Summer 1997

FORGET-ME-NOT

Myosotis Messenger

Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve
& Biological Research Station
P.O. Box 189, Rensselaerville, NY 12147

New Trail Guide

The Preserve recently received a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway to create an interpretive trail guide. Hundreds of visitors come and hike the trails every year yet lack an understanding of the historical and environmental value of the Preserve. The guide explains 14 stations that are located along the trail that follows the Ten-Mile Creek up to Lake Myosotis. Various themes are discussed including edge plant communities, forest biodiversity, the geology of the Rensselaerville Falls, Stone walls and Sugar Maples, early succession, tree disease, Lake Myosotis Impoundment, and more. We believe that the trail guide will encourage those who visit to enjoy the Preserve in a thoughtful way.

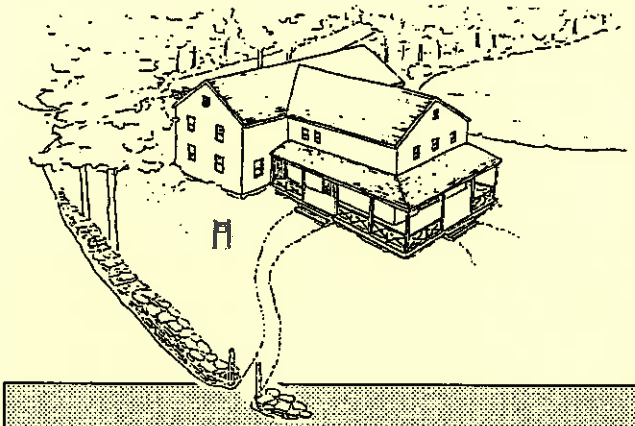
Preserve Receives National Recognition

Richard L. Wyman

Two years ago the Huyck Preserve was awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation for the Construction of an addition to the Eldridge Research Center, the preserve laboratory building. This grant was awarded in part because the Huyck Preserve has achieved national recognition as a leading field station. Both our research and educational activities have grown substantially over the last decade. For instance since 1988, nineteen graduate students have completed theses and dissertations leading to twelve Ph.D.'s and seven masters degrees. On average around 35 researchers per year utilize the Preserve as a research site some of whom have returned for over 20 years. Also during this period over 10,000 elementary and secondary students and 375 teachers have participated in the Preserve's educational programs. This usage made the existing laboratory too small.

The new addition is near completion and we will celebrate its opening before our Science Symposium on July 19th. The grant we received only covers about three quarters of the total cost and we have to raise about $32,000 to pay our share. We have raised about $10,000 but we need your help. Donations are tax deductible. We also need to furnish the building and will accept donations of desks, tables, book cases and filing cabinets. We will pick up if the distance is not too great.

The Preserve staff and Board are excited about the new addition and believe that it represents a milestone in the development of the Huyck Preserve and its biological field station.



Wish List

2 IBM Compatible CD Rom computers
with Windows 95
Software that would generate receipt
2 Laser Printers
Color Printer
Color Copier
Filing Cabinet
Professional storage for COMENART artwork
New VCR
Slide Projector
12 pair small binoculars
Desks
Desk Lamps
Library Shelving
Tables/chairs for Library
Classroom Tables/chairs
Beds
2 Vacuum Cleaner
Push Button Phone

Science Symposium and Opening of the Eldridge Research Center

The Preserve will hold its annual Science Symposium on Saturday, July 19th from 10:00 - 2:00 pm at the Eldridge Research Center on Lincoln Pond, Pond Hill Road. Tree diseases, earthworms, salamanders, house wrens, fireflies,and forestry practices are among this year's topics. The Symposium will be preceded by the official opening of the newly expanded Eldridge Research Center. Everyone is welcome to attend. Lunch will be available for a donation.

