



# The Chinquapin

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Winter 2020/21

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

## FINAL NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

**To continue receiving our newsletter "The Chinquapin" (beginning with the Spring 2021 edition), you need to be a paid-up Associate, Supporting or Patron 2020/21 Nature Society member.**

There are four membership levels.

General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month.

Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters (The Chinquapin) e-mailed to you quarterly. If you want, we can mail a hard copy to you instead.

**With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.**

Supporting Membership is \$10 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed as a supporting member in our newsletter.

Patron Membership is \$50 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an invitation

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## Cummingston Eagle Scout Project

by Bob Muller

Eagle Scout projects have been the backbone of the Royal Oak Nature Society since we started. They provide volunteers and leadership for projects greater than we could take on ourselves. We have had 35 Eagle projects since 2002. The latest one took place on July 25 of this year by Eagle candidate, Jaren Wise of Troop 1627.

Jaren organized, acquired the materials and gathered the volunteers and tools necessary to build two new "bridges" in Cummingston Park.

Along the Leafdale Trail, from the park entrance park to Crawfish Pond, there is a ditch that drains the park and moderates the depth of the pond. We had an old oil drum with both ends cut out and logs covering it for getting to the trails across the ditch. See top right photo for the replacement bridge. At the pond, there is a ditch running to the east that in the spring, prevented anyone being able to get to the back of the pond. See bottom right photo for the newly built bridge next to the pond.

Jaren purchased 24 inch culvert material and had it cut up and placed in the two ditches. Purchased crushed stone dirt provided by the city were both used to cover these culverts and part of the trail system. It took hundreds of wheelbarrow trips to move the crushed stone and dirt to the crews working on packing everything down and smoothing out the trail crossings. These two "bridges" became trail crossings.



A large amount of dirt was left over. The scouts moved it to locations on the trails that were low and often flooded and to decrease the grade of a trail that went up a steep hill.

Due to the pandemic, this project had been postponed for months, waiting for the time that even with face masks and social distancing, a work crew could safely do the job in Cummingston. Thank you Jaren.

## Winter Trees

by Don Drife

Looking at tree bark and twigs in the winter is a reason to get out into Nature. Our nature parks are wonderful places to study trees. They have a good diversity of tree species, and many of them are labeled.

When you start identifying winter trees, you need to learn a few simple definitions. Alternate means the buds (or leaves) are single on each point on the twig. Opposite means they are in pairs, and whorled means they are three or more at each point. A leaf scar is where the leaf attached to the twig. A terminal bud is at the end of the twig and does not have a leaf scar. A false terminal bud is at the end of a twig, but it has a leaf scar. Bud scales are the covering of the bud; often resembling shingles on a roof. Bundle scars form the dots on leaf scars. Some trees are easier to identify from their buds than their leaves.

Bitternut Hickory with its sulfur-yellow buds is distinctive.

Tulip Tree has a duckbill shaped terminal bud and round leaf scars.

Basswood is identified by its alternate, lopsided bud about as wide as it is long. Normally it is bright red.

Beech has a long-pointed bud that is nearly at a right angle to the twig.

Pawpaw grows in the Arboretum. It has fuzzy buds: the spherical ones are flower buds, and the elongated ones are leaf buds.

Sycamore's leaf scar circles the bud. Its sickly looking bark is unique.

The green twigs and buds of Sassafras show up nicely during the winter.

Black Cherry's burnt potato chip bark identifies it. The blunt red buds with green spots require a little practice to learn.

Oaks have buds clustered together at the tips of the twigs.

Hawthorn has reddish buds and long straight thorns.

The species listed above are all alternate with terminal buds. These next four are alternate with a false terminal bud. They take a little practice to distinguish.

Hop-hornbeam has lateral buds that diverge from the twig. They are yellowish-green early in winter, but become pale brown by spring. The cat-scratch bark is the easiest way to identify this species.

Blue-beech has a twig similar to Hop-hornbeam. Blue-beech buds are more angular and are appressed to the stem. It has smooth, tight, dark blue-gray bark on a ridged trunk. Another name for this tree is muscle wood.

Elms have more than three bundle scars in a "U" shaped line.

Mulberry normally has five bundle scars, but they are not in a line,

Ashes and Maples have small, opposite buds. The leaf scars meet on maples and there is a large gap on ashes.

Catalpa is our only whorled budded tree.

