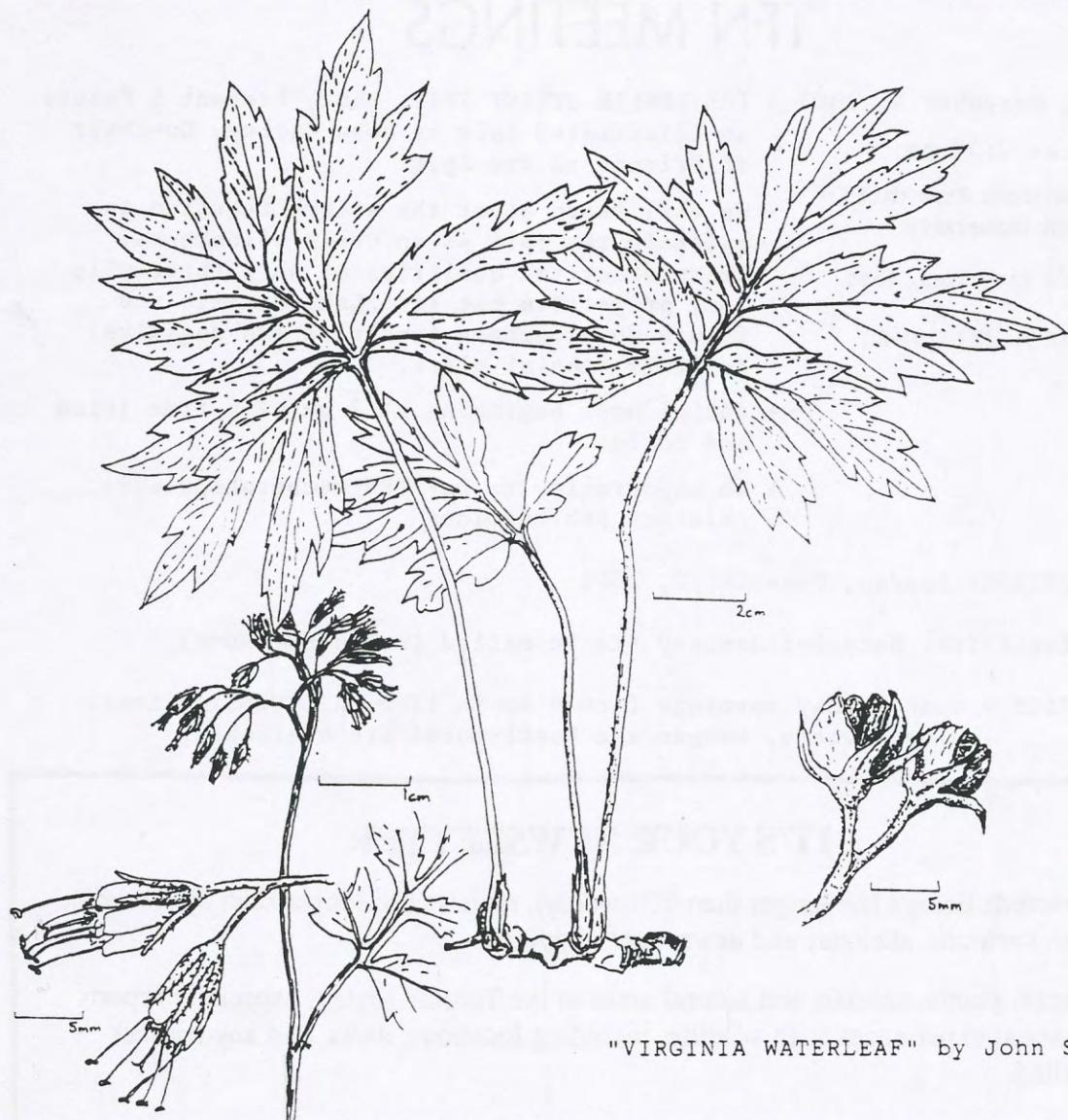


# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 503

November 2001



"VIRGINIA WATERLEAF" by John Sparling

## Inside

- Amphibians & reptiles 7
- Birds 6,7,11-12,13,20
- Coming events 27
- Fishes 18
- Invertebrates 7,18
- Issues 5,6,13,15,16,17,23-24
- Mammals 7,20
- Mushrooms 25
- People 15,20

- Plants 1,4,8-9,12,13,14,18,22,24,26
- Projects 10,13,15
- TFN - meetings 2
- outings 3-4
- newsletter submissions 2
- President's report 5
- publications 28
- Trees 21
- Weather 19,26

## TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, November 4, 2001 - THE LESLIE STREET SPIT: Past, Present & Future  
at 2:30 pm

in the Northrop Frye Hall  
Victoria University

73 Queen's Park Cres. East

VISITORS WELCOME!

- We will learn about the effort required to

maintain the Spit as an urban wilderness.

Learn about the qualities of this three-mile long projection out into Lake Ontario and future developments (positive and negative) for this special place.

+ social hour beginning at 2 pm with free juice and coffee.

+ an opportunity to buy TFN memberships and selected publications

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, December 2, 2001

NEXT NEWSLETTER: December/January (to be mailed in mid-November)



TFN OFFICE - open Friday mornings from 9 am to 12 noon. Publications, pins, decals, badges and hasti-notes are available.

### IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

**Requested:** Essays (no longer than 500 words), reviews (no longer than 300 words), poems, cartoons, sketches and newspaper clippings.

**Subjects:** plants, animals and natural areas in the Toronto region, especially reports of personal experiences with wildlife, including locations, dates, and any sources consulted.

Please include your name, address and telephone number so submissions can be acknowledged. With newspaper clippings, include source and date of each clipping.

Time dated material such as notices of meetings should be submitted at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place.

**Send material to:** Toronto Field Naturalists  
2 Carlton St., #1519  
Toronto, Ont. M5B 1J3

**Editor:** Helen Juhola

**Poetry, Art and Nature Observations:** Diana Banville

**Assistants:** Patricia Brind, Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Toshi Oikawa, Marilynn Murphy, Robin Powell

**Printer:** DM Printing

**Mailer:** Perkins Mailing Services

## TFN OUTINGS

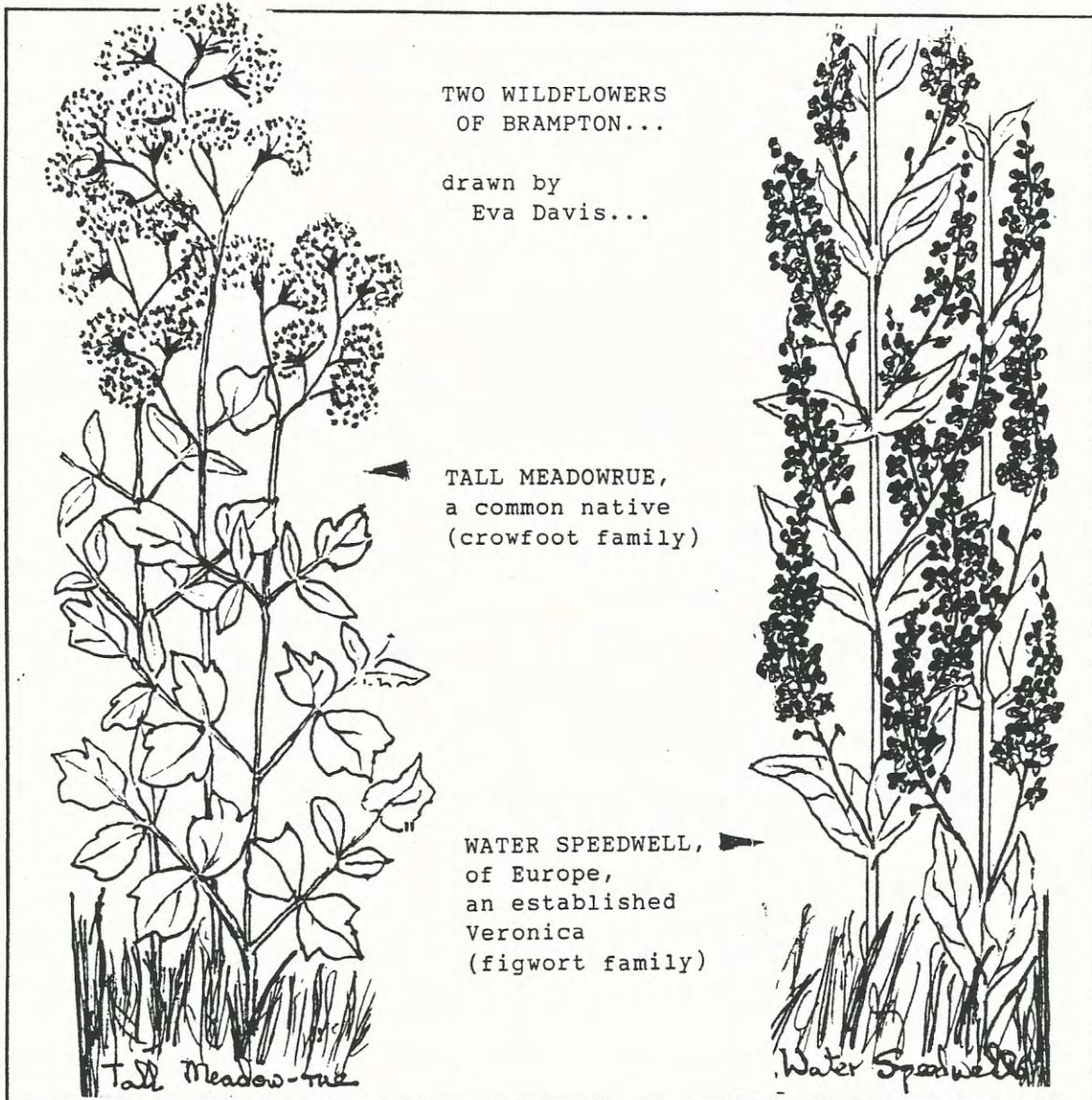
**REMEMBER:** Children and visitors are welcome on all outings but please, NO PETS!  
 To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules by calling 416-393-4636.  
 Check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear on outings  
 which go rain or shine.

