



ONAPA NEWS

Dedicated to promoting, protecting, and improving Ohio natural areas and preserves.

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Ohio's woodlands home to Dwarf Ginseng

Story and photos by Guy Denny

Most people familiar with wildflowers and/or outdoor lore have heard of American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) and its role in the lucrative, international ginseng roots trade. Ginseng has a long history in Oriental herbal medicine to promote general health, vigor, and prolong life, going back thousands of years. The genus name *Panax* comes from two Greek words, *pas* “all” and *akos* meaning “cure” a reference to the roots

being thought to be a medicinal cure all. The common name “ginseng” comes from the Chinese name *jen-sen* meaning “man-like” in reference to the fleshy roots that occasionally can take on the appearance of a human torso with legs. As native populations of wild Asian ginseng populations diminished due to over-harvesting and habitat destruction, demand for this highly sought-after commodity increased while prices soared.

In 1714, a Jesuit priest working in Canada with Native Americans, learned of the high demand for ginseng by the Chinese from a fellow priest stationed in China.

Corresponding with his colleague in China, it was soon discovered that American Ginseng occurring throughout North America was readily welcomed by the Chinese as a most acceptable substitute for their Oriental ginseng, and they were willing to pay a high price for it. Thus began the extremely lucrative trade of American Ginseng to Asian markets, primarily China, a trade that continues to

flourish to this day.

However, in this article, I want to introduce you to a lesser recognized member of the ginseng family known as Dwarf Ginseng (*Panax trifolius*). This perennial spring wildflower somewhat resembles a smaller version of American Ginseng, but it has no commercial value in the herbal trade like its much larger cousin.

Dwarf Ginseng is very much a northern species occurring in moist but well-drained



rich woodlands as far north as Nova Scotia, Ontario and Minnesota, south to Iowa, Indiana and Pennsylvania, then south along the Appalachian Mountains to Georgia. In Ohio, this relatively rare species occurs sparingly within the northern third of the state mostly in our north central and northeastern counties

Dwarf Ginseng

with a disjunct population in the hills of Hocking County. One of the best places to see this species is along the boardwalk at Fowlers Woods State Nature Preserve in Richland County. Peak bloom is in late April at the same time as most of our other spring wildflowers. It often covers the ground in large colonies of plants. Its foliage appears somewhat similar to that of American Ginseng but on a much smaller scale. American Ginseng grows 8 to 16 inches-plus tall while Dwarf Ginseng stands 3 to 8 inches tall, (usually only about 4 to 6 inches.) Both species grow from a single unbranched erect

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Dwarf Ginseng not state listed, but not common

stem terminating above ground in a whorl of three to four palmate compound buckeye-like leaves, each of which is comprised of individual leaflets. Dwarf Ginseng can be distinguished by its usually three nearly sessile leaflets rather than the five stalked leaflets of American Ginseng.

With Dwarf Ginseng, a single tall stalk (peduncle) emerges from the base of the whorl of leaves and terminates in a roundish umbel of numerous (15-30) showy white trumpet-like flowers with reflexed petals. The cluster of flowers are distinctively held well above the leaves. Each flower has five white petals with five white protruding stamens and three styles in perfect flowers (female part of the flowers). As the flowers age, they turn pink before developing a yellowish-green, three-angled fruit (drupe) containing two to three seeds.

Upon close examination of the flowers, you will notice that Dwarf Ginseng can often have individual plants that have only all male flowers. However, most plants typically have perfect flowers with both male and female reproductive parts present. Individual male plants have five stamens but only one short, undeveloped style. It is believed that young or smaller plants have fewer carbohydrate reserves stored in their roots than larger plants. Consequently, smaller plants tend to be



Fruit of the American Ginseng

males since it takes less energy to produce pollen than fruits. As the plants become older and larger, and increase their stored carbohydrate reserves, they become sexually perfect flowers with both functional male and female reproductive parts present.

At the other end of the unbranched single stem where it enters the ground, it continues straight down as a very thin fragile underground stem terminating in a small marble-sized tuber surprisingly deeply buried. This tuber can be eaten raw or boiled 5 to 10 minutes and eaten as an emergency food source.

Although Dwarf Ginseng is not revered for its medicinal properties as is American Ginseng, it nevertheless, served as a medicinal plant for Native American people. Reportedly, the Cherokee chewed the tuberous root to treat headaches. They also used this species for treating rheumatism, colic, gout, tuberculosis and shortness of breath. The Ojibwa used a poultice of chewed root which they applied as a coagulant to stop bleeding. The Iroquois were said to have treated chest pains with an analgesic made from Dwarf Ginseng.

