



WINGBEATS

Newsletter of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region of New York State

-Winter/Spring 2023 -

ASCR Annual Meeting Scheduled

by Carol Quantock

The Annual Meeting of the Audubon Society of the Capital Region is slated for Saturday, April 29, 2023 at the Kelly Adirondack Center, 897 St. David's Lane, Niskayuna, NY 12309.

We will begin the day with a bird walk on the trails beginning at 9:00 AM, followed by the meeting at approximately 11:00 AM. Refreshments and brunch will be provided.

John Hershey, a long-time local birder, will give a presentation after brunch on the birds of the Vischer Ferry IBA (Important Bird Area).

A raffle will be held after Mr. Hershey's talk for items such as suet cakes, bird seed, decorative items, and garden art.

Reservations will be required for the event. RSVP at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094AADA92EA20-annual>.

If you have any questions, please email capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com.



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Home Earth Alliance Display at Capital Region Flower & Garden Expo Attracts Large Crowds

by Carol Quantock

A new grassroots group called the Home Earth Alliance planned and created a large, interactive display at the HVCC Capital Region Flower & Garden Expo held from March 24-26, 2023.

The display was in the hockey rink area at the McDonough Sports Complex on the HVCC campus, 80 Vandenberg Avenue, Troy, NY 12180.

Included in the display was a large area set up to resemble an ideal residential yard, including native plants, trees, and shrubs, bird, bat, and bee houses, water feature, raised beds for vegetables, and a rain barrel. Encircling the "yard" were education stations where visitors could ask questions and learn about native plants, pollinators, water features, sustainable practices, raised-bed gardening, and composting.

ASCR President Teresa Murphy and Vice President Carol Quantock co-headed the pollinator station, and their thanks go out to the numerous volunteers who stepped up to help the effort. Below are a couple of photos of the event:



Youth volunteers Olivia Rose, left, and Maya Niles, right, prepare to answer visitors' questions.

A view of the Home Earth Alliance display, which included native plants, turf grass, shrubs, and trees. The display showed how people can incorporate sustainable practices in everyday life.



Conservation Corner

Reprinted from NYSDEC Website

Harmful Plants

The plants listed below can cause rashes or skin irritation. Familiarize yourself with how to identify these harmful plants and keep an eye out for them when enjoying the outdoors.

Poison Ivy

Poison ivy grows as a vine or small shrub that can trail along the ground or climb low plants, trees and poles. Each leaf has three glossy leaflets with smooth or toothed edges. Leaves are reddish in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. The plant may have greenish-white flowers and whitish-yellow berries. Every part of the plant contains an oil that inflames skin and results in painfully itchy blisters and rashes. Inhalation of smoke from burning leaves and vines is extremely hazardous. Poison ivy is often found growing in young woodlands, thickets, path edges, sand dunes, walls and roadways.

Poison Sumac

This plant can appear as a woody shrub or small tree and grows up to 20 feet tall. Each leaf has clusters of 7-13 smooth-edged leaflets. Its leaves are orange in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. Poison sumac may have yellow-greenish flowers and whitish green fruits that hang in loose clusters, and can be found growing exclusively in very wet or flooded soils, usually in swamps and peat bogs. Every part of the plant contains an oil that inflames skin and results in painfully itchy blisters and rashes. Inhalation of smoke from burning leaves and vines is extremely hazardous.

Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is very large, erect biennial or perennial. The plant has white flowers that appear in late summer, forming a large, flat-topped umbel up to 2.5 feet across. Hollow, rigid stems grow 2-4 inches in diameter, can be 8-14 feet tall, and have purple blotches and coarse hairs. Leaves can be 5 feet across and are lobed and deeply incised. Giant hogweed is usually found growing in rich, moist soils in open fields, wooded areas, tree lines, roadsides, ditches and along streams and rivers. Its sap contains a phototoxin that reacts with ultraviolet light to cause skin irritation ranging from a mild rash to severe blistering. If you think you have giant hogweed on your property, or you see it in the community, report it to ghogweed@dec.ny.gov or call DEC at 845-256-311. If emailing, please include photos if possible to help with identification.