- Thursday HIGH PARK - nature walk  
 Nov. 1 Leader: George Bryant  
 10 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West  
 opposite High Park Ave. Bring lunch.
- Saturday GALLERY HOPPING - nature arts  
 Nov. 3 Leader: Mary Cumming  
 11 am Meet at the Cumberland St. exit of the Bay subway station.  
 Bring anything you wish to show the group when we go to lunch.  
 We will be visiting a number of art galleries in the Yorkville area. Lunch  
 will be in a mall.
- Sunday TFN MEETING (See page 2 for details.)  
 Nov. 4  
 2:30 pm
- Wednesday DEER PARK - heritage walk  
 Nov. 7 Leader: Anne Scott  
 10 am Meet at the south entrance/exit of the St. Clair subway station  
 (on north side of Pleasant Blvd. just east of Yonge St.)  
 Morning only.
- Saturday HUMBER BAY PARK - human & natural heritage  
 Nov. 10 Leader: Boris Mather  
 10:30 am Meet at the northwest corner of the Queensway and Windermere Ave.  
 Bring lunch and dress warmly.  
 We will be viewing the old Joy station, the Humber walkers' bridge, the  
 Palace Pier site, the Palace Pier condos, the new lakeshore park and  
 wintering waterfowl.
- Thursday HUMBER BAY PARK - birds  
 Nov. 15 Leader: Doug Paton  
 10 am Meet at the Humber loop of the Queen streetcar. Bring lunch  
 and binoculars and dress warmly.
- Sunday LOWER DON - nature walk  
 Nov. 18 Leader: Roger Powley  
 10:30 am Meet at the Castle Frank subway station. Bring lunch.



## NOVEMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Thursday ROUGE VALLEY - nature walk  
 Nov. 22 Leader: Blair Campbell  
 10 am Meet at the northeast corner of Sheppard Ave. East and Meadowvale Rd. Bring lunch.
- Saturday ROUGE VALLEY - nature walk  
 Nov. 24 Leaders: Carol & Murray Seymour  
 10:30 am Meet at the northeast corner of Sheppard Ave. East and Kingston Rd. Bring lunch.
- Wednesday TORONTO ISLANDS - birds  
 Nov. 28 Leader: George Fairfield  
 11 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. Bring lunch. □  
 \$ FARE



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope many readers have noticed that the May 2001 newsletter was the 500th issue. That's quite an achievement. Fueled by chocolate chip cookies the editorial team, currently Helen Juhola, Patricia Brind, Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Toshi Oikawa, Marilynn Murphy and myself, toils away quietly to produce 8 issues a year. To condense all the assembled material into something interesting and topical involves a surprising amount of work. Even after the copies of the newsletter are shipped to the mailer, work continues. The mailing list needs periodic checking/ editing and the newsletter index needs updating as well. Although some would consider our newsletter production methods (cut and paste) archaic, it's very flexible and robust. An absence by a member of the editorial team or an equipment breakdown has negligible effect on production. Computer technology for the PC, desktop publishing software, flatbed scanners, photo-quality printers, etc., would appear at first to offer many advantages for newsletter production. However, early attempts to use this technology were unsatisfactory. Attempts to include material from our large 35mm colour slide library were unsuccessful. To achieve good quality grayscale images would have almost doubled the cost of production. I hope we can overcome the quality and cost issues.

It's amazing how quiet it's become with Toronto's ambitious waterfront makeover plans now that the 2008 Olympics have gone to China. Although the port lands seemed so well suited to Olympic activities, the TFN expressed concerns about construction and its potential effects on adjacent natural areas, e.g., the Spit, Toronto Islands, and Cherry St. beach. Let's hope that at least one component of the proposed urban renewal, the renaturalization of the mouth of the Don River, is implemented.

Thanks in part to the generosity of past and present members and the miracle of compound interest, we are in a strong position to acquire more land as our 4th nature reserve. A search is currently under way in the Uxbridge Cr. and Layton R. watersheds for suitable property. Two new sites have been identified very recently and are being evaluated. Property taxes for our nature reserves are becoming a significant constraint on the kinds of property we can purchase. Until the provincial government changes the rules, wetlands are the only practical choice as they have the most property tax exemption. Perhaps the tremendous public interest in the Oak Ridges Moraine will convince the province to expand programs to help protect natural areas, such as Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP). The CLTIP is the one which most benefits the TFN.

Robin Powell



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Sept. 2001

Walking on Horse Farm -- unfamiliar bird song -- blackbird perched on top of Manitoba maple -- yellow head! Sounding like a "rusty hinge". I couldn't believe my eyes! He belongs at Delta Marsh, Manitoba. Ron came with me next morning hoping to see it, but no luck.

Joan O'Donnell

Ed. Note: Toronto Region Records show that during the 1990s in three of the ten years, reports were received for yellow-headed blackbirds.

D.B.

Sept. 24, 2001

Many of you - TFN members - know about or have an interest in Thickson's Woods. This is an area beside Thickson's Road, rich in ancient trees. It was purchased in 1984 as a result of a group of naturalists anxious to preserve the Woods. They organized a campaign to appeal to concerned people to make donations to allow the purchase. Thickson's Woods has been a favourite spot for nature lovers, especially birders, and now it is also enjoyed for its surprising variety of butterflies.

North of the Woods is a stretch of meadow which would buffer the Woods, marsh and creek valley, when other natural spaces are being replaced by parking lots. A waterfront trail wends along near Lake Ontario and joins the Woods and the proposed meadow. Corbett Creek is also a part of this and was home to a beaver which had built a dam along the shore of the creek.

The group responsible for the protection of the Woods, and which will be responsible for the meadow if it can be purchased, has been known as the Thickson's Woods Heritage Foundation. It has now become a part of the new Land Trust movement in Ontario, and is now the Thickson's Woods Land Trust.

In order to acquire the meadow, the Land Trust needs to raise a down payment of \$100,000 by February, 2002. After that, just over half a million dollars will be required. This is a huge amount for a small Board to succeed in paying off, even as a five-year mortgage.

If you think this is a worthwhile cause - preserving habitat and the wild-life dependent on it - consider sending a donation now, or perhaps deciding on a yearly gift for the next five years. The Meadow will protect this relatively small area from development and new roads for noisy, smelly trucks.

Anyone inspired to help this important cause should send a donation to Thickson's Woods Land Trust, Box 541, Whitby, Ontario, L1N 5V3.

See also TFN 502, pages 5-6.

Jean Macdonald

## KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

Sept. 12, 2001

It was a sunny day in June on Centre Island. After a long walk I stopped to admire the pools and lovely gardens before heading home. I sauntered down the west side -- trees on the left, flowers on the right, pondering the logistics of making the next ferry. Totally unexpected, a bird swooped down and whacked my head and flew into a tree. We stared at each other, the bird chirping loudly. I looked for evidence of nests but saw none, waited to see whether anyone else would be attacked but, no, two others passed unmolested. So, thinking it was just one of those silly things that happen, I turned away and walked towards the middle of the gardens. Unbelievably, the attack bird struck again -- hit me on the head, flew into another tree and sat there singing. I know nothing of bird behaviour. Is this a fairly common occurrence? Has it happened to anyone else?

Emma McBey

Comment: Red-winged blackbirds are known to attack people wearing red clothing.

Sept. 27, 2001

During the month of September I have been fortunate to see some great sightings. Early in the month we saw the dragonfly migration. In High Park our group saw a flight of wandering gliders (*Pantala flavescens*) over the allotment gardens. All over Toronto green darners (*Anax junius*), black saddlebags (*Tramea lacerata*) and monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) were on the move.

In the Don Valley Brick Works I just missed seeing some young snapping turtles emerging from the ground. The City Parks employee told me how he saw the ground moving and discovered 30 baby turtles and helped them find the nearby pond. I did see them swimming about. I also saw one of the local coyotes in the brickyard. This was a first to see them there although the parks man said he had them on his list. The first cottontail I have seen in a long time was in Mount Pleasant Cemetery near the Moore Park Ravine entrance. The coyotes in the cemetery look skinny and very unhealthy. I really feel sorry for them.

This is also a good time of the year to see birds and the hawk migration is full swing. If you visit Hawk Hill in High Park and the wind is right you can see eagles, vultures, falcons, osprey and buteos flying over.

