

Spring 2014

Bulletin

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newsletter

Invasive Species Are Changing the Look of Our Landscape

Staff



Bulletin

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ON THE COVER:

Invasive species like Emerald Ash Borer are destroying Ash Trees in our forests.



This Audubon View

The news out of the Monarch Butterfly wintering grounds in Mexico earlier this year was not good. Population numbers of Monarchs are calculated from the amount of space they occupy while hibernating, and the 2013 numbers are dire. The total space occupied by the butterflies is just 1.65 acres — that's down 40% from last year and just 1/10th of what it was in 2006.

Monarch Butterflies are fascinating creatures with an amazing migration. They are actually tropical butterflies, requiring specific temperatures and humidity to survive the winter. Their migration north spans thousands of miles and four generations each year to find milkweed plant — the only plant that their larval stage is able to eat.

Earlier population declines of Monarchs were due to loss of habitat on their wintering grounds, with climate change reducing the amount of suitable area. Challenges north of the border, though, are taking an even greater toll. A prolonged drought in the south along their migration routes denies the butterflies sufficient quantities of nectar-producing plants for the energy they need for their long flight. More importantly, the use of herbicides in and around areas planted with “herbicide-resistant” grains has led to a significant decrease in the amount of milkweed — a plant critical to their survival.

On February 19th, President Obama, Mexican President Peña Nieto, and Canada's Prime Minister Harper committed their nations to creating a task force to protect the Monarch Butterfly migration across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. We applaud this effort and want to do our part here in Western Pennsylvania to help. ASWP has long grown several species of milkweed in our native plant center. In 2014, we plan to give away all of our milkweed for free and to provide freemilkweed seed to all schools, garden clubs, and members who agree to plant a Monarch Way Station this year.

To learn how you can help, and how to create your own Monarch Way Station in as little as a 4'x4' patch, visit our website at aswp.org/monarch.

Jim Bonner

ASWP Executive Director



NATURE STORE HOURS

Tuesday 9 am - 7 pm

Wednesday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm

Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm

Trails open year-round.

7 days a week, dawn to dusk

(412) 963-6100

DIRECTIONS TO BEECHWOOD (FROM PITTSBURGH)

Take Route 28 north to Route 8 North/Butler exit. Turn right at first traffic light on to Kittanning Road which becomes Dorseyville Road. Travel 4.3 miles and Beechwood will be on your left.

For additional directions, visit us at aswp.org.

DIRECTIONS TO SUCCOP CONSERVANCY (FROM PITTSBURGH)

Take Route 8 North from Pittsburgh or South from Butler and turn on to West Airport Road.

Once on West Airport Road, Succop Conservancy's driveway will be the first road on your left.

DIRECTIONS TO TODD NATURE RESERVE

Take Rt. 28 North to the Butler/Freeport Exit 17. Turn right at Rt. 356 North, and then right at Monroe Road. Travel about 2 miles, and make a right at Kepple Road. Travel 1.5 miles and Todd Nature Reserve will be on your right. Park in the lot and please sign in at the informational kiosk at the cabin. Trail maps are located at the kiosk.

Dealing With Invasive Species: How The Emerald Ash Borer is Changing the PA Landscape—and Audubon's Reserves



In 2002, an exotic beetle that attacked ash trees was discovered in southeastern Michigan. It was quickly identified as Emerald Ash Borer, an emerald-colored beetle native to northeast Asia whose larvae feed exclusively on ash tree species. The larvae feed on the cambial region of the tree, just under the bark, effectively disrupting water and nutrient flow inside the tree. Unfortunately, nearly every tree attacked by this invasive species will die in three to five years.

Since the initial discovery, the beetle has spread to 19 additional states and two Canadian provinces. It is estimated that 50 million trees have been killed within the infested area, which includes Pennsylvania. An Emerald Ash Borer was initially discovered in Cranberry Township on June 22, 2007 and five years later, the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources reported it in 33 counties. This beetle threatens five species of ash trees in the state, estimated to be over 300 million trees, or almost 4% of our entire forest canopy.

