



The NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

2014

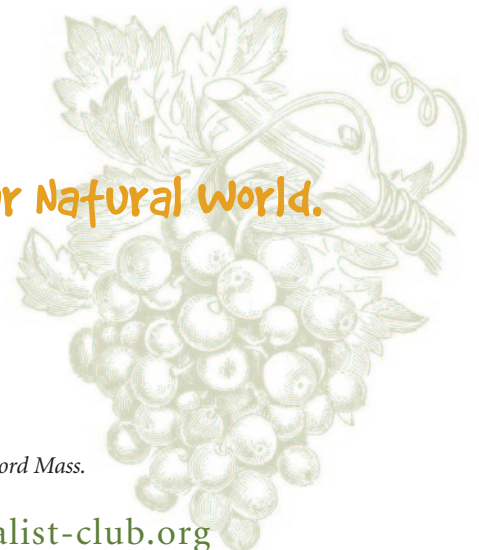
Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

July to September Calendar of Events

- JULY**
- 12 Saturday Walk at Rock House Reservation, *West Brookfield*
 - 15 Tuesday Preregister for Stump Sprouts Weekend,* *West Hawley*
 - 17 Thursday Pathways Around Ashley Reservoir, *Holyoke*
 - 19 Saturday Paddling Beautiful Tully Lake, *Royalston*
 - 20 Sunday Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, *Orange*
- AUGUST**
- 3 Sunday Plants of the Northern Hardwood Forest, *Chester*
 - 17 Sunday A Hike to Ice Glen Through an Old-Growth Forest, *Stockbridge*
 - 17 Sunday Neff Trail Hike at Laughing Brook, *Hampden*
 - 21 Thursday Pathway 'Round the Reservoir, *Ludlow*
 - 23 Saturday Grandparent/Grandchild Paddle on Buckley Dunton Lake, *Becket*
- SEPT.**
- 5-7 Fri.-Sun. Stump Sprouts Weekend, *West Hawley*
 - 13 Saturday Lichens and Mosses at Laughing Brook, *Hampden*
 - 17 Wednesday SEPTEMBER MEETING: Our Forests Under Attack – Forest Health in Massachusetts
 - 18 Thursday Walk at Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge, *Longmeadow*
 - 20 Saturday Paddling the Connecticut in Vermont, *Putney, Vermont*
 - 27 Saturday Alander Mountain, *Mt. Washington*
 - 28 Sunday Trees and Shrubs, *Westfield*

* For additional information, please see page 7.

Learn to Know, Enjoy, and Keep our Natural World.



CONCORD GRAPES: *Vitis Concord Mass.*



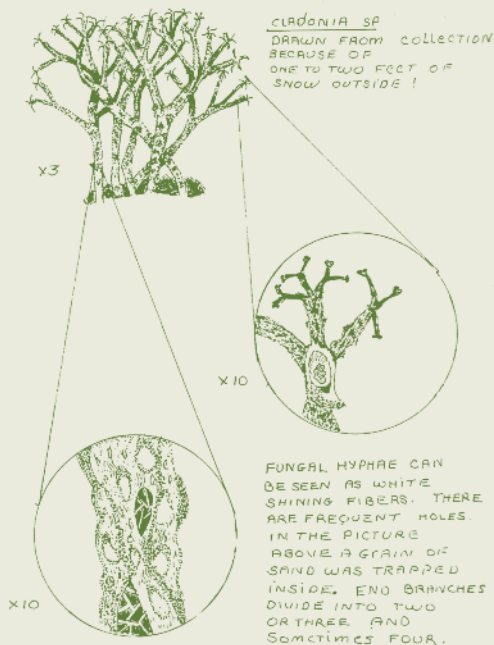
The Miniature World of Mosses & Lichens

As naturalists, we delight in wildlife, birds, and wildflowers. Yet there is another whole world of fantastic organisms on this planet living complex lives at a scale so small we tend to disregard or perhaps just overlook their uniqueness and beauty. When age began to rob me of close-up vision, I turned to eyeglasses and other aids to be able to see very small things, and became fascinated with the world on a more diminutive scale. And, as I also found, the world on a smaller, more intimate scale is a realm that's been closely observed by some notable naturalists who had experienced reduced vision at a very young age.