Now I am looking forward to October when the trees put on their spectacular showing.

Roger Powley

Comment: We understand these coyotes have mange which is prevalent this year and is part of a natural cycle.

□



Friends of the Spit - new members are always welcome.  
Call 416-699-3143, e-mail:[fos@interlog.com](mailto:fos@interlog.com) <http://www.interlog.com/~fos>  
P.O. Box 51518, 2060 Queen St. East, Toronto, Ont. M4E 3V7

## THIS MONTH'S COVER

## WATERLEAFS

I have always been interested in how plants get their names and most times the common name is fairly obvious and may be sensible, but what about the two species of waterleafs that occur in Toronto's valleys and rich woodlands. Certainly the scientific name (*Hydrophyllum*) must have some connection with water, although neither is aquatic in any real sense. The rarer of the two, the Canada waterleaf, does have somewhat brittle petioles and stems which are turgid and snap when bent and may exude water; however, the commoner species, the Virginia waterleaf, does not exhibit this characteristic. Both species quickly wilt after being picked and must therefore have a soil with an abundant supply of water in which to grow.

The leaves of both species are deeper green often appearing to have a bluish tinge and a blotchy appearance. This blotchiness may affect one side of the leaf more than the other, and also, the parts close to the main veins are often deeper green. Some botanists have called these markings "watermarks" although they have nothing to do with high spring water levels.

The Canada waterleaf may carpet the flood plain or flat areas of rich soils in some valleys, the leaves perhaps giving the impression of gently flowing water as the leaves move in the wind in spring. Probably the consensus among botanists is towards this view; however, one plant book bluntly states that the name is "without significance" being a simple translation from the common name. This seems to beg the question, so perhaps we can make our own choice, but we should look carefully when next we encounter Canada waterleaf in our woods during spring and summer, when the wind is blowing gently.

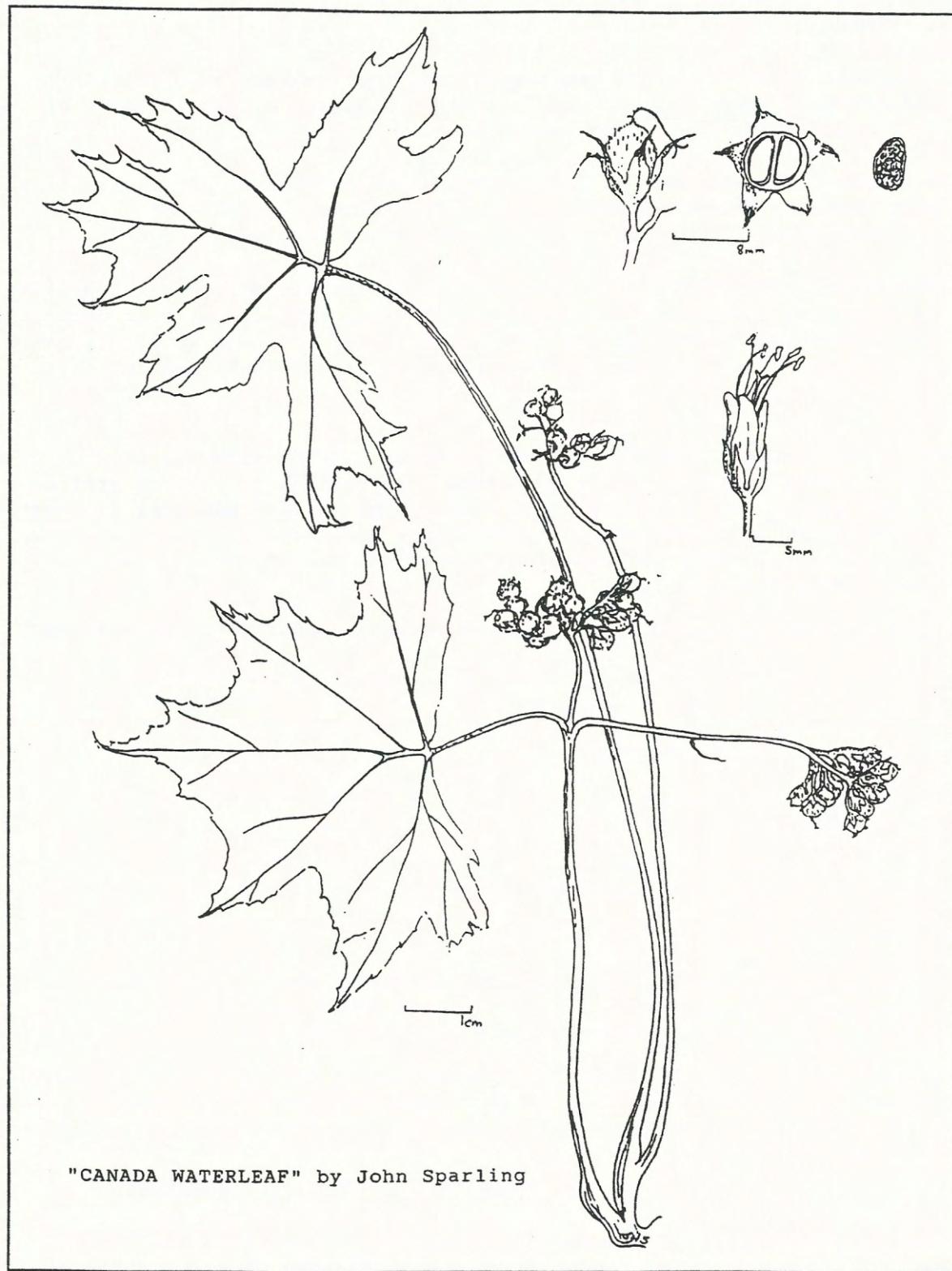
*Hydrophyllums* are found mainly in North America, with four species in the east and four in the west. They belong to the waterleaf family, a relatively small family of plants, having close relationships with phloxes and Jacobs-ladder and also with the borage family. The two species found in Toronto are easily told apart since the Canada waterleaf is glabrous or nearly so and has large palmately-lobed leaves on long pedicels over-topping the flowers, while the Virginia waterleaf is much smaller, is comparatively hairy with shorter stemmed pinnately-lobed leaves. The whitish to pink-purple flowers hang in clusters with the stamens extruding far beyond the petals. The fruits open, dehiscing along the middle to free two large seeds. Both are welcome members of our spring and summer flora.

John Sparling ▶

There is one thing about painting -- you can be a student to the end of your days. You can never learn all you want to know. There is always a problem to be solved and there is intense pleasure in trying to solve it.

from an undated notebook of Owen Staples

WATERLEAFS (cont'd)



"CANADA WATERLEAF" by John Sparling

## PROJECTS

### HELP WANTED

- TFN MONTHLY MEETINGS - Have you suggestions for speakers? Do you want to help contact speakers? Please call Karin Fawthrop at 416-282-6044 or leave a message at the TFN office (416-593-2656).
- TFN OUTINGS - Do you want to lead or help lead a TFN outing? Please leave your name and telephone number at the TFN office (416-593-2656) or call on a Friday morning and talk to a volunteer about helping.
- PUBLICITY FOR TFN EVENTS - Can you help us distribute posters and applications to libraries, community centres, etc? Can you help us get free notices in local newspapers etc? Do you have other ideas? We need people to carry our display units to events. They are very light. Even two can be carried at once.

What's your natural history project? Are you helping with the birding atlas? Are you sending reports of your nature observations to the TFN office? Do you give money to nature organizations and to environmental causes? Do you share your enthusiasm about nature with others? Do you write letters or call your politicians about environmental issues? Watch under "Projects" for ideas.

Would you like to become more involved in the Toronto Field Naturalists?

Your board is looking for volunteers from among the membership of the Toronto Field Naturalists who would like to become involved in committees related to the functions of our organization and your own particular areas of interest.

We propose the following four committees that seem to be strong areas of interest to TFN members:

- (a) Promotion and membership
- (b) Advocacy, e.g., Oak Ridges Moraine & other environmental issues
- (c) Nature walks and talks
- (d) Nature reserves

► If you are interested, please forward your name, phone number or email address and preferred committee to: Toronto Field Naturalists at 1519-2 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1J3, 416-593-2656.

► You can also sign up for a specific committee at any of the Fall 2001 TFN meetings (upcoming meetings will be held at 2:00pm on November 4 and December 2 at Northrop Frye Hall, Victoria University, 73 Queen's Park Crescent East).

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS

The F.O.N. again needs volunteers to stuff envelopes with membership renewal notices. This is done the second Wednesday of every month at the Head Office on Lesmill Road near Leslie and Sheppard. Time from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Parking available, or accessible by the Leslie Bus. Call Gloria Greer at 416-444-8419

## LEADING OUTINGS

Many (I expect most) birders and other naturalists, once they have acquired skill and knowledge in their field of interest, are anxious to pass on their know-how to others. One of the best ways to do this is by leading club outings. There is always a great demand for leaders as most naturalists' clubs have a regular schedule of walks throughout the year. In fact the outings, along with the regular monthly meetings, make up the great bulk of the program of most naturalists' clubs.