Much like people everywhere where the infestation has happened, landowners in western Pennsylvania are faced several challenges that limit their options. Early detection of an infestation is difficult, particularly if you have a large parcel, and the high cost and limited control options make it nearly impossible to protect trees. Emerald Ash Borer spread quickly, and unfortunately, a large percentage of our ash trees have already succumbed to the infestation throughout the region.

Following a multi-agency discussion that we hosted a few months ago, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania has begun developing an Ash Tree Management Plan which will address the infestation in a comprehensive manner. We have identified and are focusing on several items that will ensure responsible stewardship of our reserves.

1. One of our biggest concerns is public safety – infected or dead ash trees will be removed from the reserves to eliminate any possible safety issues along our trails or near our facilities. Infected trees within the woodlands will be allowed to fall. These trees are currently providing habitat structure and foraging opportunities to our resident and migrant birds.

2. We will monitor the reserves to determine areas where replacement efforts should be focused. In some cases, we may recognize areas that will be adversely affected by canopy gaps, or aesthetics negatively impacted due to the loss of trees. Native, but non-host tree species will be planted in these locations to fill canopy gaps or improve aesthetics.

3. Finally, we will actively monitor the reserve for healthy ash trees. To preserve ash species for future generations, as well as for preservation of local genetic material, we will treat select trees with one of the available chemical controls.

We encourage everyone to monitor their trees and learn about control options for Emerald Ash Borer. Signs of infected trees include leaf die back from the upper branches of the tree, new sprouts growing from the trunk, bark peeled off by woodpeckers, and upon close inspection, “D” shaped holes in the bark. Several control options exist, from removal of ash trees prior to infestation to insecticide injections and/or soil treatment. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources — Bureau of Forestry website contains many resources for landowners. A community training seminar on protecting ash trees and dealing with the invasive Emerald Ash Borer will be held on Wednesday, May 14th from 8:30am to 4:00pm at North Park Lodge. The seminar is free to the public but pre-registration is required by emailing cshafer@pa.gov by May 9th.

Program Schedule

MARCH 2014 - JUNE 2014

Register for programs online at aswp.org or by calling (412) 963-6100

SPECIAL EVENTS

Maple Madness

March 22 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

March 29 – Holiday Tea, Succop Conservancy

(10am-3pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Enjoy a walk through the history of maple sugaring and dive into a pancake breakfast! Our annual event occurs rain or shine. Learn how people across the ages have incorporated maple products into their lives. And don't forget to sample some pure maple syrup while you're here! Event lasts approximately 1.5 hours and is appropriate for all ages. Reservations requested.

Audubon Center for Native Plants Spring Sale

May 10 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(9am-1pm) Get a head start on this year's garden! Our native plant experts will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your yard. On this date only, all of our plants will be discounted

Audubon Nature Store Yard & Garden Sale

May 10 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(9am-5pm) Take advantage of our lowest prices of the season on yard and garden items. Browse our selection of tools, supplies, and functional decorative items for your yard and garden, and don't forget to check out our assortment of fairy garden accessories!

Mother's Day Brunch and Birdhouse Painting

May 11 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

May 11 – Succop Conservancy

(11am-1pm) Cost: \$20 member, \$25 non-member Give mom the day off! Enjoy a catered brunch, complete with mimosas for Mom and Dad, and then decorate a birdhouse together to remember Mom's very special day. This event takes place outdoors in the barn at Beechwood and under the event pavilion at Succop. Preregistration is required.

CITIZEN SCIENCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thanks to a generous grant from Dominion Foundation, we are able to bring free citizen science programs to locations across Southwestern Pennsylvania. Please visit aswp.org for a complete listing of our citizen science outreach programs.

BIRDING & NATURE HIKES

Birds & More: Naturalist Led Morning Walks

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve – Every Wednesday 9am

Succop Conservancy – Every Thursday 9am

Migratory Bird Walks

April 19, May 3 and May 10 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

April 26, May 3 and May 10 – Succop Conservancy

(9-9:30am) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member We welcome bird watchers of all ages and skill levels on our walks to catch glimpses of spring migrant birds of many species. Bring your binoculars, or you may borrow ours.