I read the book *Naturalist* by Edward O. Wilson, who as a boy had lost sight in one eye when a crab he was examining reached out and injured his eye. After this incident, Wilson could no longer see distances, so he concentrated on close, small things. This poor Alabama boy eventually received a scholarship to Harvard and is now the world's expert on ants. He has received two Pulitzer Prizes, one of them in recognition of his huge volume on these insects. I also read *Privileged Hands*, in which Geerat Vermeij describes his experiences in becoming totally blind as a young boy. Vermeij's third grade teacher introduced him to the subtle differences one can feel when handling various seashells. Today, Vermeij is a world-respected limnologist and author of many scientific articles and books. Considered in the light of these two naturalists' achievements, presbyopia seems not such a handicap after all!

Faced with a decrease in my own vision, I found my interest turning not to ants, nor to seashells, but to organisms like lichens and moss, for they are to be found all around me: lichens, the greenish-grey circles seen on tree trunks and rocks, and moss a dark green carpet covering rocks near streams or forming patches in lawns and forests. While I will never be an expert on these remarkable organisms, I certainly do enjoy learning about them.

As "organisms," lichens sound like a creation of a science-fiction writer! Lichens are formed by the association of two dissimilar organisms from two different kingdoms, an alga and a fungus, living so close together that they appear as one. Different combinations of algae and fungi produce a diversity of lichens. Recall that algae living on their own are typically found in water and photosynthesize, using light energy to assemble food from atmospheric carbon dioxide, while fungi living on their own are typically found on land and need to consume food just as animals do. When algae and fungi get together as lichen, things improve for both organisms: the fungus provides a home for the alga, enabling it to survive on land, and the alga provides food for them both.



~ Drawings from Sonya Vickers
journal of nature studies

Look outdoors and you will see lichen covering all kinds of surfaces. They grow slowly, so surfaces undisturbed for years are more likely to have lichens on them. Older trees and gravestones are especially good places to look! Lichens now cover rocks unearthed when my home was built 24 years ago. Lichens are very sensitive to sulfur dioxide, so it is rare to find lichens along city streets. Spotting plenty of lichens around your home is a good sign that you live in an area with low air pollution.

I keep a journal of all things natural and, by taking time to draw them, have learned a lot about lichens and mosses. As the eye scans an organism for details to draw, the mind incorporates new knowledge and often comes up with new questions that lead to specific investigation of, for instance, the organism's means of reproduction and sustenance. Lichens reproduce in a variety of ways. The British soldier lichen has bright red structures that help to distribute its spores. Lichens produce tiny packages comprised of both fungi and algae, which can break off together and start life in a new location.

Upon close examination of a lichen, one can see the fungus surrounding and protecting the green cells of the algal layer. Light and carbon dioxide pass through the fungus and reach the protected alga, which takes carbon from carbon dioxide and hydrogen from water and, using energy from the sun, chains carbon molecules together, producing a sugar.

A moss is a tiny, single organism – rather than two together – and is every bit as interesting as a lichen. Hundreds of millions of years ago when there was life in the seas but not yet on land, moss was likely one of the first organisms to make the leap to terrestrial life. Faced with the challenges of this drier environment, mosses evolved mechanisms to retain the ancestral sea within themselves for both transport and reproduction. Unlike vascular plants – flowers, trees, and grasses – mosses do not have vessels to transport fluid, so to get water from the ground up to the top of the plant, they use a bucket brigade of sorts, passing water from cell to cell. With this relatively inefficient means of transporting water, it is not possible for mosses to grow very tall. Water is critical for the reproduction of mosses, as fertilization occurs only when water is available to transport reproductive cells. Fertilized cells give rise to structures that produce spores. These spores will be disseminated through the air and will establish new stands of moss where they land.

In September I will be conducting a hike at Laughing Brook in Hampden to look at mosses and lichens there. Please join me for a look into this miniature world!

~ Sonya Vickers

2014 JULY to SEPTEMBER

July

Walk at Rock House Reservation, West Brookfield

Saturday, July 12, starting at 10 a.m.

Leader: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Please call Sonya (413-566-3406)

Meeting Place: We will carpool from the Big Y parking lot on Route 32 in Palmer. From the MassPike, take the Palmer exit, #8, and turn left onto Route 32.