The writer has been a frequent volunteer as an outing leader. I have led outings for the Ontario Field Biologists (no longer with us), Toronto Ornithological Club, Toronto Field Naturalists, Hamilton Naturalists, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, George Brown College, and Elderhostel. I even led a few outings for the Scarborough Cross-country Ski Club; you have to do something when there's no snow.

The club for which I led the most outings was the Toronto Field Naturalists. That is not surprising because the TFN provides more outings than any other club in Ontario, if not Canada. In the most recent issue of the TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST are listed 21 outings for May 2001 alone. These outings cover a wide variety of subjects including geology, nature arts and our local history. Most are termed "Nature Walks" because they include any and all aspects of natural history. On one outing geologist Kathleen Kemp gave us a fascinating lesson on life in the ancient seas by taking us to several downtown buildings and pointing out the fossils in their limestone facings. (e.g. corals in basement of Eaton's College Street store!)

I led my first outing for the TFN on May 24, 1958. Our walk was on Toronto Island and our best birds were black-bellied plovers and a yellow-bellied flycatcher. I soon fell into the schedule of leading the Victoria Day and Thanksgiving Day outings to the Island and this continued for about 30 years.

The purpose of the outings was not to chase rarities. It was more important to try to see to it that as many people as possible saw the birds we did find. I considered it a successful outing if we had good looks at 40-60 species. A flock of whimbrel on Victoria Day or a saw-whet owl on the Thanksgiving outing would be considered a bonus.

There were good turnouts for these outings; on days with fine weather we would have up to 70 participants. When there were too many people I would split the group and send half of them off with another leader. Some that I recall were Jake Smythe, Denis Duckworth, Roy Baker, Rosemary Gaymer, Jack Gingrich and Walter Hutton.

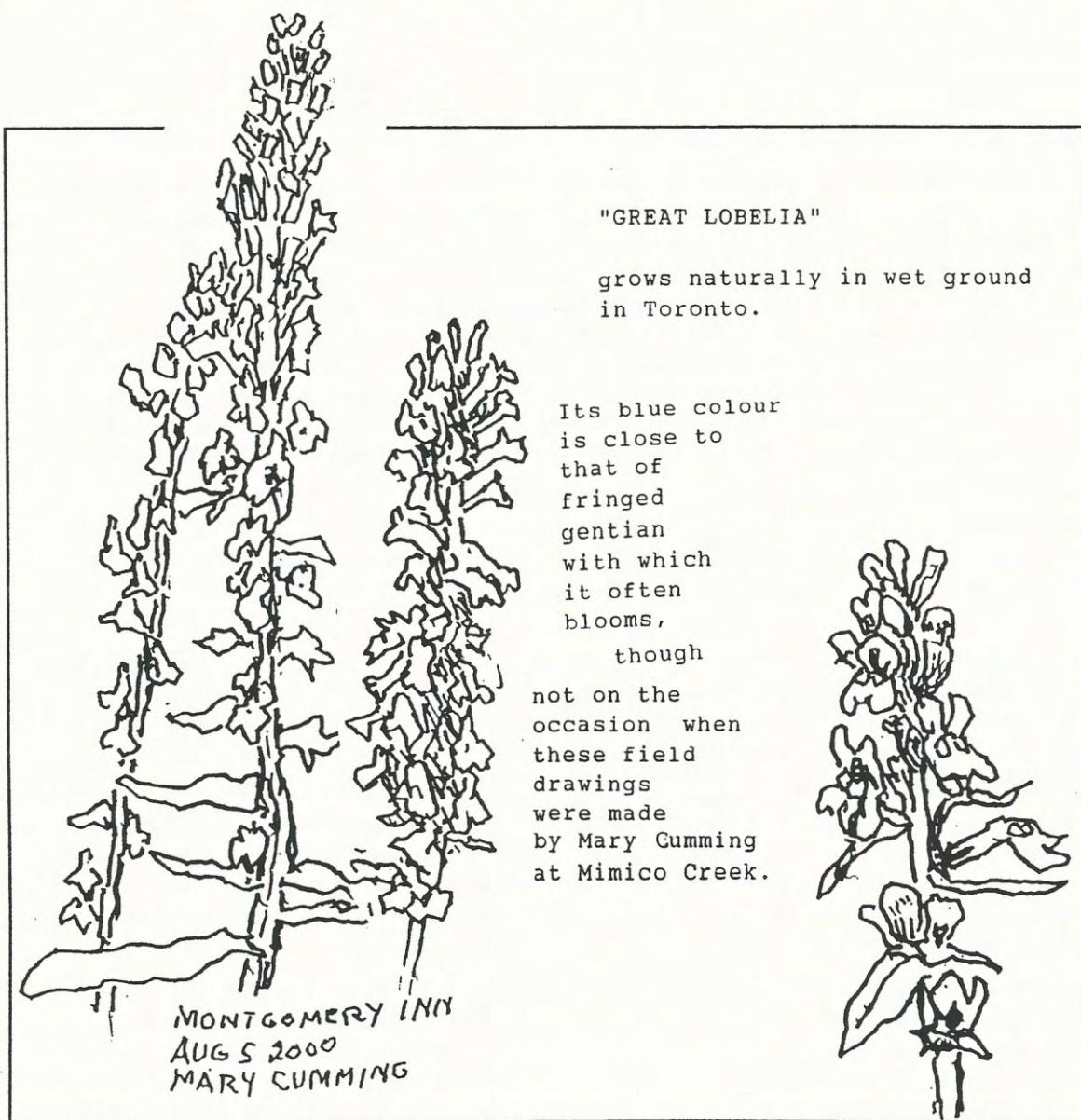
I have many fond memories of these outings, not the least being the many good friends I met along the way. As we brought the group together to describe the upcoming outing I would look out and be sure to see many familiar faces. Even today, so many years later, people come up and remind me of a special outing -- the time we saw some unusual species or the stormy day when we all got soaked but finished up the walk anyway. ▷

LEADING OUTINGS (contd')

Leading outings is a great way to meet people who share your interests and it gives you a feeling that you are doing something useful with the knowledge you have acquired during many hours in the field. And it is a two-way street because there are always people along who know things that you do not know. My knowledge of botany improved on almost every outing. I just wished I could remember the plant names from one outing to the next!

from A Birder's Diary, 1940-2000 AD by George Fairfield in TOC NEWSLETTER, Sept. 2001

□



## IN THE NEWS

### SECOND CENTURY OF THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

In the latter half of the 1800s unregulated hunting, sport shooting and, in particular the demand for decorative feathers to adorn women's clothing, caused the loss of hundreds of thousands of birds each year. "Harpers Bazaar" regularly mentioned them in its fashion column. In the fall of 1884, the stylish woman was advised to wear "dresses bordered with smooth soft feathers and birds' heads"; in the summer of 1899, "whole birds on walking hats" were the rage. Had the practice of unlimited hunting and feather gathering not stopped, many more species would be extinct today.

By the late 1800s, hunters began to notice a decline in game bird populations, and not wishing to run out of quarry, began supporting the concept of regulated hunting. However, they took no interest in the songbird numbers that were also decreasing. Fortunately, naturalists and scientists intervened.

In response to the rampant and often inhumane slaughter of birds to support the feather trade, concerned people began to establish conservation organizations with the main purpose of protecting all bird populations for future generations to enjoy. The American Audubon Society was founded during this time. This group encouraged people to stop wearing bird feathers. The efforts of all these citizens were successful, culminating in the implementation of various laws in the early 1900s.

from an article by J. Cam Finlay in THE VICTORIA NATURALIST, Vol.57.3 (2000)

### PROJECT FEEDER WATCH STARTS END OF NOVEMBER

This is a great way to learn about the birds that visit your feeder. The information you gather is invaluable in helping track bird populations from year to year. FeederWatch participants record the maximum number of each species seen at their bird feeder on count days (once every two weeks). The amount of time spent watching your feeder on your count days is up to you. Participants can enter and retrieve data and information via the Internet at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org>

The current registration fee for participants is \$25.00.

► Contact: Becky Whittam, Bird Studies Canada, 1-888-448-BIRD or (519) 586-3531, [bwhittam@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:bwhittam@bsc-eoc.org), <http://www.bsc-eoc.org>

from an article in THE PENINSULA NATURALIST, October, 2000. ▶

---

The most important winter food of yellow-rumped warblers on Cape Cod and along much of the northern Atlantic coast is bayberries (or wax myrtles), hence the former name myrtle warbler for the eastern subspecies of the yellow-rumped warbler.

► from "On Dune and Headland" by James Pringle in WILDFLOWER 17(3), Summer 2001  
[WILDFLOWER, Box 335, Postal Station F, Toronto M4Y 2L7 -- \$35/yr. for 4 issues]

#### HEALTH DEPARTMENT WANTS TO MUZZLE LEAF BLOWERS

Those noisy leaf blowers could become a thing of the past for Toronto homeowners, if the health board wins a battle to ban the devices on residential properties across the megacity.

Leaf blowers using small, two-stroke engines emit high levels of air pollutants in their exhaust: hydrocarbons from burned and unburned fuel, carbon monoxide, fine dusts and toxic contaminants such as benzene, acetaldehyde and formaldehyde. Leaf blowers can be more polluting than cars.