Although not rare enough to be a state listed species, dwarf ginseng is nevertheless a relatively rare species in Ohio. Keep an eye out for it in springtime. Coming across a nice population of Dwarf Ginseng is always quite noteworthy, and an uncommon, fun find.



Full umbel (lower left) is typical of most Dwarf Ginseng plants.

12 ONAPA Field Trips scheduled in 2023

Twelve field trips are scheduled this year, starting **April 29 through October 14**. Three events are limited to 20 participants. Most of the trips require pre-registration, but a few do not: please check the listing carefully. For the trips requiring preregistration, email guy.denny7@gmail.com; details on where to meet and items you may need on the hike (as well as notification if the trip is cancelled for any reason) will be provided when you register. We recommend you dress for the weather, bring water and a bag lunch or snack on all field trips.

Field Trip listings and updates will be posted at ONAPA.org/ACTIVITIES

Saturday, April 29, 10 am: Nature Walk at Johnson Woods State Nature Preserve. Leader Gordon Maupin, naturalist and conservation biologist, will take you on an easy walk along the mile-long boardwalk to discover the many features that make this outstanding old growth woods amazing in all seasons. Johnson Woods is located a few miles north of Orville on Fox Lake Road, between S.R. 57 and S.R. 94. **NO registration required.**

Saturday, May 6, 10 am: Nature Walk at Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve. Dick Moseley, naturalist, will lead the hike through this Licking County preserve. Meet at the preserve parking lot, on CR 273 just outside the town of Toboso. **NO registration required.**

Saturday, May 13, 10 am: Mosses and Ferns of a Sandstone Woodland at Deep Woods Preserve. Dr. Robert Klips, Associate Professor Emeritus at OSU, will lead this hike through this Hocking County preserve. **Registration REQUIRED—participation limited to 20.**

Wednesday, May 17, 10 am: Birding & Botany of the Oak Openings Region. Dr. Elliot Tramer, retired professor (University of Toledo), biologist, naturalist and expert birder, will lead this driving and walking tour through several sites in the Oak Openings region of northwestern Ohio. **Registration REQUIRED—participation limited to 20.**

Saturday, May 20, 10 am: Tour of North Kingsville Sand Barrens. Dr. James K. Bissell, distinguished botanist, naturalist and natural areas manager, will lead this tour through one of the finest natural areas of northeast Ohio. **Registration REQUIRED.**

Saturday, May 27, 10 am: Nature Walk at Johnson Woods State Nature Preserve. Leader Gordon Maupin, naturalist and conservation biologist, will take you on an easy walk along the mile-long boardwalk to discover the many features that make this outstanding old growth woods amazing in all seasons. Johnson Woods is located a few miles north of Orville on Fox Lake Road, between S.R. 57 and S.R. 94. **NO registration required.**

Saturday, June 10, 1:00 pm: Tour of Spring Brook Sanctuary. Dan Best, retired Geauga County Park naturalist, will guide the group along this stream, home of Ohio's only known native brook trout population. **Registration REQUIRED—participation limited to 20.**

Saturday, July 22, 10 am: Tour of Denny's Tallgrass Prairie. Several prairie experts will be on hand to guide small groups through the native flora of the prairie situated in Knox County. At 6021 Mt. Gilead Road, Fredericktown. **NO registration required.**

Saturday, August 12, 10 am: On the Hunt for Spiders of Ohio. Dr. Richard A. Bradley, Associate Professor Emeritus (Ohio State University), will lead this activity in Knox County. **Registration REQUIRED.**

Saturday, August 26, 10 am: Fall Shorebird Identification along Lake Erie. Jason Larson, naturalist, expert birder, and Director of the Richland County Park District and Gorman Nature Center, will be leading this driving and walking tour of several of his favorite sites along Lake Erie. We will be identifying shorebirds on their southbound fall migration **Registration REQUIRED.**

Saturday, October 7, 10 am: Annual Prairie Seed Collecting Event. Once again we will open Denny's Tallgrass Prairie for anyone to collect prairie seeds for planting their own prairie gardens. We meet at 6021 Mt. Gilead Road, Fredericktown. **NO registration required.**

Saturday, October 14, 10 am: Nature Walk at Johnson Woods State Nature Preserve. Leader Gordon Maupin, naturalist and conservation biologist, will take you on an easy walk along the mile-long boardwalk to discover the many features that make this outstanding old growth woods amazing in all seasons. Johnson Woods is located a few miles north of Orville on Fox Lake Road, between S.R. 57 and S.R. 94. **NO registration required.**

Please join us in the field this year!





