

One Step at a Time

Newsletter of the Mountaineers Naturalist Group

April 2017

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Photos from our March naturalist hikes

As you all know (unless you are off somewhere else like Mexico or Tucson) we've had a cool, wet and somewhat blustery February and March, in line with what is often associated with a La Nina year (which it is). Nonetheless, spring has insisted on rearing its head and the intendent flowers are now upon us. Mosses continue to benefit from the moisture and have supported two fine hikes led by Gary Brill to Discovery Park and Tiger mountain. And, as if to laugh at the weather a group of us ventured out on March 25 to Deception Pass. Sunny days have been at a premium and we had it all on March 25, rain, sun, clouds. And, the good news is, there are flowers, with the added adventure quality of having to find and identify them from the barest and smallest of examples; scouring protected south facing slopes for the one early flower. Birds did not seem to mind the rain and loons, harlequin ducks, mergansers, cormorants, guillemots and shorebirds were well represented. Best of all was group spirit, which persisted through the early rains and soared during the sunnier afternoon. Spring is upon us!



Deception pass nats, spring gold (lomatium), grassland saxifrage with goldback fern, grass widow and mystery plant (maybe maritime juniper – try to check it out)

In the Garden – What's happening in our Native plant garden?

The native plant garden is starting to bloom. In addition to , though the cold and rains has slowed and postponed flowering.

Blooming at this time are ribes sanguineum (red flowering current), manzanita, plus the hardy bittercress (a cruciferous plant and not a native) and oregon grape, streamside violet, smooth douglassia (see below), pasqueflower, evergreen huckleberry, and the lovely fawn lily (not quite out yet but in full foliage). Many plants are showing new healthy foliage and the place has a spring in its step. Take a visit and see what you can find as you make believe you are hiking in the mountains. At this time new plants may flower daily.



Smooth douglassia, streamside violet and hairy manzanita

April Field Trips for Mountaineers' Naturalists

You can find all these hikes listed under Activities (EXPLORE) then click on Exploring Nature. Many of these hikes have been filling, so sign up early

March 30 – Gary Brill is leading a moss/lichen identification focus hike on the Big Quilcene River. Gary has been super enthusiastic about these biota and this enthusiasm will surely rub off on you.

April 1,2 – hiking in the Columbia Gorge, with Stewart Hougen and Gordie Swartzman. These hikes require an overnight stay. They have great early spring flowers.

April 8 – Boulder Creek - Visit that jewel of a wilderness area with Gary Brill. Fairly even terrain, giant trees, magnificent waterfalls, and, of course, glorious, happy mosses to identify and glory in.

April 9 – Brian Carpenter will tour you through the Islandwood campus on Bainbridge Island, sharing what he is learning and giving you an insiders view.

April 15 – Mima Mounds is full of camas at this time and it is a mystery how the mounds were formed. Anita Elder is leading this as a joint photo-nature trip and Gordie Swartzman is slated to co-lead.

April 15-16 Table Rocks (Oregon) and Siskiyou Area (Oregon). These hikes, led by Linda Moore will feature hiking, naturalizing and photography in an ecologically rich area. Due to the distance from Seattle, this will require an overnight stay. Contact Linda if you are interested and she will fill you in on her plans. Linda prepares well and chooses great places to explore.

April 22 – Westberg Trail. Stewart and Gordie will lead this eastside flower hike near Ellensburg and up Manashtash Ridge. The flowers are generally glorious, the way up is steep, but slow because of all the flowers to identify and learn. The view from the top is glorious and it is a different ecological zone, so flowers are different.

April 23 – Nisqually Flats – Anita Elder will lead this photo-birding trip to one of our national wildlife regions. Eric Smith will co-lead to provide naturalizing support.

April 29 – Snow Mountain Ranch – Explore Cowiche Canyon near Yakima with Stewart. Flowers abound on this eastside jewel. We go wherever the flowers grow.