We'll walk at The Rock House Reservation, managed by The Trustees of Reservations, through an area that is of archeological and geological interest. As we stroll, we'll encounter an overhanging cliff that Native Americans have used as a shelter, and areas where pottery and early tools were unearthed in the 1930s by amateur archaeologists. We'll also see evidence of glaciers from the last ice age.

Pathways Around Ashley Reservoir, Holyoke

Thursday, July 17, starting at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Registration: Please call Colette to register and for meeting place.

Let's head out for an early morning scenic walk along a flat waterfront trail. Come along on this pleasant stroll, conversing the while away, reacquainting yourself with nature on a high summer day. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Bad weather cancels.

Paddling Beautiful Tully Lake, Royalston

Saturday, July 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Leaders: Dick & Moreen Kardas

Registration: Please call Dick or Moreen to sign up (413-967-5739)

Meeting Place: Job Lot/Big Y shopping center, Route 32, Palmer (Take I-90/Mass Pike to Palmer, Exit 8. Turn left at the traffic light onto Route 32 North. Turn left at the next traffic light into the shopping center.)

This beautiful lake is a pleasure for experienced and novice paddlers alike. Just north of the town of Athol, the 200-acre reservoir is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and hosts a number of recreational opportunities. We will put in on the main lake and paddle northward, through Tully River to Long Pond and back. The lake has a number of islands with sandy beaches, perfect to stop for lunch or to take a swim if the weather warrants, so don't forget to wear your swimsuit. This nice, flat-water paddle will allow us to explore coves and wetlands, and will provide the opportunity to view shorebirds, herons and other wildlife.

Bring your canoe or kayak. If you don't have a boat, you can rent one from Tully Lake Campground for a fee. Don't forget your life jacket, lunch, drink, camera, binoculars, hat, and sunscreen.

Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, Orange

Sunday, July 20, starting at 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Bill Fontaine

Registration: Call Bill (413-533-2153)

Meeting Place: Florence Savings Bank parking lot at the Stop & Shop Plaza on Route 9 in Belchertown.

The first half of this walk will take us along a gated, level paved road through a variety of habitats on the northern end of Quabbin Reservoir, an area featuring abandoned fields and orchards, wetlands, plantation plantings, cellar holes, and even a hand-laid keystone bridge. We'll take our time as we wind our way toward the reservoir some 2.5 miles away. On our return, we'll skirt the eastern ledges of Rattlesnake Hill, home to soaring vultures, porcupines and bobcats. Total distance is approximately 6 miles. Wear appropriate footwear and bring along something to eat and drink.

I drifted into a summer-nap under the hot shade of July, serenaded by a cicada lullaby, to drowsy-warm dreams of distant thunder.
~ Terri Guillemets

Plants of the Northern Hardwood Forest, Chester

Sunday, August 3, from 1 to 3 p.m.
 Leader: Dave Lovejoy (413-848-2047)
 Registration: Not necessary
 Meeting Place: Parking lot at the base of Sanderson Brook Road (Chester-Blandford State Forest) just off Route 20 in Chester.

The “hilltowns”, especially at their higher elevations and north-facing slopes, support a different vegetation than is typical in the valley. Whereas valley vegetation is usually dominated by various species of oaks, at the site of this walk, northern hardwoods (sugar maple, yellow birch, beech) are the dominant trees. We will walk towards Sanderson Brook Falls on a dirt road with occasional side trips to the Brook, seeing many of the woody and non-woody species typical of this environment. Please note that the temperature on a summer afternoon in the Chester-Blandford Forest could be noticeably cooler than in the Springfield area.

A Hike to Ice Glen Through an Old-Growth Forest, Stockbridge

Sunday, August 17, from 9 a.m.
 Leader: Dave Gallup
 Meeting Place: Table and Vine, Route 5, West Springfield
 Registration: Call Dave (413-525-4697)

Join us on a hike to a magical place, a historic spot people have ventured to for over 100 years. The glen is essentially a lush, untended, romantic landscape consisting of piled rocks thick with mosses. The north-south orientation of the glen protects it from direct sunlight; Ice Glen gets its name from the ice that can persist into the summer at the bottom of its deep rock crevices. We will traverse old-growth forests to a site where giant boulders left behind by the glaciers form craggy ice-filled caves in a cool, dense, moss-covered forest. After our adventure, let's put up our feet and enjoy a cool, refreshing drink at the Red Lion Inn's patio in historic Stockbridge, MA. Rain cancels.