1997 Huyck Research Grant Recipients

Every year the Preserve awards research grants to scientists to study the flora and fauna of the Preserve. This year the Huyck Preserve Scientific Advisory Committee awarded 8 Research Grants to:

Gregory M. Bole, SUNY-Stony Brook; Speciation and sexual selection in two species of *Photinus* fireflies

Jennifer Frank, SUNY-Albany; The effects of earthworms on decomposition in the presence and absence of an amphibian predator

Geoffrey Gardner, SUNY-Albany; Beech scale (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*) dynamics and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) regeneration in an aftermath forest

Chad Hershock, University of Michigan; The effects of plant-plant interactions on community structure along gradients of soil productivity in old fields

Michael Messere, SUNY-Albany; Effect of selective logging on the distribution of *Plethodon cinereus*

Dr. George Robinson, SUNY-Albany; Continuing studies of beech bark disease in the Huyck Preserve

Isabella Scheiber, SUNY-Albany; Female choice and the mating system of a population of house wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), a monomorphic passerine

Lilliput in my Bucket

by Barbara Bolster Barrett

I've worn several hats at the Preserve. Summers, I teach swimming in water that is frigid early on, then later greenish brown. As lifeguard, I've seen Lake Myosotis in various guises, from sizzling brightness to the utter peace of late afternoon. Then, the low slung sun performs a kind of alchemy, transforming the water to liquid silver. I've had wonderful adventures with scores of school children in my role as Educational Assistant. During every woods walk, there is a point that I know I've got them – when kids discover animal signs or aquatic life scurrying under rocks. That moment – when the air sparkles with enthusiasm – is magic. I like my hats.

This past fall and spring, I've hung another hat on the peg. The official designation is Lab Assistant, which brings forth images of white starched prissiness. In reality, I picked bugs.

The picking table is dirty, dusty and tedious. We have to scrutinize every speck of fragmented leaf for signs of life. We carefully peel apart each clump of mouldering leaves in search of small threadlike worms called Enchytraids. We scan the sides of our picking buckets and the edge of the table for escaping prisoners – mostly spiders, beetles, and centipedes. Each invertebrate is measured, recorded, and sometimes preserved for records.

I got a glimpse into a Lilliputian world. Observed characteristics like size, body construction, movement and habitat fascinated me. Both real and imagined traits and interactions entered my consciousness. My "bugs" took on distinct personalities.

The most endearing invertebrate in our buckets was an unassuming humpbacked beetle (Coleoptera) that we affectionately dubbed "Crusty". Crusties are mottled dusky colored weevils who blend perfectly with dirt and leaf fragments. They creep out of our leaf piles, and where there is one, there are often four or five more. Something about these placid herds inspires flights of fancy. Often, during my first pick, Disney's "Pink Elephants on Parade" would insinuate its way into my mind.

Other beetles just don't inspire the same fealty. Stink beetles are handsome black Coleoptera reminiscent of the escapee from A.A. Milne's poem. Despite their attractiveness, their protection is potent! New pickers aren't properly initiated until they get "stinked". Think extremely ripe work boots.

Click beetles have a different protection. When in distress, they pop up and flip with a soft distinct "click". While this display is amusing, they are otherwise non-descript: a plain, brownish beetle with an elongated body.

Larger spiders seem fierce in temperament. This impression remains, despite the fact that they appear not to bite in defense. Amazingly fast, agile creatures, many have intimidating looking palps. We list them under

biological Class Araneae, and while tiny spiders suit this ephemeral sounding name, their sturdier cousins do not! Some Araneae are incredibly powerful. Wolf spiders jump right out of the leaf pile, often eliciting a shriek from a hapless picker. This past pick, a large (10 x 5mm), hairy spider did actual battle with my tweezers, like a demented swashbuckler. Whether delicate or fierce, spiders remain fascinating.

Centipedes also took on various personalities. My favorite is Order Geophilomorpha, a long, pink-hued delicate looking creature. A fitting consort to the fairies. Another common centipede is Lithobiomorpha. Lithos are shorter and squatter in body, and arguably wrigglier than Geos. They have cute long antennae. Occasionally, we'd find the granddaddy of them all: Scleropendomorpha. These are brutish looking beasts – the kind that inspire the term "creepy crawlies". These, an apt consort to crones.

Last fall, a diminutive insect, Class name, Collembola, inspired my whimsy. Collembola, more commonly known as "springtails", are so small that we often first detect them by their hopping movement. Their color ranges from "clear" to indigo blue. Some springtails are even striped. One variety of springtail, we nicknamed "Bunny rabbit". These Collembola have humped backs, and long curved antennae. Under a magnifying glass, they look remarkably like a rabbit! Collembola often take on a salmon colored hue, so pink bunny rabbits were common. I was delighted to find them.

What a difference six months make! Collembola are prolific. Woods walkers can find vast numbers of them every spring on dampened leaves. Huge clumps of darkened specks. This spring, we had two heat extractors literally black with Collembola. Extractor boxes are set up so that bugs can crawl down into cool water below to escape the heat. After examination, we always siphon out the water onto mesh squares so that we can check for the tiny creatures we missed. These extractors were so oily with Collembola, that we had to wipe them down twice after draining.

One day, we also had a Collembola laden hand-pick. As we got down to the dirt and leaf fragments, seemingly hundreds of little dark specks started jumping. Our recorder frantically kept track as we called out our count. Our final tally showed a total of 1882 Collembola. Afterward, we were all a bit punch-drunk. On the pick, as in "real" life, there definitely can be too much of a good thing. That day, pink bunnies lost a good part of their appeal.

We later joked about that day, calling it "The Collembola Incident", "The Day of the Collembola" and "The Pick from Hell". We helped Kelly pick baby names, and "Collembola Jo" was a favorite yuck, especially with Rick. "Collembola" is that kind of word.

Days like that could have been interminable, but the fellowship at the picking table made the experience pleasant, regardless. While I enjoyed my foray into the Lilliputian world, like Gulliver, I am happy to return to my own.

Celebrating Water Week

A series of stream monitoring Workshops were held on May 5th with Scott M. Ellis (Greenville) Fifth Grade Classes to celebrate Water Week. The students investigated the Basic Creek close to their school and recorded information such as pH, dissolved oxygen, and water clarity. They also identified a variety of stream organisms which can indicate pollution. For instance, the presence of stoneflies (Order: Plecoptera), Caddisflies (Order: Trichoptera) and mayflies (Order: Ephemeroptera), which are pollution sensitive, indicate good water quality. This was part of a regional "test the Waters Day" effort and many schools duplicated this effort using common data sheets to get a "snapshot" of regional water quality and an awareness of the importance of monitoring local water bodies. The data was sent to Richard Parisio (DEC), who will present a report to participating schools.

Stream Ecology Workshop

On Saturday, July 12th the Preserve is offering a workshop on Stream Ecology. It will take place at the Eldridge Research Center on Lincoln Pond, Pond Hill Road from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. Come explore a stream with a Preserve staff person. Learn the identification of different stream organisms and how certain critters indicate different levels of water quality. This is open to people of all ages, and families are welcome. Wear clothes appropriate for exploring. Please call to register at 797-3440.

Preserve to Host State Outdoor Education Workshop

The Huyck Preserve will be hosting a workshop as part of the New York State Outdoor Education Association Conference on Saturday, October 18th. The objective of the conference is to promote public awareness, foster appreciation and stewardship, and encourage use of the outdoors for teaching.

The Preserve will be presenting a session entitled "Utilizing Biological Research Stations in Teaching Environmental Education". The focus will be to encourage teachers and environmental educators to take advantage of the environmental science resource that Biological Research Stations could provide to them and their students.

StudentVisitors

Marilyn Walters Wyman

Every year hundreds of students come to the Huyck Preserve to learn about how our natural world functions and the wonder it provides. These students (pictured above / below) are participating in our high school workshop titled Beaver Pond Lodge where they explore the process of determining whether or not development of a natural area should occur. Such workshops provide real life skills in making thoughtful decisions relating to our environment. We also give workshops centered on the research we conduct on salamanders. Some comments from students: "You guys are the sweetest people in the world!!! Thanks so much for teaching us ecology in an interesting way." "I learned the most from hands-on field research. This is because when you actually apply science, you can then fully appreciate and understand it."

