

6-2008

Gordie News, June/July 2008

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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GORDIE NEWS

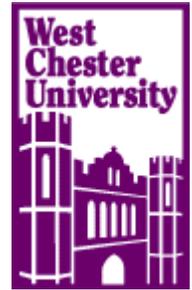
(June & July 2008) 2:6,7

Erika Szonntag, editor

Gordon Natural Area for Environmental Studies

West Chester University of Pennsylvania

(A Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation)



Special Announcements & Dates-

Next Workday: Saturday October 18, Gordon Natural Area 10-12PM

Help save postage: If you have an E-mail we can add you to the Friends of the Gordon Natural Area mailing list. You will be notified of the latest Gordie News (<http://darwin.wcupa.edu/gordon/>) and other activities

Contact Erika Szonntag with feedback or ideas for articles at es631042@wcupa.edu

:: *What's New?* ::

Poison Ivy, Oak, Sumac, oh my!

No doubt you'll be taking camping trips, going for day hikes, and doing yard work this summer, and preventing rashes from poison ivy, oak, and sumac this time of year can be difficult. Here's a quick look at what these plants look like and what to do in case of contact¹.

The rash that appears from contact with these plants is actually an allergic reaction to the oil of the plant, known as urushiol, which is present on all parts of the plant. Some are fortunate enough not to be allergic, but for those of us who are, it's quite a painful experience. Symptoms include:

- ?? Red streaks, general redness, and itchiness where the plant brushed against the skin.
- ?? Small bumps or larger raised areas (hives).
- ?? Blisters filled with fluid that may leak out.

Generally, symptoms will occur within 48 hours of contact. Even if you do not see symptoms immediately, but you suspect having contacted poison, it is best to wash up with dish soap or laundry detergent, as these soaps are best at dissolving the oil. Wash with cold water as opposed to hot, because heat opens skin pores and allows the oil to soak in.

¹ Essig, Maria G. "Health Topics: Poison Ivy, Oak, or Sumac." MSN. 25 Sept. 2007. Healthwise. 11 July 2008 <<http://health.msn.com>>.

To alleviate symptoms, over the counter antihistamines and anti-itch creams work well. If you know that you have contacted poison ivy as soon as it happens, look around for jewelweed. Open the stem of the plant and apply the liquid to the affected area; jewelweed reduces the severity of the reaction or prevents a rash altogether (I've done this and it really works!). Conveniently, jewelweed often grows near poison ivy.