Woody threats no match for stewardship teams

Story and photos by Jennifer Windus

During the winter months of December-February, ONAPA scheduled a few stewardship projects in December, and then one project each week in January and February. The crazy, unpredictable weather caused us to cancel projects numerous times so we only had three projects in December, two projects in January, and seven projects in February. Most of the scheduled projects were with other partners, rather than with the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves (DNAP).

In December, we worked at Geneva Swamp with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (December 1), at Crabill Fen with DNAP (December 6), and at Daughmer Savanna (December 13). At all three natural areas, we were removing invading woody species.

In January, we had to cancel a couple of projects, but we had a small crew work at Brinkhaven Oak Barrens with the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust (January 4) and a large group of 18 people work at Cedar Bog (January 19).

We also had a volunteer appreciation lunch and winter woody identification workshop with Bob Klips on January 25. The weather was problematic, so only half the volunteers we planned for showed up for the workshop, but we had a great day at Highbanks Metro Park. We learned how to identify woody species in the winter using a key and looked at great specimens provided by Bob. At lunch, with box lunches from Chelley Belly in Delaware, we recognized several volunteers for their contributions to ONAPA. In the afternoon, we went on a short hike at Highbanks to look at woody species near the

nature center.

In February, we also had to cancel a couple of projects, but we managed to accomplish seven projects at Crane Hollow (February 2), Beck Fen with The Nature Conservancy (February 14), Cedar Bog again (February 15, 21, & 28), W. Pearl King Prairie Savanna with Columbus Metro Parks (February 23), and Sheldon's Marsh with DNAP (February 28). At Crane Hollow, we assisted Crane Hollow Inc. with clean-up of a white pine plantation which we are in the process of removing (planted years ago by the Division of Forestry, when they owned it). At the other four natural areas, we were again removing invasive woody species. It was the first time for ONAPA to work at Beck Fen and W. Pearl King Prairie Savanna, so it was a great opportunity for volunteers to see different preserves with different partners. A super added benefit at Beck Fen was seeing a saw-whet owl at the end of the day – such a treat for all of us!



At press time, six projects were scheduled for March, but weather is always a factor. Planning has started for prescribed burns in April. The April-June stewardship project schedule should be out on the website by late March.

Watch our website for the stewardship project schedule and please join us! It is a great way to get outside, meet other great volunteers, and help manage Ohio's natural areas.



Clockwise from top left: Crane Hollow Pine Plantation clearing; W. Pearl King Savanna clearing; Saw-whet owl at Beck Fen; The Nature Conservancy and ONAPA group at Beck Fen.

Cedar Bog gets deserved attention from ONAPA

Story and photos by Jennifer Windus

ONAPA has spent a significant amount of time in the past several years working at Cedar Bog in Champaign County (just south of Urbana), working on probably more stewardship projects than at any other nature preserve.

Cedar Bog is a dedicated state nature preserve and National Natural Landmark managed by the Cedar Bog Association and Ohio History Connection. It is a high-quality fen ecosystem with many rare plants and animals. It is the largest and best fen in the state with many boreal, prairie, and coastal plain species. These species depend on open fen meadow habitat which has been declining due to the lack of sufficient management. The massasauga population, a Federal listed rattlesnake, has declined specifically in SW Ohio due to this lack of habitat management and other factors.

The Cedar Bog Association has one employee, Mike Crackel who manages the preserve and its nature center with a number of volunteers, without any management staff. If we are going to protect the rare plants and animals



Showy Lady's Slipper at Cedar Bog

that depend on Cedar Bog, we need more help which is why ONAPA has committed time and resources to this significant fen preserve.

As a result of some recent meetings with other agencies and organizations, including OSU, DNAP, USFWS, ONAPA, and the Columbus Zoo, we planned more stewardship projects in February and March to increase the amount of clearing accomplished this winter.

Greg Lipps and Jeff Davis, both statewide herpetologists studying massasaugas and other rare reptiles, are very concerned that the Cedar Bog population of massasaugas will not survive without significant habitat improvements in the near future.

If you would like to help, please watch our website or **CONTACT US** through our website for future dates we will be working at Cedar Bog alongside our partners. ONAPA will also be helping to conduct prescribed burns in several of the prairie units at the preserve this spring.

Please join us and help preserve Cedar Bog and its rare precious species!



Sunshine aided crew during February 15 stewardship project at Cedar Bog.

Candidates for 2023 stewardship assistant openings are asked to apply by April

The stewardship program is now in its eighth season and ONAPA is looking for qualified stewardship assistants to help us for three to six months starting in May.