Sycamore Island Birding Trip

May 10 – Visit aswp.org for meet-up instructions

(9:30am) Cost: \$16 member, \$20 non-member Join Audubon for a birding trip to Sycamore Island. Accessible only by boat, few birders have the chance to experience this location—even though it's just a short drive from Beechwood. Preregistration is required.

CHILDREN & PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Fledglings

March 20, April 10, May 8 and June 12

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

March 11, April 8, May 13 and June 10

Succop Conservancy

(10-11am) Cost: \$4 member, \$6 non-member Give your 3-5 year old a head start on a lifetime of loving the outdoors. Fledglings programs incorporate stories, a walk, and activities to introduce new and fun nature themes to young participants. Parent or caregiver must be present.

MARCH: Down the Maple Trail – Learn about maple sugaring!

APRIL: Bunny Hop – Learn about rabbits and other outdoor animals!

MAY: Puddles and Ponds – What's living in pond water?

JUNE: You Little Stinker – What are skunks up to this time of year?

Babes in the Woods

May 1 and June 5 — Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

May 6 and June 3 — Succop Conservancy

(10-11am) Cost: \$4 member, \$6 non-member Even the smallest children delight in a day outside! Bring your little one in a baby carrier and enjoy a leisurely guided stroll on our reserves. Parent or caregiver must be present.

HANDS-ON PROGRAMS

CONSERVATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATOR PROGRAMS

Citizen Science programs are offered for free through a generous grant from Dominion Foundation.

Native Trees and Shrubs

March 8 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

March 30 – Succop Conservancy

(2-4pm) Free for ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$25 non-member Explore a wonderful array of Pennsylvania native trees and shrubs that are a perfect fit for the home landscape. Discover how wildlife can benefit from planting these native beauties and learn landscape techniques to keep them thriving long into the future. Be prepared to tour the property. *Act 48 hours.* This program is offered for free to ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members through the generosity of the Fox Chapel Garden Club.

Project BudBurst: Citizen Science Program

March 9 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

March 23 – Succop Conservancy

(2-4pm) Free Every plant tells a story. Whether you have an afternoon or a whole season, you can make an important contribution to a better understanding of changing climates. Project Budburst is a national network of people monitoring plants as the seasons change. We will explain the program and show you how to participate. Classroom session combined with a field experience. *Act 48 hours.*

Optics 101

April 5 – Audubon Nature Store at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(10am-Noon) Free Experience binoculars and scopes with our resident birder and optics expert, Brian Shema. Brian will demonstrate how to use and select optics that best suit your needs. Participants will be able to test our line of optics including Swarovski, Kowa, Nikon, and more. Preregistration is required.

Wildflower Identification Training

April 19 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(10am-Noon) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Take your enjoyment of wildflowers to the next level by learning how to use a field guide. After a classroom training, we will try our skills on the trail with Beechwood's spring ephemerals.

Year of Useful Plants

April 19 – Succop Conservancy

(10am-Noon) Free Learn to read the landscape to see useful plants valuable from the past to today. We will cover food, clothing, tools and medicine as well as a few surprises. Classroom presentation with a short walk. *Act 48 hours.*

Project WILD Teacher Workshop

April 5 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(9am-3:30pm) Cost: \$50 per teacher Learn how to use this popular collection of time-tested, cross-curriculum environmental lessons. Participants will receive the Project WILD curriculum guide, which is only available via workshop. *Qualifies for Act 48 hours.*

Gardening with Native Plants

April 5 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

April 12 – Succop Conservancy

(2-4pm) Free for ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$6 non-member Ready, Set, Grow! Join us for a primer on Native Plant culture and selection for formal spaces. Learn the latest innovations and time tested environmentally sensitive gardening methods to boost the vitality of your landscape. Participants will be provided the opportunity to plant a variety of native plant seedlings to bring home and add to their garden. This program is offered for free to ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members through the generosity of the Fox Chapel Garden Club.

Meet the Conifers

April 6 – Succop Conservancy

(1-2:30pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Bid a fond farewell to winter with a casual tour of our local pines, spruces and firs. Learn some identification tips as well as their place in the habitat and interesting human uses.

