



The Chinquapin ['chi[ng]-ki-'pin]

*The Official Publication of
The Royal Oak Nature Society*

*A volunteer group working to protect and promote Royal Oak's native pre-
serves, while enjoying and sharing environmental education with the community*

1600 N. Campbell Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067

248.246.3380
www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/index.html

Changing Plant Communities of Cummington and Quickstad Parks by Don and Joyce Drife

All plant communities are in a state of constant change. Sometimes change comes rapidly, when events like fires or windstorms cause major changes in the vegetation in a short time. Other times change comes slowly over many years as once open areas grow up to woods or open woods develop dense understory layers which shade out plants growing below them. Change also comes when non-native plants move into an area or plants from areas to the south or north expand their ranges into new regions. Most of these types of change can be seen in Royal Oak's two nature parks, Cummington and Quickstad.

Both of these parks have undergone major changes over the years since man has settled in this area. Neither park represents a pristine natural area but both do show the response of native vegetation to a disturbed habitat. In fact, about one half of the plants growing in them are not native to the area. Because people started keeping a list of the plants in the parks in the 1970's, we can document what changes have occurred since that time.

Over the past 30 years, the parks are more grown up and the understory is denser. One cause of this may be the lack of rabbits in the two parks. Many of the plants known only from the historical records are plants of the fields, such as Common St. John's Wort, Queen Anne's Lace, Dogbane, Wild Bergamot, Common Mullein, Sweet Clover, Goatsbeard, Sow Thistle, and Black-eyed Susan, to name a few. These plants disappeared or became much rarer as the open areas in the parks grew up.

Cummington Park in particular has suffered from excess standing water. There was a large population of Red Trillium and Drooping Trillium and their hybrid in the park. That has all died out except for a few plants of Red Trillium. The record on the old list of Painted Trillium was one of these hybrid plants. A census of Trillium plants in Cummington Park in 1974 found an estimated 3500 stems. A similar count in 2001 found only 50. Other plants that have not been rediscovered in Cummington are Canada Mayflower, Starry False-Solomon Seal, Bellwort, Columbine, Bloodroot and Foamflower. Hog Peanut has not been found again in either park, although it was common in the 1970's.

Plants that have moved into the area since the 1970's include our only recorded orchid for the parks, Helleborine. This European orchid has become much more common in Michigan in the last 20 years. Norway Maple has now been recorded from both parks, and also Wintercreeper. Both are non-native plants. Garlic Mustard has moved into this part of the state. It is a native of Europe and Asia and is being watched in the parks. There has been some discussion of attempting to remove the Garlic Mustard plants, but it may be difficult to do without damaging the surrounding native plants.

We hope that reading about the plants of our parks will inspire you to go out into them and see what you can find. At the close of this article, we will present three lists of plants that we would encourage everyone who goes into the parks to look for. There will be a list for each park and one joint list for both parks. Some plants are ones for

which we only have old records and some have not yet been found but could very well occur here. You can find a copy of the current plant list on the Royal Oak Nature Society website at <http://www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/index.html>. If you think you have located a plant on the want list, please get in touch with someone from the Royal Oak Nature Society at 248-246-3380.

To help you enjoy and identify the plants you see, we recommend several books. The best basic wildflower guide is *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide* by Lawrence Newcomb. A good second choice would be *A Field Guide to Wildflowers* by Peterson & McKenny. For serious plant hunters, the three-volume set, *Michigan Flora* by Edward Voss would be a great choice.

Want List		
Cummingston Park	Quickstad Park	Both Parks
Bindweed	Black Walnut	Black Locust
Bloodroot	Cleavers	Cinquefoil
Grape Fern	Gooseberry	Hepatica
Maple Leaved Viburnum	Hog Peanut	Giant Ragweed
Red Osier Dogwood	Long Spurred Violet	Milkweed
Sassafras	Lopseed	Pineapple Weed
Siberian Elm	Miterwort	Quaking Aspen
Swamp White Oak	Tough-me-not	Sweet Clover, White or Yellow
Tulip Tree		True Solomon's Seal
Violet		Wild Ginger
Virginia Creeper		
White Oak		
Wood Fern		

Get in Touch with Us!