Neff Trail Hike at Laughing Brook, Hampden

Sunday, August 17, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 Leader: Kevin Kopchynski
 Registration: Call Kevin (413-267-4757)

Join in for an exploration of the longest loop trail at the Laughing Brook sanctuary, covering a total of about 3 miles. We will stroll at a leisurely pace, enjoying all that nature has to offer at this time of summer. Bring a trail snack, water and your camera. Heavy rain will cancel.

Pathway 'Round the Reservoir, Ludlow

Thursday, August 21 from 8:30 a.m.
 Leader: Colette Potter
 Registration: Call Colette (413-786-1805)

Take a stroll along the water's edge with knowing naturalists, whose tendency is to take a leisurely pace, skirting around Ludlow Reservoir's level-yet-scenic route. Bring binoculars, and dress for a summer morning. Bad weather cancels.

Grandparent/Grandchild Paddle on Buckley Dunton Lake, Becket

Saturday, August 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Leader: Tom & Nancy Condon
 Registration: Space is limited. Please call Tom and Nancy to sign up (413-564-0895).
 Meeting Place: Call for directions.

Do you want to introduce your grandkids to the wonder of exploring the outdoors by canoe? This is your chance to take a special outing together on a small and beautiful lake. Buckley Dunton Lake lies mostly within October Mountain State Forest. This 195-acre lake is truly a gem in the Berkshires since there is very little development along its shores. We'll take a leisurely tour of the lake, watching for birds (so bring your binoculars) and beaver. As we move into the shallows at the north end of the lake, we'll listen for bullfrogs and turtles.

Grandkids need not have any experience canoeing, but we request that Grandparents have canoed before – perhaps with us on at least two earlier canoe trips. For \$20, we will provide a canoe, plus lifejackets (for ages 10 and up) and paddles, and a small dry bag for electronics. Each canoe can carry two to three people. Bring along a lunch, some water, and shoes that you don't mind getting wet, plus your sunscreen.

The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning. The weeks that come before are only a climb from balmy spring, and those that follow a drop to the chill of autumn, but the first week of August is motionless, and hot. It is curiously silent, too, with blank white dawns and glaring noons, and sunsets smeared with too much color. Often at night there is lightning, but it quivers all alone. ~ Natalie Babbitt

GOLDENROD: genus *Solidago*

September

Lichens and Mosses at Laughing Brook, Hampden

Saturday, September 13, starting at 10 a.m.

Leader: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Call Sonya (413-267-4757)

Join us for a short walk and introduction to lichens and mosses – the marvelous miniature organisms discussed in the Naturalist's Corner. Each person will be able to use a magnifying glass and field microscope to get a closer look into the world of these tiny but ever so important organisms. Bring along a camera – a cell phone camera will work – and learn how to take close-up pictures that will aid in identification of these and other tiny things.



CLADONIA SP
DRAWN FROM COLLECTION
BECAUSE OF
ONE TO TWO FEET OF
SNOW OUTSIDE!

~ Drawing from Sonya Vickers journal of nature studies

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Asian longhorned beetle

OUR FORESTS UNDER ATTACK – FOREST HEALTH IN MASSACHUSETTS

Wednesday, September 17– 7:00 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Ken Gooch

Hemlock wooly adelgid, emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, beech bark disease – have you heard of any of these disease organisms? These and other invasive insects and diseases have been an ongoing threat to forests for many years, not only here in Massachusetts, but all across the country. Come learn about current forest health issues and what is being done to mitigate their impact.

Ken Gooch is the Forest Health Program director for the Massachusetts DCR. He is a Massachusetts Certified Arborist and has worked for the state for 30 years.

Walk at Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge,*Longmeadow*

Thursday, September 18, from 8:30 a.m. to noon

Leader: Colette Potter

Registration: Call Colette for meeting place (413-786-1805)

Join me for a fall walk. We will be looking for fall flowers, warblers, and whatever we can find in nature. Bring your binoculars and dress for the season. Bad weather cancels.