Leaf blowers have a unique tonality which can be very annoying - they emit both high intensity and high frequency sound. A proposed ban on the machines would affect residential properties and hospital quiet zones. Leaf blowers would be restricted on non-residential properties between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. and at all times on Saturday and Sunday.

from an article by David Nickle, City Hall Bureau, in BLOOR WEST VILLAGER, Sept. 7, 2001

#### TESTS SHOW SEWER WATER AS SALTY AS THE OCEAN

A storm sewer in Toronto near Highway 401 and Pearson International Airport has a dubious distinction: Winter 2001, municipal workers tested its water and found that it was as salty as the ocean. The high salt reading had only one source -- the busy highways that criss-cross this area of the city. After every winter snowstorm, fleets of dump trucks spread layers of salt to keep the roadways clear of ice, and the salt-laden melt water runs off into local rivers.

Environment Canada issued a report in August 2000 outlining the damage caused by the approximately five million tonnes of road salt used in the country annually. Toronto uses an average 130,000 tonnes.

The federal department considers the damage so severe that it is mulling over whether to place road salt on its priority list of the most serious pollutants, a ranking that would put it in the same classification as PCBs, dioxins, and benzene. Besides rusting out the steel bodies of cars and undermining roadway concrete structures, salt is poisonous to many species of freshwater fish and other aquatic life. The high Toronto reading, a level of contamination described as deadly to aquatic life, was in a sewer draining into Mimico Creek. The salt level reached 35,000 parts per million at the site, about the same level as seawater.

from an article by Martin Mittelstaedt, in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, March 28, 2001

#### SALT TOLERANT PLANT SUGGESTION

Natural occurrences of northern bayberries remote from the Atlantic coast are few and scattered, but bayberries do well in cultivation inland. ... They can be planted near highways as informal hedges that will tolerate the residue of deicing salt and shelter other plant life from its spray.

from "On Dune and Headland -- northern bayberry, Myrica pensylvanica" by James Pringle in WILDFLOWER, 17(3), Summer 2001

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

## Salting the snow

Total volume of waste snow and quantity of salt used in certain Canadian cities during winter, 1997-98.

	Total snow volume in cubic metres*	Quantity of salt in tonnes
Vancouver	Less than 100,000	2,254
Calgary	320,000	20,428
Regina	150,000	2,067
Winnipeg	175,000	24,525**
Toronto (before amalgamation)	1,500,000	17,884†
Ottawa-Carleton	1,220,000	68,000
Montreal	11,258,000	60,000***
Quebec City	3,000,000	35,000
Moncton	159,000	12,695
Halifax	n/a	41,679
Charlottetown	n/a	2,300
St. John's	n/a	21,530

\* These quantities are approximate and vary with snowfall amount.

\*\*Plus 100,000 tonnes of sand-salt mix containing 5% Sodium Chloride.

\*\*\*Plus 39,000 tonnes of a sand-gravel mix during freezing rain.

†Current figure after amalgamation, including outer boroughs, 130,000 tonnes of salt.

Source: Environment Canada

The Globe and Mail

### ISLAND HISTORIAN OPENS HIS DOORS

Every Sunday for the past 15 years, island archivist Albert Fulton and wife Emily open their doors between 1 and 5 p.m. at 5 Ojibway Ave., just a stone's throw from Algonquin Bridge. Fulton took over the duties of former archivist Peter Holt in 1986.

He also started a small quarterly newsletter in 1991 called News from the Archives that offers profiles and tidbits about the area and its residents.

Fulton has amassed stacks of catalogued photo albums, magazine and newspaper clippings, now-defunct island publications, videos, audio tapes, original island art, and directories and lists of residents that can be viewed free of charge. He also provides a research space with photocopier, and offers negatives of many of his photos.

from an article by Zack Medicoff in METRO TODAY, September 11, 2001



Old-laquer colours,  
black against autumn's gilding.  
Crows fleeing winter.

haiku by Arthur F. Wade

## PICKERING CHARGED UP OVER WINDMILL POWER

Toronto has the CN Tower, but Pickering can now boast the tallest free-standing wind generator on the continent. The giant wind turbine should provide enough power for about 600 homes under average wind conditions, and will likely attract tourists and gawkers from far and wide to the municipality.

Ontario Power Generation says the Vestas wind turbine, 117 metres tall with three 39-metre blades, is part of its \$50 million commitment to be producing 500 megawatts per year of non-polluting power within five years. The new windmill is designed to produce 1.8 megawatts of power at full capacity. Manufactured in Denmark, the windmill was shipped in sections to Oshawa Harbour and then trucked to the Pickering site. The turbine's blades are expected to spin at their maximum of 15.7 times per minute.

Ontario's plan to have 500 megawatts of power per year coming from green sources within five years would supply the equivalent power of one of the eight nuclear generators in Pickering. The new wind generator is located right next to the Pickering nuclear station on the shores of Lake Ontario just east of Liverpool Rd. The next largest wind turbines in North America, rated at 1.65 megawatts, are located in Big Spring, Texas, and Madison County, N.Y. Because of variations in wind speed, Ontario Power Generation expects the Pickering windmill will only operate at full capacity 10 per cent of the time.

from an article by Stan Josey in THE TORONTO STAR, August 22, 2001

## MORaine SUPPORTERS PLEASED BY REPORT

Environmental groups cheered recommendations made to the province Sept. 26 that could provide lasting protection for the Oak Ridges Moraine. The groups said their proposals would protect 92 per cent of the moraine from new development. The advisory panel's final report increases areas protected for wildlife to 24 per cent of the moraine, up from 16 per cent. Protected "natural core areas" would cover 36 per cent of the land and those areas must be linked by undeveloped wildlife corridors at least two kilometres wide. No gravel or sand extraction would be allowed in the core areas, which is a stronger position than that taken in a preliminary report issued in July. Another important gain is a ban on new permits for using ground water until scientific studies are done. The environmentalists who sat on the 13-member panel released the recommendations in advance of the official publication. The panel also included developers and provincial officials, who did not comment. A Nov. 17 deadline was set to finalize a comprehensive plan to protect the moraine. To meet the deadline, the province must complete legislation within two weeks. After it is tabled, there will be a debate in the legislature and then the public will have 30 days to comment.

from an article by Wallace Immen in the GLOBE & MAIL, Sept. 27, 2001



## IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

## ONTARIO IS FIFTH MOST POLLUTED AREA

The environmental watchdog under the North American free-trade agreement, released its annual assessment of the continent's industrial pollution. Called Taking Stock, it found that Ohio, Texas, Michigan, Indiana and Ontario, in that order, were the five worst-polluted jurisdictions on the continent.

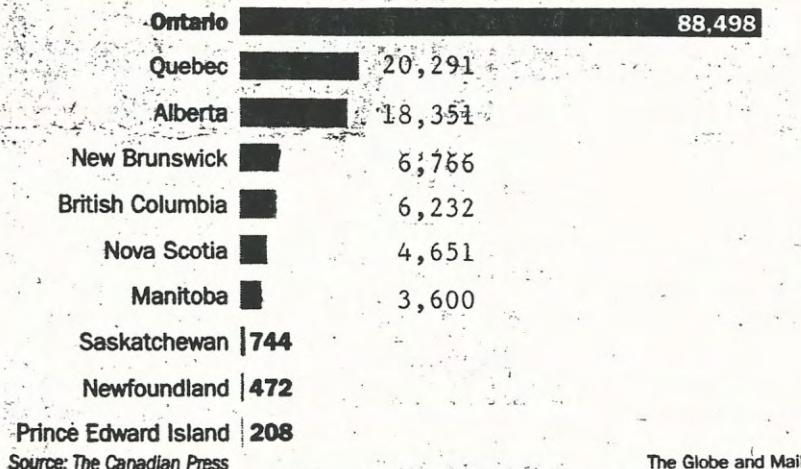
from an article by  
Martin Mittelstaedt  
in the GLOBE & MAIL,  
July 21, 2001

**Pollution leaders**

The 10 top polluters in Canada in 1998 in terms of on-site releases of chemicals tracked by the Commission for Environmental Co-operation:

Rank	Company	Location
1	Ontario Power Generation Nanticoke Generating Station	Nanticoke, Ont.
2	Inco Ltd., Copper Cliff Smelter Complex	Copper Cliff, Ont.
3	Celanese Canada, Edmonton Facility	Edmonton, Alta.
4	Browning Ferris Industries, BFI Calgary Landfill District No. 2	Calgary, Alta.
5	Ispat Sidbec Inc. Aclerie	Contrecoeur, Que.
6	Nova Scotia Power, Lingan Generating Station	New Waterford, N.S.
7	Ontario Power Generation, Lambton Generation Station	Courtright, Ont.
8	TransAlta Utilities Corp, Sundance Thermal Generating Plant	Duffield, Alta.
9	Bayer Inc., Sarnia Site	Sarnia, Ont.
10	General Motors of Canada, Oshawa Car Assembly Plant	Oshawa, Ont.

How the provinces rank in terms of direct releases of chemicals into the environment in 1998 as tracked by the Commission for Environmental Co-operation: (measured in tonnes)



Wheeling and dealing  
with air currents, scores of hawks  
dream of warmer climes.