Royal Oak Nature Society information updates can reach our members in two different ways. The first is by e-mail and second is for them to call our message line (248-246-3380) on a periodic basis. If you have an e-mail address and presently do not receive updates but would like to, please notify us so we can put you on our e-mail contact list.

Also, if you want to become actively involved with one or more of our Nature Society Teams, please contact us. Teams include, Beautification, Programs, Communications, Education and Ways & Means.

To Notify or Contact Us:

Phone: 248-246-3380
Address: 1600 N. Campbell Rd., R.O., MI 48067
E-mail: naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us

Wanted!

Nature Based Article Writers

The Chinquapin staff is interested in receiving nature-based articles and stories for our newsletter. Articles and stories should be no more than 1.5 pages long. Submissions can be made to Heather Muller or Ted Vickers at naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us or sent to the Royal Oak Nature Society, 1600 N. Campbell Rd., Royal Oak, MI 48067.

Grant Writer

The Royal Oak Nature Society is in need of a volunteer to lead grant-writing activities. This is a board position and involves coordinating state/federal grant writing with the City, or writing grants for independent organizations. No experience necessary. This is a great way to get involved and learn excellent skills. Call 248-288-2002 for more information.



28558 Woodward Avenue
Royal Oak, MI 48067
Owners: LuAnn & Steve Linker

Phone: (248) 548-2424
Fax: (248) 548-0917
E-mail: wburoyaloak@aol.com

On Shaky Ground (Short Story)

by Ellen Doster



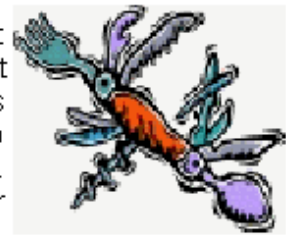
My introduction to camping, should have taught me something. I was a dyed-in-the-wool homebody, absolutely content to live the decadent existence of flush toilets, hot showers and dry bedding. I could not imagine why anyone would willingly venture beyond pristine homes in the suburbs, drive great distances on crowded highways at great expense to pitch a flimsy fabric shelter within spitting distance of hoards of other outdoor-crazed and filthy campers who have, likewise exposed themselves to the whims of Nature AND have the audacity to call this insanity... recreation.

After years of postponing the inevitable, I agreed to go along on a camping trip with my husband and children. Actually, he promised not to drop an electrical appliance into my bubble bath if I would see things his way. So, on a warm Saturday in July, we crammed a Volkswagen full of UFO's (Unidentified Filthy Objects) my husband called "camping gear", three preschoolers and a nervous dog and headed north in search of the Great Outdoors. It came aptly disguised as *Hidden Valley Campground*: a forty-acre plot of land twenty yards off a major freeway. The misnomer was not lost on this outdoor neophyte; it was, indeed a campground, though not particularly hidden, and the only valley was the recess in which we pitched our tent, which proved to be appreciably lower than the rest of the world.



When the rain started around midnight, my husband assured me that we were surrounded by "guaranteed waterproof, lightweight canvas and nylon, secured at 12 points with hand-forged steel tent stakes and rigid aluminum ribs". I actually believed he knew what he was talking about until I realized he was reading the manufacturer's label sewn into the tent seam. The tag was fluttering like a soggy banner in the wind-swept rain that now blew and billowed our humble abode.

An interesting point about hand-forged steel tent stakes is: they are only as reliable as the ground into which they are driven. When the Ausable River



crested its banks and became a raging torrent, my family, along with the equipment, became predictably unglued. The dislodging of our tent from its restraints caused the dog, in his panic, to put his nails through the tent floor, allowing it to take on an interesting fountain affect. This was an amusing diversion only long enough for the oldest child to cough up the remains of twenty-eight s'mores in one corner, forcing the remaining family members into the opposite corner. This weight imbalance caused an, otherwise, sea-worthy tent to handle poorly while shooting the rapids.

Once we landed, we tried to convince the kids the event was a surprise amusement park side trip. My husband tried to convince me that even while he was shrieking, "Save yourselves! We're all gonna DIIIIIEEE!!" he really did have control of the situation. Unfortunately, no amount of cajoling could convince the dog of anything; he had to be restrained and committed to a padded kennel.

But, it takes more than a hair-raising brush with death to dissuade me (doctors tell me another severe blow to the head could cure this.) We stopped on our way home to "pitch" our tent once again. Being ever mindful of littering laws, the dumpster behind Wal-Mart seemed a likely final resting place for the remains of our shelter.