Cow Parsnip

This large plant grows 3-10 feet tall. Leaves are 12"-18", rough and hairy, and divided into 3 segments with coarsely toothed leaflets and a broad wing at the base of each leaf stalk. Stems are rough, hairy, hollow and grooved. The plant has white or cream colored flowers that bloom in mid-summer. These flowers have 5 petals of different sizes and are arranged in broad, flat-topped clusters at the top of short stalks. Cow parsnip grows in a variety of habitats including woodlands, forest openings, grasslands, stream and river edges and along roadsides. Its sap contains a phototoxin that reacts with ultraviolet light to cause skin irritation ranging from a mild rash to severe blistering..

Wild Parsnip

Wild parsnip typically grows 2-5 feet tall and is found along roadsides, in pastures, and in fields. Its leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, branched, and have saw-toothed edges. Each leaf has 5-15 ovate to oblong leaflets with variable toothed edges and deep lobes. The plant's stem is hollow and deeply grooved. Wild parsnip has small, 5-petaled, yellow flowers that are arranged in a flat-topped broad umbel 2-6 inches across and appear June-September. The flowers produce a round, smooth, straw-colored seed pod that is approximately 0.25 inches in size. Sap in all parts of the plant contains a phototoxin that reacts with ultraviolet light to cause skin irritation ranging from a mild rash to severe blistering. If you think you have wild parsnip on your property, or you see it in the community, report it to [iMapInvasives](#).

Stinging Nettle

Stinging nettle is a perennial, erect herb that can be identified by its stinging hairs, opposite heart-shaped leaves, and small greenish flowers. The stinging hairs on stems and leaves produce an intense burning and itching sensation that can last up to 30 minutes. The plant is most often found in forests or at the edges of woods and streams.

To keep yourself safe follow these tips:

- Learn how to identify giant hogweed, wild parsnip, cow parsnip, poison ivy, poison sumac and stinging nettle.
- Stay on trails and away from areas known to have these plants.
- Carefully wash any sap from clothing, equipment and pets.

Do not touch, cut, or collect parts of these plants, even for identification purposes.



Harmful Plant IDs

Photos supplied by NYSDEC



Poison Ivy



Poison Sumac



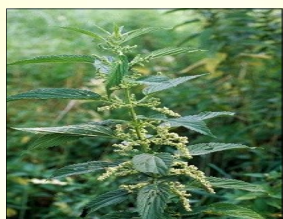
Giant Hogweed



Cow Parsnip



Wild Parsnip



Stinging Nettle

Upcoming Programs and Events

- ✿ April 18 & 20 — Bird Walk and Wildflower Meadow Garden Presentation for Regeneron Employees
- ✿ May 9 — Bird Walk at Albany Rural Cemetery, time TBD; John Loz, leader
- ✿ August 14 — Bird Feeding in Winter Presentation for the Guilderland Garden Club, Guilderland Town Hall, 11:00 AM
- ✿ Other events will be posted on the website as they are scheduled

Correction

A photograph of a black-headed grosbeak on page 2 of the last issue of *Wingbeats* was incorrectly identified as an evening grosbeak. Thanks go out to “eagle-eyed” reader Ron Boutin for correctly identifying the bird. *Wingbeats* regrets the error.

ASCR Sponsors Union College Ornithology Club

by Carol Quantock

The Audubon Society of the Capital Region is proud to announce its sponsorship of the Union College Ornithology Club. The students have varied majors and career goals, but share a love of birds and birding. Several members of ASCR have met with the students at recent events: the first at the Ornithology Club’s GBBC (Great Backyard Bird Count) event and bird walk on February 19 on the Union College campus and Kelly Adirondack Center, respectively. The second event was a bird walk at the Washington County Grasslands on March 5.

ASCR is proud to work with such an enthusiastic group of students who truly care about the environment and our planet.

We look forward to working with the students, not only at birding events, but as advisors. We are planning another bird walk in the spring. Details will be available when plans are made, and will be posted on the ASCR website.



Bird Walk at the Kelly Adirondack Center—Feb. 19



Washington County Grasslands Bird Walk—Mar. 5



Best Plants for Birds

Support Birds with Bird-Friendly GARDEN PLANTS



Best Plants for Birds

Support Birds with Bird-Friendly GARDEN PLANTS

Here are 14 North American plant species that support birds. See a plant you like that doesn't fit your space or location? There may be a similar plant more suitable to your habitat. Try searching for plants native to your area in the same genus.

Herbs, Forbs, and Vines



Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*
Other names: Common Black-eyed Susan, Brown-eyed Susan
Native range: Canada from British Columbia east to Quebec and Nova Scotia. Native or naturalized throughout the entire U.S.
Care: Annual/perennial; needs full sun and dry to moist, well-drained soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, bees, small seed- and insect-eating birds.