Clockwise from top left: Poison Ivy, Poison Sumac, Jewelweed, and Poison Oak

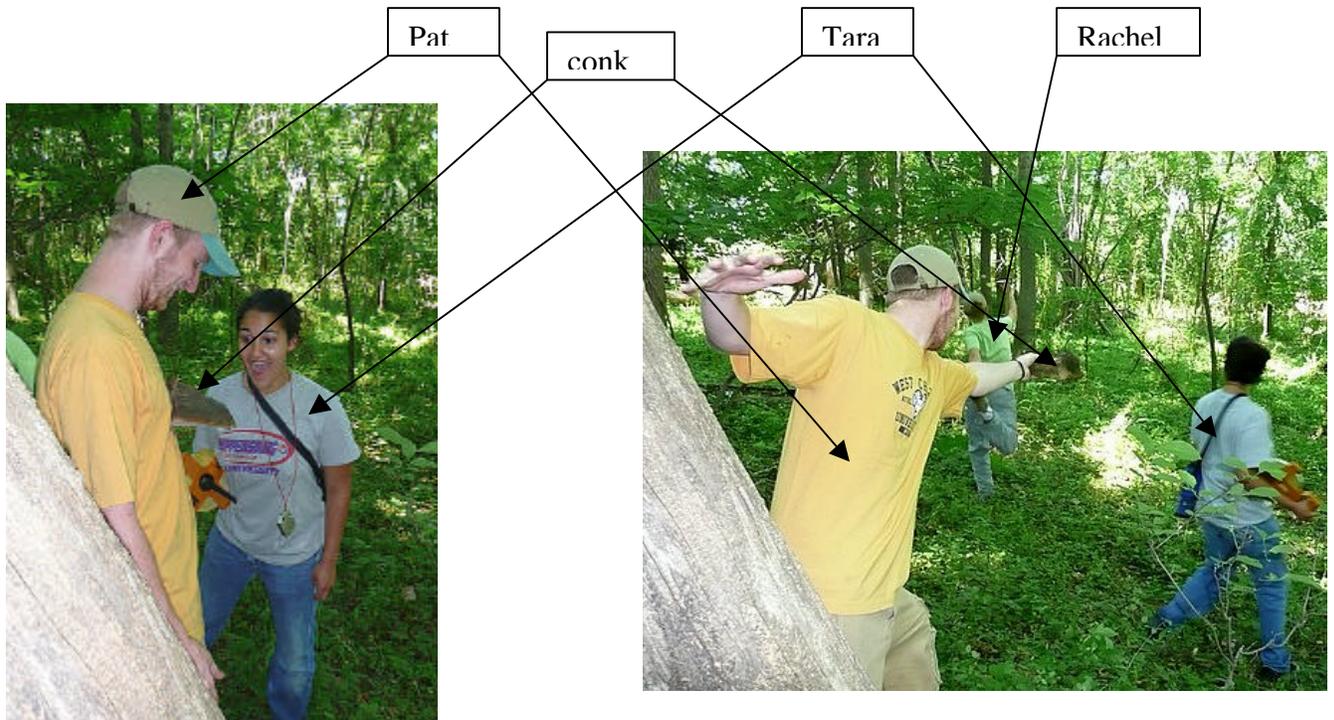


:: Snapshots ::

Left, our newly painted yellow gates, thanks to the WCU Paint Shop. Right, Dr Gerry Hertel, Dr Harry Tiebout (Biology), Dean Lori Vermeulen (Arts & Sciences), Patrick Gorman (Communications Department), Kathleen Sanger (Arts & Sciences), and Rachel Stern (Biology Education graduate-2008).



Shenanigans in the GNA! Forest health monitoring team member Tara Speck gasps as tree fungus fruiting body (conk) attaches itself to Pat "conk man" Gardner (note to reader-this CANNOT happen in nature!) Tara and Rachel Stern run away from Pat as he attempts to use a conk as a Frisbee-like weapon (a conk is a fruiting body of wood fungus).



Gordie News Editor, Erika Szonntag, Wins Student research & Creative Activity Award



Gordie News editor, Erika Szonntag, with Dr. Gerry Hertel and parents. In March 2008 Gordie News received a West Chester University Award for Student Research and Creative Activities.

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Birds of the Gordon

Dark-Eyed Junco

There are about five variations of Dark-Eyed Junco present in the United States, all of which were formerly classified as four distinct species. They are now combined into one species. The local “slate-colored” variety is pictured here. This species is considered a snowbird to middle latitudes, and some of those birds which live in the Appalachian Mountains are non-migratory (birds.cornell.edu). Some distinctive characteristics to this medium sparrow include a gray to black hood, white belly, and of course dark eyes. Wing bars are absent more often than not. Females tend to have paler, browner hues, but both sexes are similar in appearance for the most part.



European Starling



This species’ population propagated from an initial group of 100 which were brought to Central Park, New York, from Europe in the 1890s. At first glance, the European Starling appears to be black with a few spots here and there. Upon closer observation, however, luminous iridescence separates this bird from others, their plumage reflecting brilliant hues of purple, green, and gold. Generally, the European Starling is present all year round and is considered a non-native pest.

Foresters to use wasps to find non-native invasive insects²

Scientists are currently considering the benefits of using a certain variety of wasp to locate non-native invasive insects in forests of the northeast and mid-Atlantic states. The non-native emerald ash borer has been wreaking havoc on these regions' North American ash tree populations since 2002, when it was discovered in Michigan. The beetle has effectively destroyed 25 million ash trees over the last six years.



The wasp of interest is the native species *Cerceris fumipennis*. The ground nesting larvae feed on wood boring beetles, including the emerald ash borer (pictured left). Scientists will be monitoring specific wasp colonies and counting how many beetles of which types are brought back to nests by the adult wasps for the larvae. Depending on the type and number of beetles the wasps return with, researchers can determine whether or not there is an infestation of that beetle in a particular forest. For example, if a wasp does not return to the nest with ash borer beetles within the first 40 returns, there is likely no infestation.