Haiku by Therese Paradis

#### RADIO WAVES COULD ZAP ZEBRA MUSSELS

Zapping zebra mussels with radio waves might control the pesky invader that clogs water intake pipes and threatens native mussels and fish in the Great Lakes region. Exposing fish tanks containing zebra mussels to low-energy radio waves emitted by a generator killed the mussels within 40 days, apparently by causing the mussels to surrender needed calcium. The radio waves did significantly less harm to other exposed organisms such as crabs, crayfish and other freshwater mussels -- and had no effect on fish, according to the research presented at a meeting of the American Chemical Society.

from an article in METRO TODAY, August 29, 2001

#### CATNIP MAKES GOOD INSECT REPELLENT

Catnip, which mysteriously creates euphoria in cats, is an effective insect repellent. Entomologists have sought a patent for the use of the catnip oil nepetalactone as a repellent for bothersome insects. Nepetalactone, which gives catnip its odor, was found to be 10 times more effective than the popular insect repellent diethylmeta-toluamide (DEET). During experiments, scientists found a greater percentage of mosquitoes were repelled by the catnip extract than by DEET.

from an article in METRO TODAY, August 29, 2001

#### SWARMS OF LADYBUGS ARE ON THE HUNT FOR APHIDS

Toronto is facing a late summer tourist invasion from swarms of ladybugs drawn by sunny weather and a supply of their favourite food, green aphids. The Asian lady beetles, as they're formally known, are thriving. The bugs were first brought to the United States in the 1970s to control aphids -- they can eat 60-80 aphids a day. They gradually migrated north until they arrived in Canada in the early 1990s. Now they are the most common species of ladybug we have.

People throughout southern Ontario have spotted swarms of the bugs and wondered about the drifts of dead ladybugs along lake shores. Ladybugs won't bite but if they are irritated then they might take a nibble. A plant and insect specialist with the city of Toronto says the easiest way to deal with the bugs in your house is to use a vacuum cleaner to suck them up. He doesn't recommend using chemicals to kill them.

from an article in THE TORONTO STAR, September 1, 2001

Like small birds, our individual lives are vulnerable and evanescent, and preservation -- cultural or ecological -- still comes down to kindness between neighbours.

from "River in a dry land: a prairie passage" by Trevor Herriot,  
Stoddart, 2000

## IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

## IT'S A DROUGHT -- DRIEST SUMMER IN 50 YEARS...

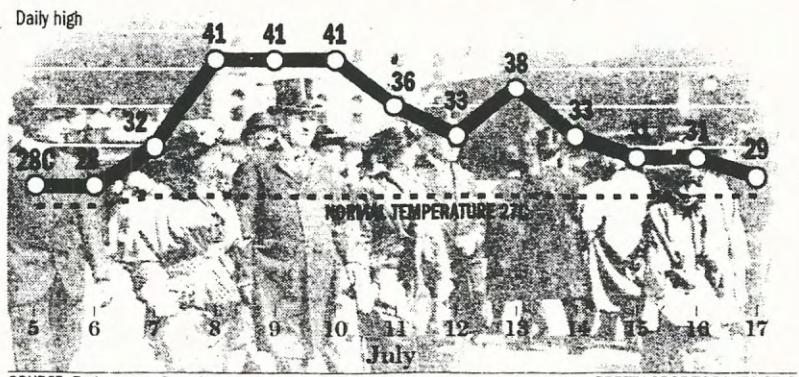
Southern Ontario's summer of 2001 is going down in the record books as the driest in more than half a century. This past summer, the entire Great Lakes region received less than three-quarters of its normal rainfall. During this summer we had 23 days when temperatures topped 30°C, about double the normal of above 30°C days in the "normal" southern Ontario summer. Even worse were the nights -- 14 when the temperature didn't fall below 20°C, when the normal would be 5°C. The heat resulted in a record number of smog alerts and prompted Toronto to call its first heat emergency, triggering a series of special measures -- opening air-conditioned spaces to the homeless, distributing bottled water and operating a heat emergency phone line.

from an article by Nicolaas Van Rijn in the TORONTO STAR, Sept. 9, 2001

## FROM THE PAST

IT WAS LIKE WE WERE LIVING IN A FURNACE

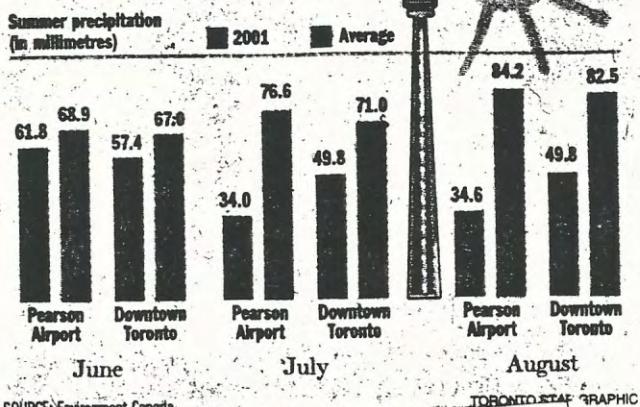
## Toronto's heatwave of '36



from the TORONTO STAR, Aug. 9, 2001

## Long, hot summer

Toronto's summer of 2001 was the driest in more than half a century.



---

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

OWL ANTICS

Two young owls have been terrorizing residents around Fredericton, N.B. yanking ponytails, threatening pets, dive-bombing joggers and stealing hats. The winged pair has taken over Odell Park where officials warned city dwellers not to walk after dusk. Many have ignored the warnings in order to get a look at the avian delinquents. A swooping victim said, "The full weight of the owl came down on my head. I had no time to react at all." Park officials in the city theorized that the two owls could be trying out their hunting techniques. One park forester said, "Their behaviour is a little odd right now. We think they will grow out of it."

from an article by Steve Newman, in THE TORONTO STAR, September 1, 2001

RACCOONS IN THE CEILINGS

Some august institutions have bats in their belfries. At City Hall, it's raccoons in the ceilings. City workers have had to extract masked critters from the ductwork in the office of Councillor Olivia Chow. Councillor Joanne Flint went through a similar reign of terror more than a year back.

This time, it was a rain of terror (if you get our meaning) for Chow's staff as two frightened, motherless raccoon babies were collared earlier this week. Cleaning staff were dispatched to quickly remove the offending traces of the unwelcome visitors.

from an article in THE TORONTO STAR, September 1, 2001

NATURALIST, BIRD-LOVER J. MURRAY SPIERS

Prof. Speirs, a retired zoology professor, died in his sleep on Monday, September 3. He was 92. His main interest was birds but he was an all-round biologist and he was recently recognized with an Order of Canada.

Prof. Speirs was one of the founders of the Ontario Federation of Naturalists, the Pickering Naturalists and many other societies. He wrote hundreds of articles and authored several books including Birds of Ontario, A Naturalist's Guide to Ontario, and The Illustrated Natural History of Ontario. In a ceremony at his Pickering home, he was appointed to the Order of Canada on April 27, 2000, for his contributions as a conservationist. He researched the effects of the insecticide DDT on Ontario forests and worked on the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. He taught in the department of Zoology at U of T and built up the department's research library. He recently donated a portion of his land to the Altona Forest Conservation Area.

from an Obituary by Natalie Alcoba, in THE TORONTO STAR, September 7, 2001



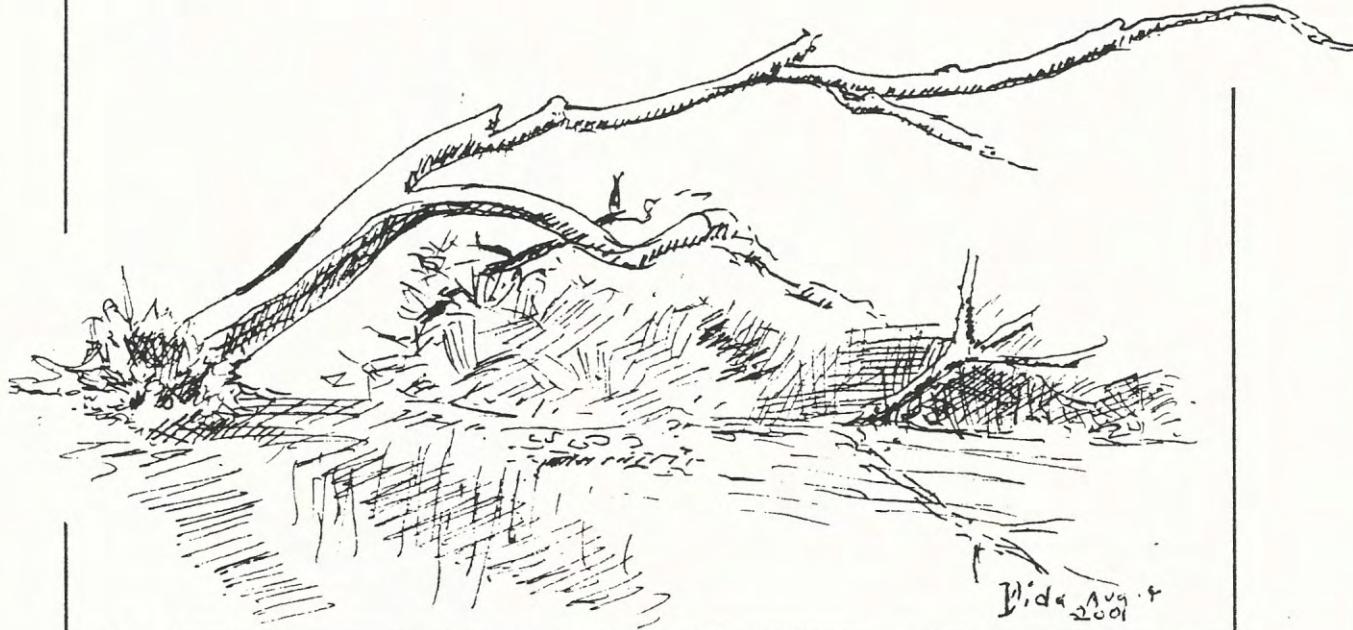
## THE TREES OF MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY

It always surprises me that some of the most beautiful specimens of trees are rarely used by landscapers and gardeners. One example of this is the sub-alpine fir, *Abies lasiocarpa*. It has a better shape than most evergreen trees, thick foliage, beautiful cones, and is a silvery blue colour. The answer may be availability. The tree in Mount Pleasant seems to be very healthy so hardiness does not seem to be a factor. It grows in the western mountains from Alaska all the way to New Mexico. Because of the blueish foliage, it is easy to pass it by thinking it is a blue spruce. A closer inspection reveals it to be a fir.

Fir trees have cones that sit up on the branches and usually remain on the tree as spikes after the seeds have fallen. Spruce trees have hanging cones. This tree is found in Section 7. It is labelled "Rocky Mountain Fir". Common names are not very stable, so it is best to remember "Lasiocarpa". "Lasio" comes from Greek and means shaggy or woolly, and "carpa" means fruit. In "Native Trees of Canada", R.C. Hosie calls this tree the "alpine fir". This does not make sense as alpine refers to plants growing above the tree line in mountains. Peterson calls it the sub-alpine fir, a better name.

Roger Powley

Driftwood on the lower Humber



A TORONTO GRASS

Green Foxtail

a Eurasian grass,  
established in Toronto.



spikelet  
(enlarged)

This specimen,  
approximately 70 cm high,  
was found on Niagara Street  
on August 17, 1993,  
and drawn by  
Joanne Doucette.



## THE SOUTHERN ONTARIO GRID

The southern Ontario landscape was planned from afar in the late eighteenth century. In fact, a Scottish surveyor laid out the pattern of development and settlement without setting foot on the continent.

The region was divided into a series of counties, townships and lots, each based on a gridiron pattern. Sideroads and concession roads provided the basic form. Rectangular and square lots of 100 and 200 acres fronting on these roads completed the development pattern. Today's rural landscape was so influenced by that gridiron pattern that it remains the predominant influence. Farmsteads were and are almost always at right angles to the roads; farmhouses face the road; laneways meet the roads at right angles; the arrangement of farm buildings is almost always rectilinear and coincident with the grid; even gardens and orchards reflect the gridiron pattern.

The gridiron pattern was a relatively easy way to organize and plan the landscape. The result is an organized and easy to understand pattern that lets one find his/her way back by simply making three right turns. However, the grid made no allowances for topography, wetlands, forests, or other natural features. When severe obstacles were encountered, roads either simply stopped (although road allowances continued), or were routed around the feature to re-join the grid on the other side.

The exception to this pre-planned, gridiron pattern was Waterloo Township, where development was the result of a land purchase from the native people by Pennsylvania Dutch settlers from the United States. They brought their land settlement patterns which resulted in a very different form of development. Topography and other natural features were respected and roads joined farmsteads and villages, following paths of least resistance. Unlike the case with the gridiron landscape, if one is not familiar with the landmarks it is easy to become disoriented. This can give the impression that one cannot get there from here in the former Waterloo Township.

Early in the settlement of southern Ontario, trees were cut to provide cropland and by the middle of the nineteenth century, few of the forests encountered by the early settlers remained. As wheat farming gave way to mixed farming towards the latter part of the century, trees were planted to line roads and laneways, provide windbreaks and shelter for farmsteads, and create orchards. The planting of these trees simply reinforced, in the third dimension, the gridiron, rectilinear pattern of roads, lots, farmstead buildings and fields.

One of the legacies of the gridiron pattern and the tree planting of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that reinforced it are the tree-lined roads and laneways of southern Ontario. Unfortunately, many of these have succumbed to old age, disease, rural electrification lines and improved roads. Interestingly enough, roadside plantings were probably not done for aesthetic reasons, but mainly for a practical purpose that no longer pertains. Winter travel required snow on the road for the runners of sleighs and sleds. Because the landscape had



become bereft of trees, roads were windswept and snow cover was difficult to maintain. As well, sun and winter thaws would melt snow on the roads, creating a muddy, impassable track. Roadside tree planting was initiated to trap snow on the roads and delay thaws, keeping them somewhat shaded from the sun.

The sugar maple was the preferred choice, being readily available in farm woodlots, relatively easy to transplant, long-lived and hardy, providing good shade, and of economic benefit for maple syrup production.

The legacy of southern Ontario's eighteenth century pre-planned gridiron remains and continues to influence our rural development patterns in many ways.

from an article by Owen R. Scott in ACORN, Summer 2001.

This article is based on a presentation at the ACO Conference, Kitchener, April 2001. □

"HIMALAYAN BALSAM"

The pale green seed-pods, when ripe, burst at a touch to reveal "springs" which eject the black seeds - hence the official name of "touch-me-not".

Eva Davis



... I [feel] so strongly there are two types of history, nature's and man's, and that the one is a creature of cycles while the other, with mixed results, aims always at straightness -- progress, development, control.

from RIVER TOWN: TWO YEARS ON THE YANGTSE by Peter Hessler, Harper Collins Publishers, 2001

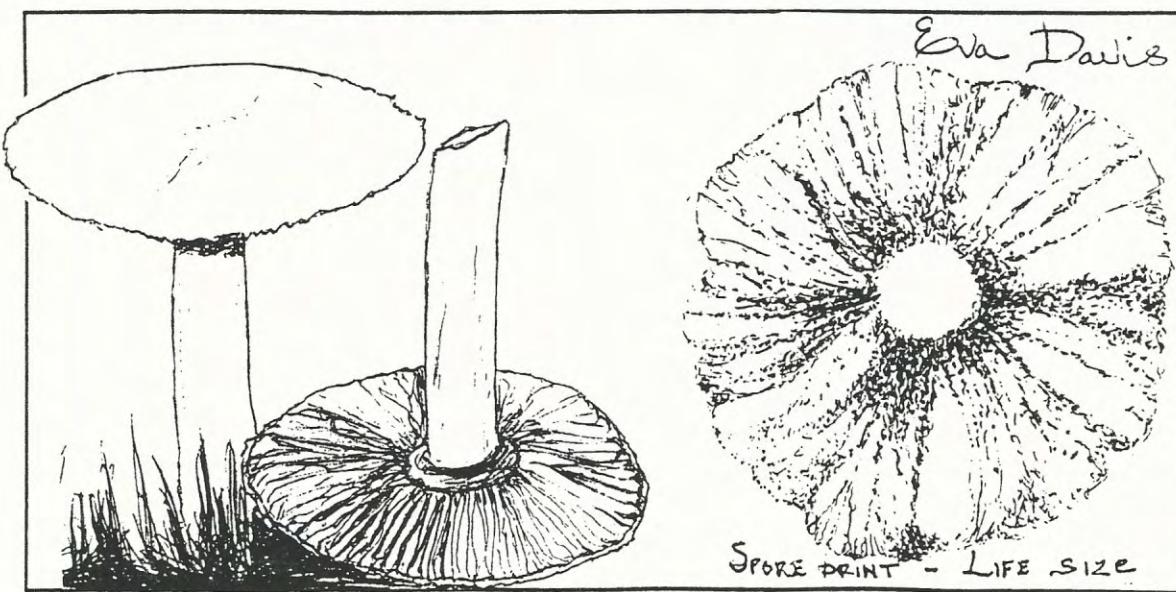
## SPORE PRINTS

One of the most satisfying aspects of fungus hunting is not simply finding a mushroom but checking the colour of its spore print when in doubt as to which mushroom (my usual condition). Spore prints come in many colours: white; cream; bright yellow-brown to rusty-brown to cinnamon-brown to clay-brown; purple-brown to chocolate-brown; smoky-gray to black; pale pink to salmon pink -- there is even a solitary pale green spore print belonging to *Chlorophyllum molybdites*, a Lepiota-like fungus, found in fairy rings, which is poisonous (Orson Miller). On Labour Day (Sept. 3, 2001) I came across a group of "ordinary" looking fungi in grass, in Churchville Park in Brampton. Flat, whitish, suede-like caps, 3"-4" across; free, thin, crowded, off-white gills; thick white stalk; possessing a beautiful "mushroomy" smell; fruiting near conifers. I had no idea what these unhelpfully unspectacular looking creatures might be. The spore print, however, surprised me by turning out to be a dusky pink, and out of the many pink-spored families, Barron's *Pluteus tomentosulus* fitted perfectly.\*

Beginners particularly will find this trick a great help. Remove the stem and place the cap, gills down, on white paper. Leave overnight (with or without a glass over the mushroom, as preferred). Provided the cap is dry and fresh, the print may surprise, not only in colour but in the piled ridges of spores which are dropped.