The earth had donned her mantle of brightest green; and shed her richest perfumes abroad. It was the prime and vigour of the year; all things were glad and flourishing.

~ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

CATTAIL: genus *Typha T. latifolia*

Paddling the Connecticut in Vermont, Putney, Vermont

Saturday, September 20, from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Leader: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call to sign up (413-564-0895)

Meeting Place: Barnes & Noble parking lot at Holyoke Mall.

Come explore the Connecticut River in Vermont. Although our trip will start just downstream of the Bellows Falls Dam, it quickly leaves the developed world behind and takes us back to what it was like in the early days of travel along this Blueway Corridor. We'll paddle some small riffles and quickwater that deter motorboats from venturing into the river north of Massachusetts. The Bellows Falls Canal was man's first attempt to make this section navigable, but it is no longer in existence and boaters once again have to navigate the shallow riffles.

This 16.5-mile trip is for experienced paddlers only. Bring your canoe or kayak, life jacket and other boating gear. You may wish to use binoculars as this is a good reach for birds and other wildlife. Pack a picnic lunch and plenty of water. As always, dress for the weather. At the end of this long day of paddling, plan to join us for a beer and dinner at the rustic Whetstone Brewery overlooking the Connecticut River in Brattleboro.

Alander Mountain, Mt. Washington

Saturday, September 27, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Leader: Bill Fontaine
 Registration: Call Bill (413-533-2153)
 Meeting Place: Former Friendly's parking lot, Great Barrington, Mass., on right side of Route 7 just north of the Route 23 intersection.

Views from the summit of Alander Mountain are well worth the effort it takes to get there. This remote area has been described as one of the most beautiful and ecologically significant regions in the Northeast. The Nature Conservancy has called it one of the nation's "Last Great Places." On this strenuous 5-mile up and back hike, we'll climb through a hemlock ravine and northern hardwood community to the summit of Alander Mt. on the western escarpment of the Taconic Range, to enjoy views overlooking the Harlem Valley and Catskills to the west, Mt. Everett to the north, and Mt. Frissell and Bear Mountain to the east and south. Wear sturdy footwear, and bring along something to eat and drink. Bring poles, too, if you have them. Wet conditions cancel.

Trees and Shrubs, Westfield

Sunday, September 28, from 1 to 3 p.m.
 Leader: Dave Lovejoy
 Registration: Not necessary.
 Meeting Place: Main entrance to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, across from the Stanley Park recreation fields.

Many of the common trees and shrubs of southern New England can be easily seen along the trails in the Sanctuary along the Little River. We will focus on a dozen or so of these woody plants, learning how to recognize them and distinguish them from similar species. Some of the late season wildflowers will also be seen.



SEEKING

a Coordinator for our Dessert Table

We are still looking for someone to help out with the dessert table.

Are you interested in helping with this? If so, please contact Dave Gallup at 413-525-4697.

EVENTS sponsored by other organizations

Laughing Brook Third Saturday Nature Series:

These events occur from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and are led by Kevin Kopchynski. These programs at Laughing Brook require registration with Mass Audubon (800-710-4550) and, in most cases, a registration fee. Laughing Brook is located on Main Street in Hampden. For more information, call Kevin Kopchynski (413-267-4757), or visit the Mass Audubon website at www.massaudubon.org.

Saturday, July 19

Insects of the Field and Forest

Summer's a time when insects are very active. Come visit Laughing Brook to explore both field and forest to see and hear some of the many insects that live here. Watch as a bee pollinates a flower, see how many different types of butterflies you can count, and learn what lives within all that white spittle on field plants.

Saturday, August 16

Forest Sensory Walk

Use your five senses to explore Laughing Brook in a whole new way: see how many items you can find on our "unnature trail," listen to the many different sounds, smell and taste nature's mints, and feel different textures.

Sunday, August 24 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Leader: Pete Vancini, Laughing Brook Caretaker

Laughing Brook Evening Walk

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy the sights and sounds at the end of the day. As the sun goes down, birds can be heard as they prepare for the evening. Robins, bluebirds and swallows are often seen in the parking lot prior to dusk. We will watch the skies for migrating nighthawks, in small window of time during which they migrate south, flying acrobatically as they catch insects on the wing. As the sun sets, we will listen for night insects such as crickets and katydids.