California Fuchsia *Epilobium canum*
Other names: Hummingbird Trumpet, Zauschneria
Native range: Western United States from Washington to New Mexico.
Care: Perennial; prefers full sun and dry to moist, well-drained soil.
Attracts: Hummingbirds, bees.



Common Sunflower *Helianthus annuus*
Other names: Annual Sunflower
Native range: Manitoba, Canada to Texas and westward. Not native but naturalized to the eastern U.S.
Care: Annual; prefers full sun and dry soil.
Attracts: Bees, seed-eating birds.



Coral Honeysuckle *Lonicera sempervirens*
Other names: Coral Honeysuckle, Trumpet Honeysuckle, Woodbine
Native range: Eastern U.S. from Maine to Florida and west to Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.
Care: Perennial; prefers full or partial sun and moist, preferably rich soil. Will need a structure to climb.
Attracts: Hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, fruit-eating birds.



Gray Goldenrod *Solidago nemoralis*
Other names: Prairie Goldenrod, Oldfield Goldenrod, Dyersweed Goldenrod, Dwarf Goldenrod, Field Goldenrod
Native range: Across southern Canada. Native in the U.S. from Montana to Texas and eastward. Native range extends south to Durango in Mexico.
Care: Perennial; prefers full sun and sandy, clay or gravel soil. Plant in dry soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, bees, seed-, insect-eating birds.



New England Aster *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*
Other names: New England American Aster
Native range: From Quebec to Alberta in Canada, south through the U.S. into North Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, and Kansas and west to the eastern Great Plains. Also native to the mountains of Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico.
Care: Perennial; prefers light shade and moist soil.
Attracts: Hummingbirds, butterflies, caterpillars, bees, seed- and insect-eating birds.



Wild Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*
Other names: Beebalm
Native range: Most of southern Canada and part of the Northwest Territories, most of the United States except California and Florida. Northeastern Mexico.
Care: Perennial; prefers full sun to partial shade, dry to moist soil.
Attracts: Hummingbirds, butterflies, caterpillars, bees, insect- and nectar-eating birds.

Trees and Shrubs



American Hazelnut *Corylus americana*
Other names: American Filbert
Native range: From Manitoba to Texas and eastward, except Florida and the far eastern coast of Canada.
Care: Perennial; prefers partial shade to shade and dry to moist, rich, well-drained soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, seed- and insect-eating birds. Good cover and nesting location.



Common Serviceberry *Amelanchier arborea*
Other names: Downy Serviceberry, Shadbush, Juneberry, Junebush, Shadblow, Sarvis
Native range: Southeastern Canada New Brunswick to Quebec and Ontario. Eastern U.S. from Maine to Minnesota to Texas.
Care: Perennial; can handle sun to shade. Prefers moist, well-drained, acid soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, bees, fruit- and insect-eating birds.



Common Winterberry *Ilex verticillata*
Other names: Winterberry, Michigan Holly, Black Alder
Native range: Quebec and Ontario in Canada, down through the eastern U.S. from Florida to eastern Texas and up to Minnesota.
Care: Perennial; tolerates full sun to full shade and moist or wet soil. Needs lots of water and tolerates poor-drained soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, fruit- and insect-eating birds. Good cover and nesting location.



Flowering Dogwood *Cornus florida*
Other names: Virginia Dogwood, Florida Dogwood, White Cornel, Arrowwood, American Boxwood, Corona De San Pedro
Native range: Ontario, Canada; southern Maine to Florida in the U.S., west to Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois; Coahuila to Veracruz, Mexico.
Care: Perennial; prefers partial shade to shade and dry to moist, rich, well-drained, acid soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, bees, fruit-, insect-eating birds.



Pacific Dogwood *Cornus nuttallii*
Other names: Pacific Flowering Dogwood, Mountain Dogwood
Native range: British Columbia down the Pacific coast through California. Also native to Idaho.
Care: Perennial; tolerant of full sun to full shade. Needs dry or moist, rich, well-drained soil.
Attracts: Fruit-eating birds.



Red Twig Dogwood *Cornus sericea*
Other names: Red Osier Dogwood, Red Osier, Red-twig Dogwood
Native range: Canada, Alaska, and the northern and western continental U.S.
Care: Perennial; can handle full sun to full shade, with well-drained soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, fruit- and insect-eating birds.



