thank you for your continued support!

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pinately lobed. It flowers from July to October and the seeds ripen from August to October. The inconspicuous flowers are pollinated by wind. A notable feature of the plant is a pleasant pungent odor and it has been used in cooking as a flavoring.

The species is reported to tolerate a wide range of soil conditions but requires open sun and moist soil. That latter reported requirement seems somewhat dubious given the conditions where I have seen the plant growing. It will grow in gravel roadsides and in cracks in concrete curbs. A good many plants can be seen growing in the very small amount of 'soil' that develops at the base of the safety divider wall in the middle of Highway 401.

The species has been naturalized in North America for a considerable time. It is only in the last few years that I have observed the species growing along roadsides in small numbers at many locations across Ontario including north of Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Toronto, Windsor, and Port Hope. The attached photograph was taken along Highway 7 north of Georgetown.

**Fetid Dogweed or Fetid Marigold
(*Dyssodia papposa*)**



Figure 2. Fetid Marigold (*Dyssodia papposa*) growing along Highway 401 near Newtonville, Ontario, August 31, 2011.

Fetid Dogweed is an erect, multi-branched annual growing from a large taproot reaching 30 cm tall. It has opposite, deeply pinnatifid, glabrous leaves with scattered tan to red glands. The leaves are up to 3.5 cm long and 1.5 cm broad with leaf divisions that are linear with a few coarsely serrate teeth on the margins. The flower resembles a tiny Marigold. The petals are yellow but the ray flowers are inconspicuous and small. A most distinctive characteristic is the strong aroma, particularly when plant parts are crushed, which gives the plant its common and generic name.

Fetid Dogweed was first reported in Canada at Fort Erie, Ontario, as a "railroad weed" by David Day (1883, as *Dyssodia chrysanthemoides*) [Oldham and Klymko, 2011]. There were no additional Ontario herbarium or literature records until 1996 when a patch of several hundred plants covering about 50 m of gravel road shoulder was found along Highway 401 in Elgin County. In the 15 years since, the species has spread rapidly along southern Ontario's main traffic artery, Highway 401 and more recently along some other highways. The main population at present is to be found throughout much of the extent of Highway 401. The species has been rarely reported in other parts of Canada and those records are mostly also recent.

As noted above, the flower resembles a small Marigold. In overall appearance, the plant looks rather yellowish and a practiced eye will soon recognize dense yellowish strips of plants growing immediately adjacent to the pavement of the highway. The strips are confined to only about one meter in width but they

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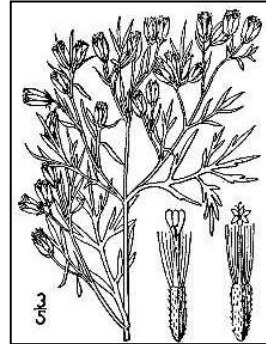
can extend nearly unbroken for tens of kilometers along the highway edge. Although this is not a species native to Ontario, its habitat requirements and growth pattern to date would not indicate that it will become an aggressive invader of our natural areas and agricultural lands.

Reference Cited

Oldham, M.J., and J. Klymko. 2011. Fetid Dogweed (*Dyssodia papposa*; Asteraceae) in Canada. *Northeastern Naturalist* 18(3):347–356.

by W.D. McIlveen

Sketch of **Fetid Marigold** from:
USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database/Britton, N.L. and
Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern
United States, Canada and the British Possessions*
3 v. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. V. 3:513



Credit Valley Conservation Events at Terra Cotta Conservation Area, Halton Hills

Family Fun Day

Saturday, November 12, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Suggested donation of \$5 per person along with gate admission.

Whether you are testing out your tracking skills in a scavenger hunt, discovering your inner artist while making nature crafts, or adding to our wildlife sightings board, you won't run out of things to do during Family Fun Day!

All programs include indoor and outdoor activities, starting at the Watershed Learning Centre. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

Contact: Stewardship hotline at 905-670-1615 x 221 or education@creditvalleyca.ca

Bird Feeder Workshop

Saturday, November 26, 2011

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Suggested donation of \$5 per person along with gate admission.

Use your carpentry skills to build a wooden bird feeder to bring birds to your backyard. All building materials and tools will be supplied (one feeder per family).

All programs involve indoor and outdoor activities, starting at the Watershed Learning Centre. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

Contact: Stewardship hotline at 905-670-1615 x 221 or education@creditvalleyca.ca



Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Membership Form

_____ Renewal or _____ New Member(s) Date _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership fee for the period			
from September through to August	_____ Single (\$30.00)	_____ Family (\$40.00)	
from December through to August	_____ Single (\$22.50)	_____ Family (\$30.00)	
from March through to August	_____ Single (\$15.00)	_____ Family (\$20.00)	
from June through to August	_____ Single (\$ 7.50)	_____ Family (\$10.00)	

Do you have any suggestions for programs or field trips?

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

(**must** be signed by anyone planning to attend field trips or other outdoor activities)

In making this application, I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required to participate, and that I accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation and will not hold the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club or its representatives responsible.

In consideration of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club accepting my application, I hereby and forever release and discharge the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club and its officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising as a result of my participation in these trips and declare that this is binding upon me, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigned.

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Meetings are at St Alban's Church in Glen Williams (see over) starting at 7:30 p.m.

Please fill out this form and bring it in to next indoor meeting or mail with payment to:

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club,
P.O. Box 115,
Georgetown, Ontario,

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club
Meeting Location
St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams

