Babler S.P. (Bicycle & Woodbine Trails – Short Loop)

August 27, 2024

	BOTANICAL NAME (with genus pronunciation)	**FAMILY** [CC] = Coefficient of Conservatism	**COMMON NAME**
☐	*Actaea pachypoda* (ak-TEE-uh)	Ranunculaceae [CC8]	Doll's Eyes / White Baneberry
☐	*Agrimonia pubescens* (ag-grim-MO-nee-uh)	Rosaceae [CC4]	Downy Agrimony
☐	*Amelanchier arbora* (am-uh-LAN-kee-er)	Rosaceae [CC6]	Serviceberry
☐	*Ampelopsis cordata* (am-pel-OP-sis)	Vitaceae [CC3]	Raccoon Grape / Heartleaf Peppervine
☐	*Amphicarpaea bracteata* (am-fi-CAR-pee-uh)	Fabaceae (Faboideae subfamily) [CC4]	Hog Peanut
☐	*Arnoglossum atriplicifolium* (awr-no-GLOSS-um)	Asteraceae (Senecioneae tribe) [CC4]	Pale Indian Plantain
☐	*Arnoglossum reniforme* (awr-no-GLOSS-um)	Asteraceae (Senecioneae tribe) [CC8]	Great Indian Plantain
☐	*Brachyelytrum erectum* (brack-ee-ell-LY-trum)	Poaceae [CC5]	Long-Awned Woodgrass
☐	*Campanula americana* (kam-PAN-yoo-luh)	Campanulaceae [CC4]	Tall Bellflower
☐	*Celastrus orbiculatus* (sell-ASS-trus)	Celastraceae [intro]	Oriental Bittersweet
☐	*Cornus drummondii* (KOR-nuss)	Cornaceae [CC2]	Roughleaf Dogwood
☐	*Cornus florida* (*Benthamidia florida*) (KOR-nuss)	Cornaceae [CC5]	Flowering Dogwood
☐	*Corylus americana* (KOR-ill-luss)	Betulaceae [CC4]	Hazelnut
☐	*Cystopteris protrusa* (sis-STOP-tr-riss)	Cystopteridaceae [CC5]	Lowland Bladderfern
☐	*Elaeagnus umbellata* (el-ee-AG-nus)	Elaeagnaceae [intro]	Autumn Olive
☐	*Galium triflorum* (GAY-lee-um)	Rubiaceae [CC4]	Fragrant Bedstraw
☐	*Hydrastis canadensis* (hy-DRASS-tiss)	Ranunculaceae [CC6]	Goldenseal
☐	*Laportea canadensis* (luh-POR-tee-uh)	Urticaceae [CC4]	Wood Nettle
☐	*Lobelia inflata* (lo-BEE-lee-uh)	Campanulaceae [CC3]	Indian Tobacco
☐	*Lobelia siphilitica* (lo-BEE-lee-uh)	Campanulaceae [CC4]	Great Blue Lobelia
☐	*Microstegium vimineum* (my-kro-STEE-jee-um)	Poaceae (Panicoideae subfamily) [intro]	Japanese Stiltgrass
☐	*Monotropa uniflora* () (mono-TRO-puh)	Ericaceae [CC8]	Indian Pipe
☐	*Perilla frutescens* (pr-ILL-uh)	Lamiaceae (Nepetoideae subfam.) [intro]	Perilla
☐	*Persicaria virginiana* (pr-seh-KAYR-ee-uh)	Polygonaceae [CC1]	Jumpseed / Virginia Knotweed
☐	*Phegopteris hexagonoptera* (fay-go-TAYR-iss)	Thelypteridaceae [CC8]	Broad Beech Fern
☐	*Rudbeckia triloba* (rood-BECK-ee-uh)	Asteraceae (Heliantheae tribe) [CC3]	Brown-Eyed Susan
☐	*Sassafras albidum* (SASS-uh-frass)	Lauraceae [CC2]	Sassafras
☐	*Sceptridium dissectum* (skep-TRIDD-ee-um)	Ophioglossaceae [CC5]	Grape Fern
☐	*Solanum americanum* [*S.ptychanthum*] (so-LAY-num)	Solanaceae [CC1]	American Black Nightshade

☐	*Spiranthes ovalis* var. *erostellata* (spy-RAN-theez)	Orchidaceae [CC8]	Oval Ladies' Tresses
☐	*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum* (SIMM-fee-o-TRY-kum)	Asteraceae (Astereae tribe) [CC3]	Calico Aster
☐	*Tilia americana* (TILL-ee-uh)	Malvaceae [CC5]	Basswood
☐	*Triphora trianthophoros* () (try-FOR-uh)	Orchidaceae [CC9]	Three Birds Orchid
☐	*Verbesina alternifolia* (vr-beh-SEE-nuh)	Asteraceae (Heliantheae tribe) [CC4]	Yellow Wingstem
☐	*Viola pubescens* (vy-O-luh)	Violaceae [CC5]	Downy Yellow Violet

NOTES

WHERE WE WALKED: We met at the Visitor's Center parking lot and then caravanned to the "Guy Park Trailhead" parking lot. That's where we began botanizing along a narrow loop formed from part of the paved "Bicycle Trail" and part of the unpaved "Woodbine Trail". It was perfect! When we were finished, John led us over to inspect some Sassafras trees near the entrance to our parking lot. They are infected by a *Nectria* fungus and show the telltale reactionary growths on their bark.

FATHER SULLIVAN:
We were all happy to see our hero Fr. Sullivan arrive. Last week was his birthday, so we all sang "Happy Birthday" to him. It clearly embarrassed him, but it was a "good" kind of embarrassment so we all sang even more loudly. We did a pretty good job of it until we got to the "dear Father Sullivan" part when our syllables flew all over the place as we tried to squeeze them into the melody.

GISELA:
We were happy to be reacquainted with Gisela, a fellow plant enthusiast. She has walked with us before, but not for quite a while. There's a famous ballet called "Giselle" (YouTube synopsis HERE) but knowing about it won't help us much in learning to pronounce her name – in fact it might even make it more difficult. Our Gisela pronounces her name with a hard "G", and with an accent on the first syllable: **GEE-sell-uh**. We all tried practicing it aloud. No worries. If we can whip through "*Silphium terebinthinaceum*", then "Gisela" shouldn't be a problem at all.

By the way, it's "SILL-fee-um / tayr-a-bin-thin-AY-see-um". Doesn't saying it make you feel intelligent? Try it when you're feeling low or after you've done something really stupid. It's a confidence-builder. Just like when we squeeze its big "Prairie Dock" leaf, it makes us feel "cool".

ASIMINA TRILOBA:
Before our walk, June mentioned that she had never before tasted a pawpaw. Fifteen minutes later we were all in Pawpaw Heaven. Pawpaws were all over the ground, free for the tasting.

Everybody had pawpaw stories to tell – how best to eat them, how to cook with them, how to make ice-cream with them. Then the conversation switched to persimmons (which won't be ripe for another couple of months). Renee explained how she processes persimmons by pushing them through a cone-shaped sieve called a "Chinois" (pronounced and often spelled "Shinwa") using a special wooden pestle. [ATTENTION K-MART SHOPPERS: we have a blue-light special in Aisle #8 on Shinwas! You can find them HERE.]

Back to the pawpaws. There's something a little different about the pawpaws we found. Although they're fully ripe, they seem to have fallen 5 or 6 weeks too early and they're a bit smaller than usual. They also seem thin-skinned – bruising and becoming mushy very easily. There's a bit of a pawpaw mystery on the nearby Hawthorn Trail. The Hawthorn is a loop trail that straddles a ridge. On the North-facing half of the trail there are countless pawpaw trees – a monoculture maybe a quarter mile long! But they're all juveniles with no parents in sight. How did they get there? Was there a tornado or fire a few years ago that killed the mature trees and triggered growth of the saplings?

GALIUM TRIFLORUM:
St. Louis has 7 Bedstraw species [list HERE]. We found 2 of them along our trail. We'll skip *Galium concinnum* (Shining Bedstraw) because it's the refined, tidy, sophisticated one that always gets everybody's attention. We'll look instead at the lesser-known *Galium triflorum* , the "Fragrant Bedstraw". It's easy to identify with its whorls of 6 leaves. (Actually, St. Louis has one other bedstraw that also has whorls of 6 leaves. But it's the annual "Cleavers" plant (*Galium aparine*) that has larger leaves and runs rampant like a wild-child and sticks like Velcro to everything, so we're not likely to get them confused.)

Why was Fragrant Bedstraw given the not-too-helpful species epithet "*triflorum*" (3 flowers) instead of a more useful epithet such as "*odoratum*" (fragrant)? It's because the name "*Galium odoratum*" was already taken by the famous European plant "Sweet Woodruff". But don't worry, our native species is just as fragrant and just as culinarily useful as the European one. You can read how an award-winning chef gathers and makes use of the plant as a vanilla substitute HERE. The chef mentions that it's during the *flowering* stage that a plant produces the most Coumarin.

Speaking of which, many of us probably thought that the wonderfully-fragrant Coumarin was just a benevolent organic compound whose sole purpose in life was to float around and make people happy. Freshly mown grass, marzipan, vanilla wafers… bliss! But John popped that little bubble with 5 words: "It's used in rat poison." What?! Yes, our innocent-looking coumarin ($C_9H_6O_2$) is an anticoagulant that causes rats to die from internal hemorrhaging. However it apparently has not been found to be harmful to humans, even in large quantities. Still, its use does have some legal restrictions.

PARTICIPANTS:
There were 14 of us botanists today, who are (in alphabetical order):
Gisela Baner, Renee Benage, Kathy Bildner, Jerry Castillon, June Jeffries, Michael Laschober, Sharon Lu, Burt Noll, John Oliver, David Steinmeyer, Fr. Sullivan, Mark & Deb Tolcou, and George Van Brunt.