Currently, the project is scheduled to last three years. The USDA Forest Service considers invasive species to be one of the top threats to forest health. Annually, about \$138 billion in lost forest value and control and eradication methods of invasive species. States participating in the project include "New York, all six New England states, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina." Past methods used to locate ash borers included stripping the bark off of ash trees, which obviously damages the plant. "Using one insect to search for others" is a practical and more environmentally friendly approach.

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:: Fun Stuff Online ::

"The Word" is Priceless: Steven Colbert on Regulating Greenhouse Gas Emissions

green.yahoo.com/blog/climate411/108/stephen-colbert-is-priceless.html



Comedy Central "news anchor" and political pundit Steven Colbert shares with us his quirky and comical opinion about the EPA's decision to delay regulating greenhouse gas emissions. In this clip from "The Word," a segment on each Colbert Report episode, Colbert attempts to define the word priceless in the context of the green economy. Four minutes of good laughs, to say the least. You can find this video and others from the Colbert Report on comedycentral.com.

Carbon Emissions across the United States

² Forests to Use Wasps to Find Invasive Insect. Associated Press. Concord, N.H.: WCAX News, 2008. 10 July 2008 <<http://www.wcax.com>>.

www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/05/30/business/20080601_ENERGY_GRAPHIC.html#

This interactive energy graphic from the New York Times makes it easy to see how states measure up to each other in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by sector, such as electric power and transportation. Figures are based on emission data from 2004.

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Projects and Research in the GNA

We are currently on board with two projects funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (#1,2) and one funded by the USDA Forest Service (#3)

1. *Wild Resources Program:* This study will evaluate the effects of deer and non-native invasive plants on native plants. All non-native invasive plants have been removed from the fenced and non-fenced invasive removed plots in 2007 & 2008. In the spring of 2009 the flowering garlic mustard will be removed and then the second plant survey will be conducted in all the plots

2. *Tree Vitalize Program:* This program begins the restoration of the GNA woods that have been severely impacted by white-tailed deer for 30 years. All trees planted in the spring have been measured (diameter and height) and tree guards have been put on them. As needed we are keeping them watered. Because of the projected climate change in our area some southern species (e.g. loblolly pine) have been include so we can measure their growth.

3. *Forest Health Protection, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry:* This study will allow us to look at the trends in forest health over time so that management activities can be implemented in a timely manner. Funding has allowed us to re-measure the forest health monitoring plots (18) that are distributed across the Gordon Natural Area. All trees from the original survey have been re-measured and all saplings (>1.0 inches in diameter) have been measured in the 24ft in radius subplot. In the early fall all established seedlings in the subplot will be counted

Billion Tree Campaign

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched a campaign to plant trees all over the world. The Gordon Natural Area has pledged 200 trees thus far. World target-pledged-planted/the Gordon Natural Area

Target



7,000,000,000/200

Pledged

3,801,586,917 /200

Planted

2,264,285,763 /136

Visit <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>

GNA Supporters:

2004: Presidential Initiative (WCU); Environmental Council (WCU); USDA Forest Service; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2005: Wegman's; Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Environmental Council; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2006: Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery; Valero Energy Corporation; National Wildlife Federation; Henderson High School Environmental Club; Friends of the Gordon Area

2007: Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (PA DCNR), Wild Resources Program; WCU Alumni Association; Darlington Biological Society; MENTA Café; Yellow Springs Farm Native Plant Nursery

2008: Redbud Native Plant Nursery; Aramark; PA DCNR, Tree Vitalize Program; USDA Forest Service

Contact: ghertel@wcupa.edu; 610-436-2722; 484-883-3371

NO TRAIL BIKES ARE ALLOWED IN THE GNA – They have increased the length of trails by 300% and are impacting the biodiversity in the GNA.

DOGS NEED TO BE LEASHED – Students doing laboratory assignments have been attacked by unleashed dogs.

WCU Public Safety: 610-436-3311; 911 calls tell them you are on Stadium



Rd