Stewardship assistants work on natural areas and preserves throughout Ohio, conducting rare plant surveys, preserve monitoring, and assisting with some administrative duties. The position is part-time with fieldwork two to three days a week. The program is designed to contract with recent college graduates in the fields of botany and zoology, natural resources, environmental science, and related fields. We will also consider college students who recently completed their junior year as well as graduate students.

We expect to have several returning stewardship as-

stants this year, but hope to contract with individuals from southwest Ohio to help us build a stewardship team in that region.

For more information, check ONAPA.org for a position description and **CONTACT US** through the website.

This experience is guaranteed to make for an exciting and rewarding summer if you like working outside with people!



ONAPA.org

- ◆ To volunteer
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- ◆ To CONTACT US

Wetland habitat is restored at Headlands

Story and photo by Jeff Frischkorn

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has re-purposed a frequently inundated parking lot into a 10-acre wetland at the 120-acre Headlands Beach State Park.

This former parking lot and soon-to-be birding destination is located at the park's far western extremity in Lake County's Painesville Township. It is adjacent to a water intake plant on the west and Lake Erie immediately to the north and along the park's fabled mile-long public beach. **(Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve is located at the east end of Headlands Beach State Park.)**

In fact, it is this proximity to Lake Erie that prompted the Ohio DNR to obtain \$113,711 from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program and coupled it with \$58,100 from the state's own H2Ohio program.

Work started on this project immediately upon receipt of the first grant award in January 2021. The Ohio DNR plans to finish planting the site this spring with final completion anticipated by June 2023.

"Frequent flooding of the parking lots on the west side of the park made them often unusable for their intended purpose and they became an eyesore. We discovered the opportunity for Great Lake Restoration Initiative grant funding and began to imagine a better use of the site," said Melissa Moser, the project leader for the Ohio DNR's Division of Parks & Watercraft, which owns and operates the state park.

Once completed the new wetland will join a much smaller one at the far east end of the Headlands Beach State Park complex. Here at the adjacent 25-acre Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve is a small, purposely built wetland along with publicly accessible trails and boardwalk. It, too, is a popular birding spot.

Much of the initial construction for the new wetland was performed by the Parks and Watercraft Division's own personnel. And another Ohio DNR division became involved, as well, said Moser.

Unfortunately, several roadblocks along the way, including an orphan gas well and water line issues, Moser said.

"The orphan well at the site was eligible for plugging through our Division of Oil and Gas' Orphan Well Program.' The Orphan Well team worked closely with our staff to safely cap the well while covering all costs through their program. It saved the park more than \$200,000," Moser said.

As for the ultimate project, Moser said the Ohio DNR is restoring approximately 10 acres, the land portion being "graded for different vegetation zones to include submergent, emergent, scrub-shrub, and forested areas."

"Excess sand was removed from the new wetland and relocated to the beach to create new sand dune habitat," Moser said.

Asked how deep the pond will be, Moser said, in essence, it all depends on Lake Erie's always fluctuating water level.

"Even at its deepest point, it is only a few feet deep," Moser said.

Moser said, too, that "although there are some native species expected to pop up naturally, "we don't want to give invasive plants an opportunity to take hold. Rather, we are doing selective planting of native wetland species appropriate for the site and also plan to transplant some plants from other areas of



the park," Moser said.

Similarly, the Ohio DNR will also work to preserve the newly created sand dunes located between the new wetland and Lake Erie.

"It's exciting to note that one of the first new dunes established already has a naturally occurring switchgrass population taking root," Moser said.

However, wildlife has been taking advantage of the wetlands even before the whole of it has been completed. On a recent visit to Headlands Beach State Park, I saw that waterfowl were taking full advantage of the new shallow-water pond even as a human crew was busily working along its banks.

Consequently, "the new wetland will not only provide valuable habitat for native species but will also provide a new opportunity for wildlife viewing," Moser said.

Helping is that the park's remaining asphalt lot runs right up to the edge of the project. As such, visitors will find excellent birding opportunities simply by looking out a vehicle's front window.

The Buckeye Trail also runs along the northern edge of the park, and currently ends at the wetland, though the Ohio DNR plans to extend a trail around the entire wetland complex in a subsequent phase of the project "making for even better viewing opportunities," Moser said.

"The trail will likely be a natural surface trail through much of its length but there is asphalt leading up to the wetland on either side, making it easily accessible for all visitors. We plan to eventually make even more improvements to allow good access for wildlife viewing by all park visitors," Moser said.

Ohio DNR Director Mary Mertz eagerly says this "project will do wonders for the guest experience at Headlands" via transforming these previously flooded areas "into an H2Ohio wetland."