This article provides a simplified method for identifying winter trees. If want to learn more about Michigan trees I highly recommend *Michigan Trees* by Burton Barnes and Warren H. Wagner. It is published by the University of Michigan Press and I would encourage you to get the second edition. The keys and line drawings are the best I have seen. This is a revision of Otis's *Michigan Trees*. Dr. Walter Nickel taught me to use Otis's tree keys half a century ago.

When you study winter trees, you learn about forestry and forest types. **Below photo shows the bark of trees discussed in this article.** For additional photos and information, please check out the following link:

<https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/28169/Winter-Trees--2020-21-Winter-NL-supplement>

Walk to the four corners of Tenhave Woods or the Eastern and Western ends of Cummington to see different species. Cummington and Tenhave have different forest types. Go explore Cummington in the winter and learn more about her.



Blue Beech



Hop-hornbeam



Black Cherry



Sycamore

© Donald C. Drife



**ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.  
PREREGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

## **SPEAKER PROGRAMS**

*We normally have our monthly general meeting/speaker programs from October to April at the at the Mahany/Meiningen Senior Community Center (3500 Marais). We present speaker programs that are usually Power Point presentations focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions.*

We are considering doing virtual speaker programs this winter. If we decide to do one or more of them, we will post them in our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

## **Royal Oak Arboretum Gardening Accomplishments for 2020**

by Bob Muller

In the 12 years since we started developing the area behind the community center into the Royal Oak Arboretum, we've slowly transformed the area from an invasive buckthorn forest into a botanical garden. Although we still have much to do, it now looks great and many people walk the paths. We receive comments and thanks as they pass when we are working.

A tremendous amount of work has been done this season, by our Arboretum stewards. We worked every Tuesday in the morning for several hours from spring to fall. This year Vanessa Schultz became our chief eco-scaper and has done a great job getting the memorial (see photo) and butterfly gardens cleaned up and numerous new wildflowers planted. Also, with the help of Gail Valentine, Doris Walters and Karen Pettke, general weeding was done and the wood chip trails were cleared. Keeping the trails maintained is still occurring as we didn't get the grant to make the trails hard surface and handicapped accessible. The goal of hard surface trails is continuing with other grant possibilities being looked into. This year, we also have been able to set out sprinklers to water the plantings during dry weather and this has shown great results. There were many logs including a few a couple feet in diameter that we cut up and dragged out. We have been fighting the buckthorn since 2008 and are finally making great headway. With the help of John Semchena, Kevin Norris and Ken Cadwell, we have dug out the majority of the Buckthorn west of the sidewalk that runs through the arb. We have planted 24 native trees, three of which were not in the collection before. We do have a problem with deer browsing on our planted trees and have made new

sturdy six foot high tree cages to solve this problem. These will replace four foot high chicken wire cages that are also not very durable. The Oak Opening we started last year with a custom seed mix has not turned out as well as we hoped; many of the seeds failed to germinate. We have decided to not order more seed but to secure plants next season, as well as grow plants in our nursery. We will be starting to plant an area with native shrubs next season, several of which we have ready to be moved from the nursery. Tree First, the company that has partnered with us in the maintenance of the trees in the Arboretum and both nature parks, will be helping to remove a number of dead trees sometime this fall.



## **ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY FRIENDS OF FUNGI**

**Royal Oak Nature Society Friends of Fungi** is a group that promotes the understanding of, and an appreciation for, fungi in general and those fungi found in Tenhave, Cummingston, and other local urban woods. Mary Fredricks & Karen Blenc head this group. There is no cost to belong and preregistration is not required. The group normally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, November, January, February and March at the Mahany/Meiningen Senior Community Center (3500 Marais).

Because of COVID 19, we are currently NOT planning on having our January and February meetings/programs. If we decide to do it, we will post it on our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

**ALL NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.  
PREREGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

## **NATURE WALKS**

*There is at least one naturalist lead walk per month with additional ones added during the spring wildflower and fall color seasons. An emphasis is put on understanding the different forest types found in our parks. Further information is given on individual plant and animal species, geology and human history of the area. There is no preregistration or cost for any of our public nature walks. Wearing boots is recommended in the winter and spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer.*

**CUMMINGSTON PARK:** Park is just east of Meijers. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay

**TENHAVE WOODS:** Park is just east of the High School. Park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoot walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

**ROYAL OAK ARBORETUM:** Park and meet on the north side of the Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais).