Wildflower Walk

April 27 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(2-3:30pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Join us for a relaxed walk along Spring Hollow to see Beechwood's spring ephemeral wildflowers in full swing. See them while you can!

Lost Ladybug: Citizen Science Program

May 3 • 1-3pm – Succop Conservancy

May 18 • 2-4pm – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Join us for a relaxed walk along Spring Hollow to see Beechwood's spring ephemeral wildflowers in full swing. See them while you can!

Build a Whimsical "Green Roof" Birdhouse

May 17 • 2-4pm – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

May 31 • 10am-Noon – Succop Conservancy

Cost: \$25 per birdhouse Create a whimsical green roof birdhouse using native plants. Then take your birdhouse home and watch the plants grow atop the house while birds enjoy a new place to rest their feathers. Perfect for families.

Build a Magical Fairy Garden

June 1 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

June 8 – Succop Conservancy

(2-4pm) Cost: \$25 per Fairy Garden We'll provide everything you need to build your own magical fairy garden—and even give you a journal to jot down fairy sightings and a misting bottle to keep the garden's moss and plants looking magical. If your fairy garden needs some additional bling, stop by Audubon Nature Store and browse our array of perfectly sized fairy house accessories! Perfect for families.

Summer Bird Feeding

June 7 – Audubon Nature Store at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(10am-Noon) Free Want more of your favorite birds in your yard? Join us for a discussion on bird feeding during the spring and summer months. Learn techniques to lure birds to your yard, see products that best suit some of our summer residents, and receive a special discount of bird feeding products available in the Audubon Nature Store. Preregistration is required.

Permaculture: Feasting on a Native Landscape

June 14 • 2-4pm – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

June 21 • 10am-Noon – Succop Conservancy

Free for ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$6 non-member Permaculture refers to permanent agriculture, an area of ecological design that creates sustainable landscapes inspired by natural ecosystems. This class will focus on a variety of PA native edible plants that will continue to provide a healthy harvest year after year. Participants will have the opportunity to taste native plant inspired dishes and create signature herbal tea. This program is offered for free to ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members through the generosity of the Fox Chapel Garden Club.

Pond Dipping

June 14 • 2-4pm – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

June 21 • 10am-Noon – Succop Conservancy

Free for ASWP and Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$6 non-member Explore our ponds with your hands! We will scour the edges for frogs and dragonflies, then pass out dip nets to see what's hiding under the surface. We will provide the equipment, just bring your enthusiasm.

Natural History for Educators

June 25-27 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve
(9:30am-3:30pm each day) \$225 per Educator This survey course will take you through the basics of our field, forest and water landscapes. We will learn to find and identify flora and fauna, with emphasis on the common things you and your students may most likely encounter. We'll also delve into the stories behind these organisms and natural features. Our goal is to give you confidence to explore nature with your classroom. Please bring a bag lunch. 15 hours Act 48 available. Participants will receive a resource kit that is a \$100 value.

SCOUTS

Scout Badge Day

April 12 • 10am-Noon – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve
April 12 • 1-3pm – Succop Conservancy

Cost: \$8 per Scout Schedule your cub scout den or girl scout patrol for badge or Journeys work. You can choose from our offerings, or we will customize to fit your requirements. Scheduling is only in advance, by den or patrol, by contacting Scott Detwiler, sdetwiler@aswp.org, (412) 963-6100 ext. 20.

Soil and Water Conservation Merit Badge

May 17 – Succop Conservancy

(10am-2pm) Cost: \$25 per Scout Earn credit toward your Boy Scout Soil & Water Conservation Merit Badge. We cover most of the requirements, and can serve as counselor to approve the remainder — contact us for details. Bring blue cards and a bag lunch. Pre-registration required.

AUDUBON AT NIGHT

Spring Peepers Night Hike

April 11 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(7-8:30pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Listen to the sweet, sweet sound of spring — the mating calls of toads and frogs. We'll also journey into the nearby forests and fields for other nocturnal signs of spring.

Family Twilight Hike

May 23 – Succop Conservancy

(8-9:30pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member The hour just after sunset is a very active time for many animals. Creep along our trails to catch glimpses of nature starting its day... at night!