Eva Davis

\* A mushroom by this name was listed for the Don Valley in 1932.



## THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

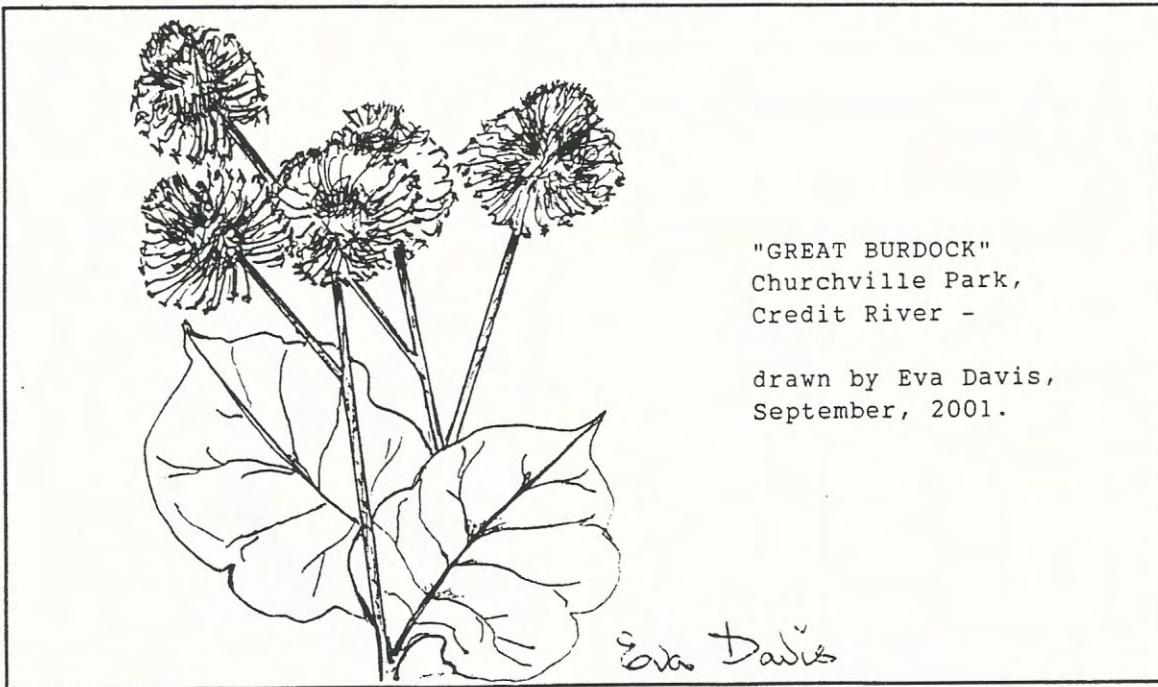
November 2000, Toronto

The fine autumn weather of October carried into November, for a while; but a noticeable cooling trend set in by mid-month with a deepening flow of Arctic air, seasonably overcast skies, and frequent flurries. Over Toronto, the snow didn't amount to much, but Buffalo had some very heavy lake effect snows off Lake Erie. By November 21st and 22nd, both daytime maximum as well as overnight minimum temperatures were below freezing -- making for an early inauguration of winter reminiscent of the 1970s and 1980s. The final part of the month became milder again but with overcast skies and drizzle, again more reminiscent of times past than of recent years.

Still, the effect of the early part of the month was not overcome. The monthly mean was above the 1971-2000 average, by  $0.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  downtown and  $0.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  at the airport. And, yes, precipitation was below normal again, in the 55 mm range as opposed to the 75 mm range. Total sunshine hours were 92.6 hours, 8.7 hours above normal.

Gavin Miller

□



During the year, up to a third of the Earth's surface can be snow-covered.  
from "Study finds snow a chemical cauldron" by Peter Calamai in the TORONTO STAR, Dec. 17, 2000

## COMING EVENTS

Royal Canadian Institute - Sunday afternoon lectures on science at 3 pm.

- Nov. 4 - Lessons from death
  - Nov. 11 - Mutations, aging and cancer
  - Nov. 18 - In search of elegance: the evolution of the art of structural engineering
  - Nov. 25 - Living life small: nanoscale bioengineering
- Meet in the JJR Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Bldg., 1 King's College Circle. Call 416-977-2983 for more information. Free.

High Park Sunday afternoon walking tours at 1:15 pm

- Nov. 4 - The "Haunts" of High Park
  - Nov. 18 - On Grenadier Pond
- Meet just south of the Grenadier Cafe & Teahouse in the park. \$2 donation. Call 416-392-1748 or 416-392-6916.

Toronto Entomologists' Association meeting

- Sat. Nov. 24 at 1 pm in Room 119 in the Northrop Frye Hall, 73 Queen's Park Cres. East. The topic will be "Amazing Creatures of Nottawasaga" by Chris Jones. For more details, call Alan Hanks at 905-727-6993.

Mycological Society of Toronto

- Call 416-HI-FUNGI for information about meetings and forays.

Rouge Valley Conservation Centre - guided theme walks beginning at Pearse House

- Nov. 11 - Native History at 1 pm.  
Call 416-282-8265 for more information.

Ian Wheal Heritage Walks

- Sat. Nov. 3 at 11 am - Meet at the intersection of Hwy 27 and Humber College Blvd. (West Humber River) [Bring lunch and water.]
- Sat. Nov. 10 at 1:30 pm - Meet at the southeast corner of Power St. and Queen St. East. (Power Street Springs)
- Tue. Nov. 20 at 1 pm at northeast corner of Broadview & Gerrard St. East.

Royal Ontario Museum - free admission Fridays from 4:30 pm to 9:30 pm.  
Call 416-586-8000 for more information.

North Toronto Green Community

- Sun. Nov. 11 at 2 pm - Upper Yellow Creek with Peter Hare. Meet at the southwest corner of Wilson Ave. and Dufferin St.
- Sun. Nov. 18 from 1 pm to 4 pm --Taddle Creek with Eduard Sousa. Call 416-599-4171 for details and to register.

Chinese sumac seeds  
blowing upward in the wind  
are keys of heaven.

haiku by Helen Juhola

# TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

2 Carlton St., #1519  
 Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3  
 416-593-2656  
 Web site: [www.sources.com/tfn](http://www.sources.com/tfn)

Publications Mail  
 Registration No.  
 40049590

## TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage. Issued monthly September to December and February to May.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB:	TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983.....\$ 4.00
ITS HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION, 1965 .....\$ 2.00	A GRAPHIC GUIDE TO ONTARIO MOSSES, 1985 .....\$ 4.00
CHECKLIST OF PLANTS IN FOUR TORONTO PARKS; WILKET CREEK, HIGH PARK, HUMBER VALLEY, LAMBTON WOODS, 1972 .....\$ 2.00	GUIDE TO TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' NATURE RESERVE, LEASKDALE, ONT., 1986 .....\$ 4.00
TORONTO THE GREEN, 1976 Metropolitan Toronto's important natural areas are described and recommendations given for their conservation and management; includes maps, bibliography and index .....\$ 8.00	TORONTO ISLANDS: PLANT COMMUNITIES AND NOTEWORTHY SPECIES, 1987 .....\$ 4.00
TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' RAVINE SURVEYS.....ea \$ 4.00	TODMORDEN MILLS, 1987.....\$ 4.00
Survey #1 – Chatsworth Ravine, 1973	VASCULAR PLANTS OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO, 1994 ...\$ 8.00
Survey #2 – Brookbanks Ravine, 1974	TORONTO CHECKLISTS (birds, other vertebrates, butterflies, other invertebrates, mosses, other plants) .....each 50¢
Survey #3 – Chapman Valley Ravine, 1975	TORONTO ROCKS, 1998.....\$ 8.00
Survey #4 – Wigmore Ravine, 1975	HUMBER FORKS AT THISTLETOWN, 2000 .....\$ 4.00
Survey #5 – Park Drive Ravine, 1976	NO G.S.T.
Survey #6 – Burke Ravine, 1976	All publications may be ordered from Toronto Field Naturalists, 2 Carlton St., #1519, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3. (Add \$2.00 per item for postage and handling).
Survey #7 – Taylor Creek-Woodbine Bridge Ravines, 1977	
Survey #8 – West Don Valley, 1978	
INDEX OF TFN NEWSLETTERS (1938 to present).....\$10.00	

*Please note: It has always been the policy of the Toronto Field Naturalists  
 not to give out its membership list.*

## MEMBERSHIP FEES (No G.S.T.)

\$30 FAMILY (2 adults – same address, children included)

\$25 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY

\$20 STUDENT, SENIOR SINGLE

Tax receipts issued for donations

Membership fees and address changes should be sent to:  
 2 Carlton St., #1519, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3