We are considering doing nature walks this winter, but would be limited in number of people who can be on each walk. If we decide to do one or more of them, we will post them in our website, our Facebook page and send a

## **In Remembrance of Ray Coleman**

by Don Drife

Ray Coleman passed away on October 5<sup>th</sup> of this year after a brief illness. Ray and his wife Pat were active in the Nature Society since its founding. Ray presented several times at our speakers program, educating us about butterflies, other insects, and Costa Rica. His outstanding photographs filled his presentations. Ray and Pat attended all our annual fundraisers, helping wherever they could. In previous years we held a springtime open house. Ray would conduct a photography workshop, giving pointers to beginner and experienced photographers. It did not matter if you had the latest digital camera or a camera phone, Ray could improve your photographic technique. Ray was an accomplished photographer who was always willing to share his

knowledge. He was elected an Associate of the Photographic Society of America for his "excellent service to photography." His service to local camera clubs was recognized when the Greater Detroit Camera Club Council named him a Fellow. His photographs have appeared in the *Audubon* magazine, *National Wildlife*, *National Geographic*, and many other magazines and textbooks.

Ray (below photos) is survived by his wife Pat and grandniece Nicholle who many of you know. I will miss seeing him on our walks and making pictures with him. He was a remarkable mentor and friend.





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to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and two free tickets to our annual fundraiser.

If you want to be an Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (see below) and mail it along with a check to the Royal Oak Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost).

Through your donation (tax deductible), you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we provide.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail us the information asked for on our membership form (see below) and send that information to: [naturesociety@romi.gov](mailto:naturesociety@romi.gov)

Please check out our Facebook page & "like" the Royal Oak Nature Society.

Page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/228095233882566>



Please check out our Instagram page:

<https://www.instagram.com/royal.oak.nature.society/?hl=en>



[www.treefirst.org](http://www.treefirst.org)  
[info@treefirst.org](mailto:info@treefirst.org)

### Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable to: **Royal Oak Nature Society**  
MEMO: **Membership**

Mail completed form & check to:  
**Royal Oak Nature Society**  
1600 N. Campbell Rd.  
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (household members): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1 year Household Membership  
(September-August)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General (free)         | Receive newsletter                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$5)        | by:                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (\$10 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular mail OR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$50 & up)     | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail          |

## NATURE SOCIETY GROUPS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of the following groups:

**Stewardship:** Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummingston Park and the Arboretum.

**Communications:** Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board.

**Education:** Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

**Fundraising:** Is responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Nature Society.

**Programming:** Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

**Ways & Means:** Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Karen Blenc

Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers

Education: Open

Program: Bob Muller

Stewardship-Tenhave & Royal Oak Arboretum: John Semchena

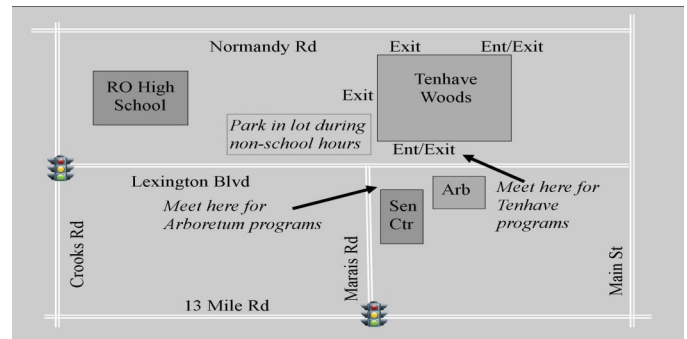
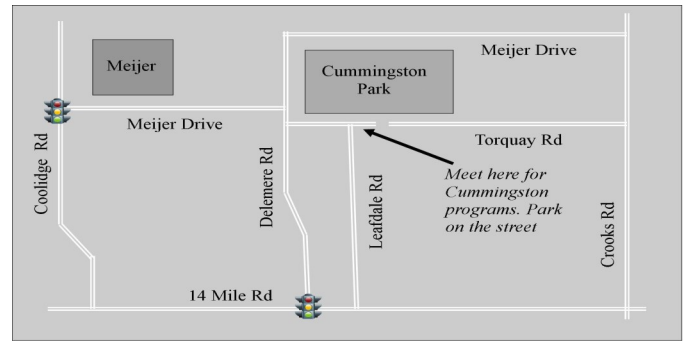
Stewardship-Cummingston: Mary Fredricks

Scout Representative: Richard Stoll

At Large: Michelle Watson & Christine Utter

Troop/Pack 1627 Representative: Richard Stoll

## Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingston Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

*The Royal Oak Nature Society is a nonprofit education and stewardship group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them. In addition, we are in the process of developing an arboretum in Worden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs for children and adults.*

The Royal Oak Nature Society  
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Royal Oak, MI 48067  
248-246-3380  
nature.society@romi.gov  
www.romi.gov/407/nature-society