COMENART Artists Again at Preserve

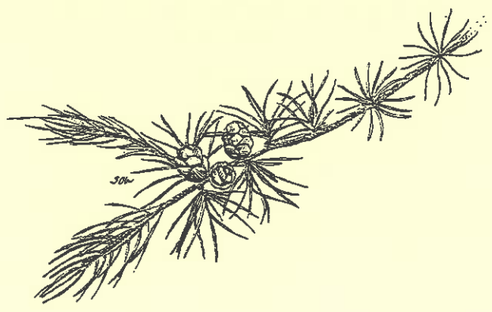
The E.N. Huyck Preserve is happy to be hosting four more artists this summer from the COMENART Natural History Artist-in-Residency Program. This program allows natural history artists to work closely with scientists at the biological field station throughout the research season and enrich their skills and talents working in nature as a living laboratory. Most important to the program is sharing this endeavor with the community, hence the name COMENART, meaning community/environment/art. Each artist will present a program to the community at the Rensselaerville Library annex. Programs will focus on hands-on workshops spending time looking at the natural world through the eyes of an artists and making a leap into the mind of a scientist. We are delighted to welcome Scott Rawlins, Elizabeth DaBoer, Karen Aliban-Confers and Hannah Sawyer to this year's program. Look for notices in the Library newsletter for community workshop dates and times. Enjoy, look and learn!

Beach Party Fundraiser

The Preserve is hosting it's Beach Party Fundraiser Friday evening on July 11th from 5:00 - 9:00 pm. at Lake Myosotis. A bonfire at dusk is planned. Suggested donation $20/Family ($15/Member Family), $10/ Individual ($5/ Member Individual). A picnic dinner will be for sale. Everyone is welcome!

Nature Study and Swimming Lessons

As a benefit of membership at the Family Level ($40) the Preserve offers Nature Study classes and swimming lessons for children. These programs run for six weeks beginning the second week in July. Nature Study meets Tuesdays (July 8-August 12) for grades K-2 and on Thursdays (July 10 - August 14) for grades 3-6. Swimming Lessons meet Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (July 9 - August 15) from 1:00-3:00 pm.

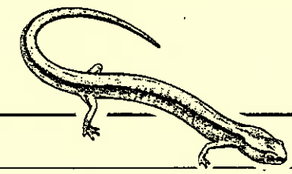


Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve
1997 Huyck Hike* and Summer Activities Schedule

Huyck Hikes meet at Lincoln Pond at 2:00 pm

June		
8	Tom Alworth* (*Huyck Preserve*)	Female stick carrying in House Wrens: building or courtship?
14	Scott Rawlins (COMENART *Artist-in-Residence*)	Patterns in Nature, Workshop for Children in 3rd - 6th grades
15	Gregory Bole* (*SUNY-Stony Brook*)	Speciation and sexual selection of two species of *Photinus* fireflies
21	Annual Membership Meeting	Eldridge Lab, 4:00 pm
29	Isabella Scheiber* (*SUNY-Albany*)	Female choice and the mating system of a population of house wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), a monomorphic passerine
July		
6	Michael Messere* (*SUNY-Albany*)	Effect of selective logging on the distribution of *Plethodon cinereus*
11	Beach Party Fundraiser	Lake Myosotis, 5:00 - 9:00 pm
12	Stream Ecology Workshop	Eldridge Lab, 2:00 pm
12	COMENART Exhibit	Opening at Weathervane with Library Cocktail Party. Artists' work will then be on display in Library Annex throughout the summer
13	Geoffrey Gardner* (*SUNY-Albany*)	Beech scale (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*) dynamics and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) regeneration in an aftermath forest
19	Science Symposium	Eldridge Lab, 10:00 am
27	Jennifer Frank* (*SUNY-Albany*)	The effects of earthworms on decomposition in the presence and absence of an amphibian predator
August		
2	Hana Sawyer (*COMENART Artist-in-Residence*)	Lecture / Discussion for adults
3	Chad Hershock* (*U of MI-Ann Arbor*)	The effects of plant-plant interactions on Community Structure along gradients of soil productivity in old fields
17	George Robinson* (*SUNY-Albany*)	Continuing studies of beech bark disease in the Huyck Preserve
24	Richard Wyman* (*Huyck Preserve*)	Going, going, gone: What good are species?

1997 MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name_____

Address_____

Circle One

Student $10	Individual $30/ Sr. Individual $20	Family $40
Senior Family $30	Contributing $100	Sustaining $250
Patron $500	Benefactor $1000	KHE Fund (Endowment) $_____

Please make checks payable to E.N. Huyck Preserve, PO Box 189, Rensselaerville, NY 12147. Your contribution is tax deductible.

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