

June 10-12 - MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE
Contact Dept. of Continuing Education, Millersville University, PO Box 1002, Millersville, PA 17551. (717-872-3030)

June 20 - 24 - PHILADELPHIA BOTANICAL CLUB and TORREY BOTANICAL SOCIETY
A joint field meeting of BSA, Northeast, at Manchester College, IN. Registration deadline May 7. For information contact David J. Hicks, 219-982-5309, or djhicks@manchester.edu

Saturday, June 26, 10 AM - noon - BOWMAN'S HILL WILDFLOWER PRESERVE
The program: "Knowing Native Plants *focus on ferns*" Learn about our native ferns and their unique habits. Pre-register; \$10 / \$6 members (215-862-2924) bhwp@bhwp.org

WHY EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW THE FERNS

To venture into a forest or to cross the open country anywhere, knowing nothing of the ferns, is like visiting an art gallery in which the finest paintings are turned to the wall. For there is nothing that grows or lives that can approach the feathery grace, the symmetry of form, or the lacy elegance of pattern of the Ferns: and to be blind to all this beauty is nothing less than calamitous.

This is a case where even a little knowledge is an excellent thing. I have been told hundreds of times by frequenters of the wild, that having learned by hook or crook to learn the names of a half dozen ferns or so, their outings, in consequence, became so rich in new zest and added interest, that they were not content until they had identified every species within reach. One enthusiastic novice said to me, "I can go over to Duden's Woods Sundays and call every fern I see by name. Why, it's like knowing everybody I meet as I walk down Fifth Avenue, and yelling at them, 'Hello, Jim!' 'Hello, Pete!' 'Hello, Annie!' A walk means much more to me than mere physical exercise."

While a very marked and widespread interest in our native wildflowers, bushes and trees has developed since the big war, the ferns do not yet seem to be receiving the attention they deserve. One possible reason for this is the impression of many that their study is a difficult one, and that they are not easily cultivated.

Another is the attitude of a great number of people, among them not a few wildflower lovers, to whom a fern is a fern, simply that and nothing more. A recent visitor to my wild garden who knew and named a majority of the flowering plants, even those that were not in bloom, was dumb as an oyster when I showed her my fernery. Later, upon hearing that there were sixty species and over twenty varieties of ferns growing there, she said, "I was never so surprised in all my life. I have always thought there were only three kinds of ferns -- Maidenhair, Brakes and just ferns!"

As for the vast multitudes of the unseeing, those who look upon all vegetation, except possibly things like cabbages and sunflowers, as a conglomeration of worthless weeds, their case seems hopeless. However, the introduction of nature study into the schools may arouse in their children a better appreciation of the natural treasures of the wild, that will atone in some degree for their own ignorance and indifference.

Converts to the ranks of fern lovers are easiest made from the second of these classes. When one knows a Maidenhair and a Bracken; it is not difficult to make him acquainted with the Christmas Fern, the Cinnamon Fern and other conspicuous kinds. And so he soon gets on speaking terms with a goodly number and is in a fair way to become an addict.

It is a little more difficult to persuade those of the first group that the study of ferns is really one of the simplest and most delightful pursuits in the world, and that they can be grown in the home garden and grounds as easily as one can grow Zinnias, but it can be done. All that is necessary is to tell them how to go about it, and induce them to make a start, if only with a few plants.

Herbert Durand in "The Field Book of Common Ferns"; 1928

HARDY FERN SOURCES

FANCY FRONDS; Judith Jones -- PO Box 1090, Gold Bar, WA 98251; (360) 793-1472
Mail-order catalog lists over 100 ferns. To order send \$2.00 refundable

FOLIAGE GARDENS; Sue & Harry Olsen -- 2003 128th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98005;
(425)747-2998; Email FoliageG@juno.com;
<http://www.backyardgardener.com/Foliagegardens/>
The website is informative and includes their catalog. The paper catalog is available at \$2.00

GARDEN IN THE WOODS - NEW ENGLAND WILDFLOWER SOCIETY, INC -- 180
Hemenway Rd, Framingham, MA 01701-2699; (508) 877-7630; Email newfs@newfs.org
<http://www.newfs.org/>
A large selection of specific wildflower seeds.

THE FERNERY -- 93 Magellen Way, Covington, KY 41015; (606) 261-3017.
FERNERY@aol.com Free catalog as long as they last.

ROSLYN NURSERY -- 211 Burrs Lane, Dix Hills, NY 11746; (516) 643-9347
roslyn@roslynnursery.com; <http://www.roslynnursery.com>; Catalog \$3.00

VARGA'S NURSERY -- 2631 Pickertown Rd, Warrington, PA 18976; (215) 343-0646
Catalog available. Call for appointment.

WILD EARTH NATIVE PLANT NURSERY -- Box 7258 Freehold, NJ 07728; (732) 308-9777
Email wildearthnnpn@compuserve.com Catalog \$2.00/two years