Ellen Doster is a freelance writer and Royal Oak resident. After 35 years of marriage she has learned to love the idiosyncrasies of her inveterate outdoorsman husband. They've managed to share trout streams, camp sites and innumerable outdoor adventures with only occasional dire results.



Newsletter Staff:

Heather J. Muller (Editor) * Ted Vickers * Gretchen Greenwood

Education Committee Report

By Kristine Hammond

The Education Committee of the Nature Society is keeping busy with two projects, Nature Nights and a Teachers Roundtable. You may have read about our Nature Nights, last year at Whittier Elementary, and this past fall at the Boys and Girls Club at the Salter Community Center. We rely on volunteers from the Nature Society and Boy Scout Troops to run these nights. In the past, we have had nature-themed arts and crafts, tree ring displays, bird song identification, pond life, and a wildflower slide show. In addition, we have had guests provide fossils and skins and skulls. We have applied for funding to expand our program next year. Our goal is to host Nature Nights at two schools with an even wider variety of displays.

Our Teachers Roundtable is a new project this year and still in the works. We will be inviting teachers and administrators from Royal Oak schools to join us for this program. We'll start by taking the group for a nature walk on the trail system at Tenhave Woods, pointing out trees, flowers, birds, and other flora and fauna located right here in Royal Oak. After our walk, we can return to the Community Center for lunch and discussions about how the Nature Society can help teachers with nature education. Ideas include representatives from the Nature Society leading students on nature walks in either of our nature preserves, leading students on nature walks on school grounds, or presentations inside the classroom. We are excited to start working more closely with the schools.

If you are interested in helping with our Nature Night program, or interested in attending the Teachers Roundtable, please call Kristine Hammond at (248) 577-5171.

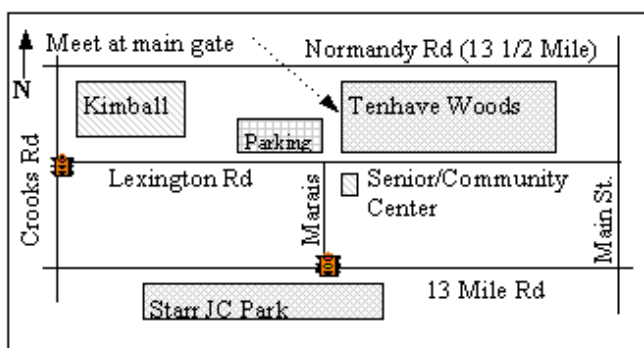
Nature Walk Programs

Meet at the park

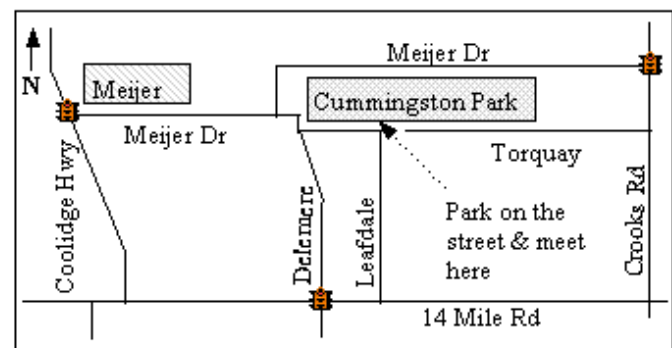
Date	Day	Time	Location	Theme
June 14th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhav Woods	Late Spring Wildflowers
July 23rd	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Tenhav Woods	Early Summer
August 20th	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Tenhav Woods	Late Summer

Our Parks

Tenhav Woods at Quickstad Park



Cummingston Park



Royal Oak Nature Society — Board of Directors:

President – Heather J. Muller (248.546.4184)
 Secretary – Gretchen Greenwood (248.288.2002)
 Treasurer – Bob Guymer (248.399.7042)
 Program – Bob Muller (248.398.0195)
 Communication – Ted Vickers (248.549.5366)

Beautification – Jack Kerby (248.280.0186)
 Ways & Means – Dena Serrato (313.248.8827)
 Education – Kristine Hammond (248.577.5171)
 Membership – Jeanette Carnaghi