

Wildflower Walk

Location: Hop Along Cassidy Gorge/Shale barren

Date: May 7, 2011

Elevation: 1079

Trip Leader: Butch Kelly/ Rich Crites

Weather: Sunny, few clouds, about 70 degrees

No. in Attendance: 14

Blooming	Plants Observed
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Sensitive Fern
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Wild Geranium
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Green and Gold
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. Ragwort
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Coltsfoot with Dandelion-like seeds
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. Fleabane
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. Seneca snakeroot
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Poison Ivy
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Vetch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10. Rue anemone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. Columbine (normal red)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12. Columbine (rich purple)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. Columbine (intermediate redish-purple)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14. Deerberry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15. Blackberry
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Christmas fern
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17. Bowman's root/Indian physic
<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Alleghany servicebery
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Virginia Creeper
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20. Pussytoes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21. Bleeding Heart
<input type="checkbox"/>	22. Greenbrier
<input type="checkbox"/>	23. Blue ash ? (9 leaves and dry upland location)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24. Lespedeza
<input type="checkbox"/>	25. Bracken fern

Blooming	Plants Observed
<input type="checkbox"/>	26. Ebony Spleenwort fern
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27. Lyre Leaf Rockcress
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28. Mountain Laurel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29. Shale barren bindweed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30. crown vetch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31. Wild pink/Pennsylvania Catchfly
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32. Golden Alexander
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33. Alumroot
<input type="checkbox"/>	34. Coral bells
<input type="checkbox"/>	35. Tulip Poplar
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	36. Locust Tree
<input type="checkbox"/>	37. Pinxter Azalea
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	38. Birdfoot violet
<input type="checkbox"/>	39. Indian hemp
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	40. Clematis albicoma/ Leather flower
<input type="checkbox"/>	41. Black cherry trees
<input type="checkbox"/>	42.
<input type="checkbox"/>	43.
<input type="checkbox"/>	44.
<input type="checkbox"/>	45.
<input type="checkbox"/>	46.
<input type="checkbox"/>	47.
<input type="checkbox"/>	48.
<input type="checkbox"/>	49.
<input type="checkbox"/>	50.

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Driving Directions: We stopped along this shale barren to observe flowers on our way to Roaring Run.

Notes: Hop Along Cassidy Gorge is a shale barren named by early club member Sam Ellington.

We also heard and saw Indigo Buntings while observing the leather flower/*Clematis albicoma*.

Shale barrens:

These small-patch communities are endemic to western Virginia, eastern West Virginia, west-central Maryland, and south-central Pennsylvania. In Virginia, they occur at elevations from 1,000 to 2,600 ft.

Habitats generally occur on steep (~ 30 degree) slopes with south to west aspects. The steep, xeric slopes and friable nature of the shale create poorly vegetated hillsides of bare bedrock and loose channery visible from afar.

Continual undercutting of thick but relatively weak shale strata by streams maintain most shale barrens. Less common, densely graminoid-dominated variants occurring on steep spur ridge crests and other stabilized shale slopes are sometimes referred to as "shale ridge balds" or "shale ridge prairies."

Although stunted trees of several species - e.g., chestnut oak, northern red oak, Virginia pine and pignut hickory - are common, shale barrens are strongly characterized by their relatively open physiognomy and by a suite of uncommon and rare plants found almost exclusively in these habitats.

Endemic or near-endemic shale barren species include shale-barren rock-cress (*Arabis serotina*), white-haired leatherflower (*Clematis albicoma*), Millboro leatherflower (*Clematis viticaulis*); also endemic to Virginia), shale-barren wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum allenii*), shale-barren evening-primrose (*Oenothera argillicola*), shale-barren ragwort (*Packera antennariifolia*, = *Senecio antennariifolius*), and Kate's Mountain clover (*Trifolium virginicum*).

Other more or less widespread and characteristic herbaceous species of Virginia shale barrens include Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), poverty oat-grass (*Danthonia spicata*), wavy hairgrass (*Deschampsia flexuosa* var. *flexuosa*), moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*), mountain nailwort (*Paronychia montana*), rock spike-moss (*Selaginella rupestris*), shale-barren Pussytoes (*Antennaria virginica*), Canada cinquefoil (*Potentilla canadensis*), smooth sunflower (*Helianthus laevigatus*), false boneset (*Brickellia eupatorioides* var. *eupatorioides*), hairy woodmint (*Blephilia ciliata*), and western wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum* var. *capitatum*), Bath and Alleghany Counties).