Saskatoon Serviceberry *Amelanchier alnifolia*
Other names: Western Serviceberry, Juneberry, Saskatoon
Native range: Along the Pacific coast from Alaska to California. East to Quebec in Canada, Minnesota to New Mexico in the U.S.
Care: Perennial; can handle full sun to full shade. Prefers dry to moist, well-drained soil.
Attracts: Butterflies, caterpillars, fruit- and insect-eating birds.

CornellLab
Bird Academy

Learn more in the self-paced, online course,
Growing Wild: Gardening for Birds and Nature.



Sources: The Biota of North America Program (BONAP), North American Plant Atlas
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Plant Database
National Audubon Society, Native Plants Database
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), PLANTS Database

Photo Gallery

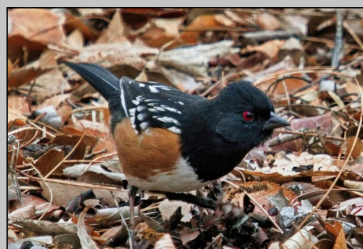
Great Photos from Members and Recent Events



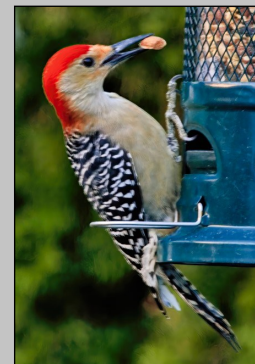
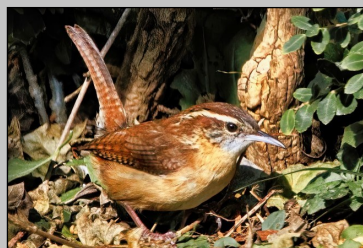
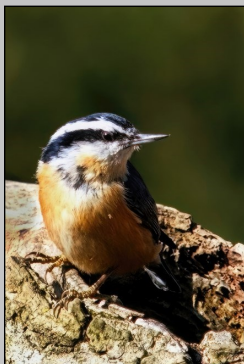
Left: Barred Owl at Kelly Adirondack Center; center: Black-capped Chickadee; right: male Snow Bunting at Washington County Grasslands.
Photos by Hailey Stoltenberg



Left: Warren Greene lecturing at GBBC event; center: House Finch pair at feeder cam; right: Tufted Titmouse at feeder cam.
Left photo by Hailey Stoltenberg; center and right photos courtesy of Carol Quantock



Left: female Red-bellied Woodpecker; center: male Rufous-sided Towhee (western race); right: White-crowned Sparrow.
Photos by Gerald Woulfin



Left: Red-breasted Nuthatch; center: Carolina Wren; right: male Red-bellied Woodpecker.
Photos by Gerald Woulfin

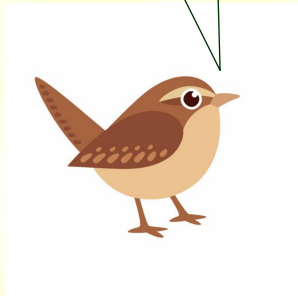


ACTIVITIES

Find the Differences



Can you find all the differences between these two pictures?



Did You Know?



Photo: allaboutbirds.org

Blue Jays frequently mimic the calls of hawks, especially the Red-shouldered Hawk. These calls may provide information to other jays that a hawk is around, or may be used to deceive other species into believing a hawk is present.

www.FreePrintableColoringPages.net



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An All Volunteer Chapter Organization of the National Audubon Society

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Board Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. We discuss upcoming events and make decisions that guide the chapter for the year.

Please join us!

Email
capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com
for more information!

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of the Capital Region**
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www.capitalregionaudubon.org

Questions?

Email: capitalregionaudubon@gmail.com

Looking to have an impact in your community?

Become an Audubon Society of the Capital Region

Chapter Supporter!

As a Chapter Supporter, 100% of your membership dues stay local. This helps us support local conservation efforts, continue to promote birding and bird education, and to support other special initiatives, such as the construction of bird blinds. There are three Chapter Supporter memberships available:

Individual: \$20.00

**Couple (two persons residing in same home):
\$35.00**

Family (three or more adults/children residing in same home): \$50.00

In return you get:

- An official ASCR Chapter Supporter Membership card
- An ASCR Chapter Supporter window cling to prevent window strikes
- The satisfaction of knowing you are supporting local birds and their habitats

Click [here](#) for more information on how you can become an ASCR Chapter Supporter!!