May 6 – Whiskey Dick mountain – explore dry Whiskey Dick mountain, east of Ellensburg, rich in birds and wildflowers during this wet spring. Stewart Hougen leads us there in search of cactus in bloom. It is a wild, lovely place.

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Washington Native Plant Society Lectures

April 25, 2017: Bellevue Botanical Garden; Richard Ramsden; "Seeking Washington Wildflowers"

May 4, 2017: Center for Urban Horticulture, NHS Hall; Linda Vorobik; ; "A Yankee Botanist's Search for New Zealand Bush"

June 1, 2017: The Mountaineers Program Center, Cascade Room; David Giblin; "Revising 'Flora of the Pacific Northwest'-What did we Learn and What's Next?"

June 13, 2017: Bellevue Botanical Garden
Nancy Kartes "Coming of Age: Bellevue Botanical Garden at 25" plus tour of the Urban Meadow Project

Audubon Society field trips

Link provided to field trips for April:

<http://www.seattleaudubon.org/sas/GetInvolved/GoBirding/FieldTrips/LatestFieldTrips.aspx>

Odds and Ends

Poetry

Galway Kinnell (from Trees)

Tok-tok-tok-tok, as from somebody
nailing upholstery, started up nearby:
the bird with a bloodmark on the back
of his head clung, cutting with
steady strokes his cave of wormwood.
On another tree, a smaller bird,
in gray rags, put her rump
to the sky and walked headfirst
down the trunk toward the earth
and the earth under the earth.

Galway Kinnell (from Perfect Thirst)

Let us remember this is our home
and that we have become, we mad ones, its keepers.
Let us sit bent forward slightly, and be opened a moment,
as earth's holy matter passes through us.

Seamus Heaney – Sweeney's Last Poem

There was a time when I preferred
the turtle-dove's soft jubilation
as it flitted round a pool

to the murmur of conversation.

There was a time when I preferred
the blackbird singing on the hill
and the stag loud against the storm
to the clinking tongue of this bell.

There was a time when I preferred
the mountain grouse crying at dawn
to the voice and closeness
of a beautiful woman.

There was a time when I preferred
wolf-packs yelping and howling
to the sheepish voice of a cleric
bleating out plainsong.

You are welcome to pledge healths
and carouse in your drinking dens;
I will dip and steal water
from a well with my open palm.

More Than Enough

By [Marge Piercy](#)

The first lily of June opens its red mouth.
All over the sand road where we walk
multiflora rose climbs trees cascading
white or pink blossoms, simple, intense
the scene drifting like colored mist.

The arrowhead is spreading its creamy
clumps of flower and the blackberries
are blooming in the thickets. Season of
joy for the bee. The green will never
again be so green, so purely and lushly

new, grass lifting its wheaty seedheads
into the wind. Rich fresh wine
of June, we stagger into you smeared
with pollen, overcome as the turtle
laying her eggs in roadside sand.

Seeing Nature – show currently at SAM

If you can manage getting downtown Seattle you might consider going into the Seattle Art Museum to view the Seeing Nature exhibit. Clearly, what Paul Allen (whose collection it is) had in mind with nature is not the same as what we do, I was treated to many fine pieces and many fine landscapes. The pieces below by Claude Monet and Gustav Klimt are two different takes on natural landscapes. I love



Klimt's creation of dappling on the birches and Monet's meadows leave me reeling. There is a fine black iris from Georgia O'Keefe and a lovely, loving tree by Maxfield Parrish, which turned my head about him as an observer of the natural world. It is a fine collection and worth the shlep. First Thursdays are free at SAM if you don't mind crowds.

Photo contest – next months feature photos will be decided by a photo contest. The winner will receive a naturalist field bag (nice!) or (if they already have one) another fun gift. The decision will be made on the basis not of a single photo but of the oeuvre. All photos submitted can be used at other times.

Photos (all photos by Gordie Swartzman)



Edmonds pier (find the kingfisher), Magnuson Park art, tree hugger at wilderness camp, Canada geese and oregon grape in bud.