Just a reminder . . . Please be mindful of the environment. If possible, please carpool to your destination and share costs with your driver. Thank you. ~ *Naturalists' Club Board of Directors*



...I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house. So I have spent almost all the daylight hours in the open air. ~ *Nathaniel Hawthorne*

NOTES of THANKS for contributions made through the Phyllis Wheat Smith and Dorothy Anne Wheat Naturalists' Funds

Through the Dorothy Anne Wheat and Phyllis Wheat Smith Naturalists' Funds, our Naturalists' Club was able to make donations to support two national parks. During our April trip to Utah, we presented Zion National Park Foundation with a \$500 check that was gratefully received. Here's an excerpt from their letter of thanks:

The funds raised from your donation will support Zion National Park's Youth Education Initiative, enhancing the Park's educational outreach and Junior Ranger programs. Your donation will help fund opportunities to bring school children into the Park, many of which have never experienced nature or the wilderness.... We genuinely appreciate your efforts on behalf of Zion National Park Foundation, and we hope you will feel a great sense of satisfaction in knowing you were able to support such a worthy cause.

We were also pleased to present a \$500 check to Bryce Natural History Association. They, too, are working to introduce youth to the wonders of nature, and tell us that our donation will be used to conduct outreach programs for local schools. We are very fortunate that our Club can support educational opportunities like these not only for local youth, but also for those living elsewhere, and within reach of some of our nation's most special places – our national parks.



In October, the Naturalists' Club will be 45 years old!

LOOKING FORWARD to upcoming events-

Stump Sprouts Weekend, West Hawley

Reservations and 50% deposit should be sent by July 15. This trip may be cancelled if fewer than 18 people have paid by that date. For current information, please call Dietrich or Julie.

Friday, September 5 through Sunday, September 7, from dinner on Friday evening through a Sunday luncheon.

Leaders: Dietrich and Julie Schlobohm (413-788-4125)

Registration: All-inclusive cost for two nights' lodging and six meals is \$154 per person.

Indicate your roommate preference and make your check payable to: The Naturalists' Club and send to: Dietrich Schlobohm,

52 Poplar Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089.

High on the side of a mountain with a magnificent view, Stump Sprouts ski lodge provides a beautiful setting for walking, hiking, or relaxing in solitude. A ninety-minute drive from Springfield, the property consists of a 450-acre tract surrounded by Dubuque, Savoy, and Mohawk State Forests. Guests need to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries; bathrooms are shared. Our hosts will provide superb family-style garden-fresh meals, complete with homemade breads, and cookies. There is usually a choice of meat/nonmeat fare. Bring along binoculars, good footwear, curiosity, and a sense of adventure. Limit: 20 people.

PEAR: Pyrus communis

This was one of those perfect New England days in late summer where the spirit of autumn takes a first stealing flight, like a spy, through the ripening country-side, and, with feigned sympathy for those who droop with August heat, puts her cool cloak of bracing air about leaf and flower and human shoulders.

~ Sarah Orne Jewett

THE NATURALISTS' CLUB 2014 - 2015

FROM THE TREASURER

Many of you know that September is the month for membership renewal for the year (September to August). Members with a '14-15 (or later) on their newsletter mailing label are paid up for (at least) the current year. Those current through '13-14 may either renew over the summer by mailing a check, (payable to the Naturalists' Club) to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield MA 01086, or wait to pay at the September meeting.

Note: If your address and contact information have not changed, the form below need not be completed. We would, however, like your email address if you haven't sent it previously. Thanks.

Please note: Since Dave Lovejoy maintains the Naturalists' Club mailing list, please direct special requests or changes to him, at dlovejoy@westfield.ma.edu or 413-572-5307.



APPLE: *Pyrus malus*

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- \$15 per year for Individual or Family Membership
- \$25 per year for Supporting Membership
- \$50 per year for Sustaining Membership
- \$300 for Lifetime Membership

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW

Name

Address

Phone Number

Email

Requests for programs/trips

Please send information per the above to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA 01086.



The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969 for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment. It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization.

Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' CLUB. Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature. Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

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