Summer Solstice Hike

June 20 – Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

(8:30-10pm) Cost: \$6 member, \$10 non-member Join us for a hike in the twilight of the last day of spring before summer solstice. We will watch the long day turn to night on the trails, along with the fireflies, frogs and perhaps some other surprises.

SUMMER CAMPS

Get Outside with Audubon!

Hike, explore and have fun!
Summer camps at
**Beechwood Farms
Nature Reserve**
in Fox Chapel and
Succop Conservancy
in Butler.

Visit aswp.org to learn
more and register online!

ASWP.ORG • (412) 963-6100

 Audubon Society
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

MARCH

- 5 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 8 Native Trees and Shrubs (2pm)
- 9 Project BudBurst (2pm)
- 12 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 19 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 20 Fledglings: Down the Maple Trail (10am)
- 22 Maple Madness (10am)
- 26 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)

APRIL

- 2 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 5 Project WILD Teacher Workshop (9am)
- 5 Optics 101 (10am)
- 5 Gardening with Native Plants (2pm)
- 9 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 10 Fledglings: Bunny Hop (10am)
- 11 Spring Peepers Hike (7pm)
- 12 Scout Badge Day (10am)
- 16 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 19 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)
- 19 Wildflower Identification (10am)
- 23 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 27 Wildflower Walk (2pm)
- 30 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)

MAY

- 1 Babes in the Woods (10am)
- 3 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)
- 7 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 8 Fledglings: Puddles and Ponds (10am)
- 10 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)
- 10 Sycamore Island Birding Trip (8:30am)
- 10 Yard & Garden Sale at Audubon Nature Store (9am-5pm)
- 10 Audubon Center for Native Plants Spring Sale (9am-1pm)
- 11 Mother's Day Brunch (11am)
- 14 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 17 Build a Whimsical "Green Roof" Birdhouse (2pm)
- 18 Lost Ladybug Project (2pm)
- 21 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 28 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)

JUNE

- 1 Build a Magical Fairy Garden (2pm)
- 4 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 5 Babes in the Woods (10am)
- 6 Firefly Watch (8pm)
- 7 Summer Bird Feeding (10am)
- 11 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 12 Fledglings: You Little Stinker (10am)
- 14 Pond Dipping (2pm)
- 14 Permaculture – Feasting on a Native Landscape (2pm)
- 18 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 20 Summer Solstice Hike (8:30pm)
- 25 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 25 Natural History for Educators (9:30am) 3-Day Program

SUCCOP CONSERVANCY

MARCH

- 6 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 11 Fledglings: Down the Maple Trail (10am)
- 13 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 20 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 23 Project BudBurst (2pm)
- 27 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 29 Maple Madness (10am)
- 30 Native Trees and Shrubs (2pm)

APRIL

- 3 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 6 Meet the Conifers (1pm)
- 8 Fledglings: Bunny Hop (10am)
- 10 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 12 Gardening with Native Plants (2pm)
- 12 Scout Badge Day (1pm)
- 17 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 19 Year of Useful Plants (10am)
- 24 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 26 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)

MAY

- 1 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 3 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)
- 3 Lost Ladybug Project (2pm)
- 6 Babes in the Woods (10am)
- 8 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 10 Migratory Bird Walk (8am)
- 11 Mother's Day Brunch (11am)
- 13 Fledglings: Puddles and Ponds (10am)
- 15 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 17 Scouts: Soil & Water Conservation Merit Badge (10am)
- 22 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 23 Family Twilight Hike (8pm)
- 29 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 31 Build a Whimsical "Green Roof" Birdhouse (10am)

JUNE

- 3 Babes in the Woods (10am)
- 5 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 6 Firefly Watch (8pm)
- 8 Build a Magical Fairy Garden (2pm)
- 10 Fledglings: You Little Stinker (10am)
- 12 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 19 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)
- 21 Pond Dipping (2pm)
- 21 Permaculture – Feasting on a Native Landscape (2pm)
- 26 Birds and More Naturalist Led Walk (9am)

Memorials

Edward Olzewski

Patty, Bob and Janie Orringer
Corrine and Linus Barch

Emma Niznik

Catherine Gallagher
Jane Gallagher

Marty Napolitano

Ginny and Gil Glenn

A. Craig Succop and A. Ernest Succop II

Gus Succop

Honors

Sophia and Luke Britton

Betsy and Bob Kampmeiner

Tom and Jo Ann Succop

Amy, Michael, Craig and Wills Millin
Linden Partners, LLC.