"This project will provide a space where visitors can see the diverse wildlife that relies on high-quality wetland habitat to thrive. The new paths leading to this wetland will be an accessible way for people to experience the beauty of a wetland and learn about the H2Ohio work being done across the state," Mertz said.

This article is a reprint from "Ohio Outdoor News" newspaper, and was written by ONAPA member Jeffrey L. Frischkorn a retired outdoor writer for the "News Herald", based in Willoughby, Ohio, and now a regular writer for "Ohio Outdoor News". Subscriptions to "Ohio Outdoor News" 1-800-535-5191. Website at www.outdoornews.com/Ohio

Spring is Ohio's 'stellar fireworks show' of wildflowers

Story and photos by Andrew Lane Gibson

Spring is upon us once more. The last breaths of winter's chill are receding, leaving a landscape ripe for life and new growth. It's incredible how quickly the drab browns of our world become flush with emerald green each and every spring. Red-winged blackbirds are calling, spring peepers peeping, and salamanders on the run with the warming temperatures and lengthening days. Perhaps the best sign of spring is the awakening of the botanical world. Here in the eastern deciduous forest of North America resides one of nature's greatest spectacles in our spring wildflowers. There's really nothing else quite like it on Earth.

The bare forest understories explode in a profusion of blooms. From trilliums to bluebells, violets to irises, there's no shortage of beauty and wonder as the trickle of March roars into the flood of April. Our spring flora is a specialized and tough group of plants. They deal with an unpredictable array of weather conditions and temperature swings.

Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), our first native bloomer each spring, is famous for its thermogenic capabilities. That is – through cellular respiration it creates its own "body" heat to thaw snow and soil! The warming soil triggers development as their tubers and bulbs push forth new growth. Much of spring's bounty occurs in forested habitats, most often in older, less disturbed woods with rich soils thanks to centuries of leaf decay and recycling. Plants take full advantage of the bare canopies to capture as much sunlight as they can. As the canopy closes and understory darkens diversity wanes with much of our summer and fall flora out in more sunny habitats.

Many are probably aware of the term 'spring ephemeral' when it comes to wildflowers. These are species that develop, flower, set and release seed, and then senesce all in the matter of weeks. Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), trout-lilies (*Erythronium* spp.), and dwarf larkspur (*Delphinium tricorne*) are excellent examples. Most ephemerals are long-lived perennials that come back year after year and can take upwards of a decade to reach flowering maturity. Despite being efficient at photosynthesizing, their limited time above ground equates to a much shorter growing season. Not all spring wildflowers are ephemeral in nature. Many species such as large-flowered trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), and violets (*Viola* spp.) may flower in spring but you can find their leaves well into summer and fall.

Another interesting aspect of our spring blooming wild-

flowers is their relationship with ants. Some species rely on them as a means of seed dispersal known as myrmecochory. Ants are attracted to the seed's eliasome, a fleshy fat and protein rich appendage that makes for a great meal. They carry the seeds back to their nest, eat the appendage, then discard the seeds which helps facilitate dispersal! While slow, it's a time-tested method of survival and results in exceptional displays covering acres of forest floor. Fun fact – research suggests the large colonies of trout-lily leaves you see in early spring can be upwards of a millennium old! Food for thought next time you see such a sight!

Fortunately for us wildflower lovers, Ohio is home to a wealth of sites to see spring in full gear. It's not uncommon to see forests ensconced in a diversity of blooms with dozens of species present.

No matter where you live in the state you're not far from a stellar fireworks show of early season color. The show always starts in southernmost Ohio first and advances northward with the warming temperatures. I've always said it's like time travel going north with the season and seeing species

just beginning to bloom that have finished up further south. So be sure to get out on the trails this spring to see these amazing plants for yourself. It took decades, even centuries, of time to have the view before you. All that is a lot of time, patience, and good luck! Spring is a time for seeing old friends you haven't seen in nearly a year but when reunited feels like no time at all has passed.

Andrew is Assistant State Botanist for the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.



From top left, clockwise: Great White Trillium, Upland Dwarf Blue Iris, Squirrel Corn and Celandine Poppy

Andrew's Picks

- * Shawnee State Forest
- * Shoemaker SNP
- * Lake Katharine SNP
- * Lawrence Woods SNP
- * Whipple SNP
- * Eagle Creek SNP
- * Hocking Adena Bikeway between The Plains and Nelsonville
- * Goll Woods SNP
- * Bender Mountain Park



Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association

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***SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, August 5, for 2023 ONAPA Annual Meeting,
Caesar Creek Lake Visitor Center, Waynesville***