Dan and Nancy Fales

Marnie, Howard, Riley and Miller Owens



There's a Lot to See at Audubon Nature Store

STOCK UP ON SYRUP

Audubon Nature Store has stocked its shelves with Wagner's 100% pure Pennsylvania maple syrup. Made locally in Somerset County, Wagner's maple syrup is available in gallon, half gallon, quart, pint and half pint sizes in both medium amber and dark robust grades.

YARD & GARDEN SALE — Sat., May 10, 9am to 5pm

Take advantage of our lowest prices of the season during Audubon Nature Store's Yard & Garden Sale – May 10, 9am to 5pm. Browse our selection of tools, supplies and functional decorative items for your yard and garden, and don't forget to check out our assortment of fairy garden accessories! With Mother's Day on Sunday, you'll not want to miss this one-day event, which runs in conjunction with ASWP's Native Plant Sale.

Join Us for These Nature Store Programs at Beechwood:

OPTICS 101 — Sat., April 5, 10am-Noon

Come experience binoculars and scopes at Audubon Nature Store's Optics 101 program. Our resident birder and optics expert, Brian Shema will demonstrate how to use and select optics that best suits your needs. Participants will be able to test our line of optics including Swarovski, Kowa, Nikon and more. Please register at aswp.org.

SUMMER BIRD FEEDING — Sat., June 7, 10am-Noon

Wanting more Orioles, Hummingbirds or other favorite birds in your yard? Join us for a discussion of bird feeding during the spring and summer months. Learn techniques to lure birds to your yard, products that best suit some of our summer residents, and receive a special discount of bird feeding products in the Audubon Nature Store. Please register at aswp.org.

ASWP gratefully acknowledges the generous support received from the following corporations, foundations, and trust funds:

\$50,000 +

- ▶ Columbia Gas – NISource
- ▶ Fred J. and Shirley H. Jordan Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

- ▶ Allegheny Regional Assets District
- ▶ Clapp Charitable Trust
- ▶ EQT Foundation
- ▶ Laurel Foundation
- ▶ The Pittsburgh Foundation
- ▶ The Sprout Fund
- ▶ White Pine Fund

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- ▶ Dominion Foundation
- ▶ The Florence Boyer Foundation
- ▶ FTS, Inc.
- ▶ National Audubon Society
- ▶ pair Networks, Inc
- ▶ PNC Bank

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- ▶ The Ahmanson Foundation
- ▶ Church Brew Works Foundation
- ▶ Medure's Catering
- ▶ PA Department of Environmental Protection
- ▶ The Techs
- ▶ United Way of Allegheny County
- ▶ Whole Foods — Wexford

\$500 - \$999

- ▶ Fox Chapel Area Rotary
- ▶ Fox Chapel Garden Club
- ▶ Morgan Stanley Pittsburgh
- ▶ PPG Industries Foundation
- ▶ T.N. Walker, Inc.
- ▶ The Webb Law Firm
- ▶ Western PA Mushroom Club

Mark Your Calendars! Pittsburgh Day of Giving "Sprints Ahead" in 2014 to May 6th

ASWP is once again excited to participate in The Pittsburgh Foundation's annual Day of Giving. Instead of its traditional fall date, this year the Foundation has moved up the Day of Giving day to the month of May.

Want an easy way to help further your support and help ASWP "Spring Ahead" into 2014? Well then mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 6th — the day you can make your money go even further. Starting at 6 am until midnight on May 6th, donations can be made at pittsburghgives.org and will be matched by the Foundation. Matches are capped at \$1,000. The Pittsburgh Foundation contributes money based on the total amount raised by each organization. Last year, we received an additional 13% on all gifts made that day.

Is your membership up for renewal during the months of April, May, or June? Then participating in Day of Giving is the perfect way to renew! If you would like to receive an email reminder about Day of Giving this May, send an email to ckubiak@aswp.org, and we'll send you a friendly reminder the night before. If you have any questions about Day of Giving, please contact us at (412) 963-6100.

Ask the Naturalist

Q: Is There Any Good News About Invasives?

A: Still finding stinkbugs in your house? Worried about the Emerald Ash Borer in your yard? Whether you are talking about plants or animals, invasive species are a growing problem. So is there any good news out there about invasive species?

We went looking for the bright side of invasive species control — and we'll say up front that the selection of material was limited, at least compared to the stories about the extent of the problem. However, there are some encouraging examples.

Every control method works better the earlier efforts are begun. A great example of this is The Adirondacks in New York — a huge, relatively-intact forest. It is protected from invasive species by a rapid response program. The smallest of patches are addressed quickly. Even labor-intensive handwork needed for things like Japanese knotweed is effective at early stages. This has protected this ecosystem from many of the invasive plants common around it. Pennsylvania has used this strategy with certain new cases like giant hogweed. Maintaining a program that only looks for seemingly-insignificant new sites may seem extravagant at first glance, but can be cost-effective in the long run.

Sometimes complete removal is not necessary. Some species that tend to grow densely count on that density for proper reproduction. Lake George, NY, used that principle to fight zebra mussels. Conventional wisdom says that once established, zebra mussels cannot be controlled manually. But when Lake George residents found a small but thriving population, they did manual removal anyway. Obviously, there was no practical way to remove every mussel. By removing enough mussels quickly before another reproductive season could begin, they made it difficult for the mussels' reproductive cells to find each other, and the population no longer continued to thrive.

An introduced beetle has been very effective in significantly controlling purple loosestrife. It won't eradicate the plant, but it does help the plant "behave" without threatening other species. Vetting a potential biological control takes time and resources. The last thing needed is a predator that turns to a native or agricultural species when its target species is gone. However, a biological control reduces the need for chemical and physical efforts while potentially becoming a relatively self-sustaining solution.

Sometimes, however, things must run their course. Some invasions spread so effectively that we can only wait to see what happens. Some invasive species outgrow their own sustaining factors, native predators and diseases start to catch on, or their native competitors adapt. This is not so much a success story per se, as much as an expressed confidence that nature can provide its own solution. We may be seeing this with house sparrows and starlings. These introduced birds spread across America, displacing natives. After tremendous peaks in the mid-twentieth century, populations have slowly but steadily declined. Nevertheless, even if nature eventually adapts, the price is that significant ecosystems and commercial value may be lost in the short term.

Every invasive species problem has many dimensions and possible solutions. We may not be able to address all invasive species as effectively as we would like, but should remember that we have been successful with many. If we don't look for success, we won't find it.

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Amazing Survival Tactics— The Carolina Wren

Some may remember the extreme winters of 1976-1978 when concern was given to the survival of Carolina Wren. The species, known to struggle during severe cold and prolonged snow cover, was well documented in the Christmas Bird Count data from this time period — population levels were found to be less than one-third previous year's levels.

This past January was another difficult month for the species; however some very clever survival tactics were noted in western Pennsylvania. A store owner in New Kensington reported that a Carolina Wren entered her store through sliding entrance doors on occasion. A local birdwatcher reported that a Carolina Wren was using his garage as safe (warm) haven — the bird made its way into his dining room one day, and even spent some time perched near his dining table.

At Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, we noted Carolina Wrens using the cupola of the education building. The birds flew into the cupola through louvered panels and perched in the heated air shaft. They even learned how to access the adjoining classrooms, using the same route to exit the classrooms when startled.

Severe weather is still a threat to our Carolina Wrens, but some clever survival tactics are obviously providing safe roosting locations and an expanded "habitat" in which they may find insects.



A Carolina Wren takes an indoor break. Photo credit: Don Weiss



614 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1618
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- May 11** at Succop **Mother's Day Brunch & Birdhouse Painting**
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