A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO LATE SUMMER & FALL WILDFLOWERS

AT THE

FITZGERALD LAKE CONSERVATION AREA

compiled by

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, I've become ever more intrigued by the succession of wildflowers that appear in the spring, summer and even fall. The Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area affords an abundance of these wonderful plants and I started taking my camera along on hikes to try to capture their fleeting beauty. This in turn inspired me to share my photos with others in a context that relates some basic information about the flowers, their growth, their habitat and their reproduction. I've become particularly interested in the folklore associated with these plants and their use for food or medicinal purposes. I hope that this brief guide will help you to identify a sampling of the late summer and fall wildflowers that grow along the paths and in the woods and pastures of the FLCA. All but Lady's-Thumb are native to New England. Though many flowers fade as fall approaches, the season is enriched by the matchless effusion of asters and goldenrods. The photos were taken by me at the FLCA or on abutting land (except for two goldenrods from Graves Farm), but most can be found within the FLCA. The present collection of flower descriptions follows similar guides to spring and summer wildflowers that I've compiled in the past two years. Common, family, genus and specific names follow those found on the Go Botany web site (see Sources). Once again, I am deeply indebted to Connie Parks for looking over preliminary versions of this guide and for offering numerous helpful suggestions and corrections; while errors may persist, they are mine.

> Bob Zimmermann August 2019; revised and expanded, August 2020

TERMINOLOGY

Although I have tried to keep the plant and flower descriptions nontechnical, there are a few terms in the text that need a bit of explanation. Annuals and biennials are plants that complete their life cycles within one or two years, respectively, while perennials continue to grow and reproduce for three or more years; most New England wildflowers are perennials. Petals and sepals are both modified leaves. Petals, which surround the reproductive apparatus of the flower and are often brightly colored to attract pollinators, are in turn surrounded by sepals, which cover the flower bud; though often green, sepals are sometimes colored and resemble petals in which case they are called tepals. Bracts, yet another modified leaf type, are usually located at the base of a flower, and are generally green. In members of the arum family, such as skunk cabbage and jack-in-the-pulpit, a spike of tiny flowers are borne on a structure called a spadix, enclosed by large, thick bracts Some leaves are arranged in pairs, opposite to one another, while others occur singly in an alternate fashion, along the stem. Still others form a whorl of three or more leaves, circling the stem. The base of some leaves clasp, or entirely surround, the stem. Leaf characteristics can often be quite helpful in identification. The reproductive parts of a flower are known as the pistil, which contains the ovary, and the filamentous stamen, which produces pollen containing the male gametes. Seeds are packaged in a fruit, including capsules or follicles that split open to release the seeds at maturity, achenes that contain a single seed but do not open at maturity, and fleshy berries or drupes that are often consumed and dispersed by animals (and humans!). The underground parts of perennials, such as rhizomes, tubers, corms and bulbs, store nutrients to promote regrowth of the plant in spring or summer and in many cases account for asexual reproduction. Rhizomes are modified, fleshy stems that grow horizontally underground and contain multiple buds that can give rise to new plants; these structures account for the spread of many wildflowers (and are responsible for the invasiveness of numerous non-native plant species). Tubers, also derived from stem tissue, are enlarged, fleshy structures with buds scattered over their surface from which shoots (and roots) develop. Corms are solid structures that form at the stem base and generally produce a single bud or shoot, while true bulbs consist primarily of modified leaves with many layers, like an onion, and a single bud from which the plant develops.

Daisy Fleabane

(Erigeron annuus)



Family: Asteraceae (Sunflower, Daisy, Aster)

Height: 1-5'

Leaves: 1-4" long, alternate, lanceolate,

toothed

Flowers: ½" wide, numerous yellow disk flowers

in center surrounded by 40-50 white or

lavender-tinged ray flowers

Fruit: 1-seeded achene with a fluffy *pappus*

for dispersion by the wind.

Flowering: June-October

<u>Habitat</u>: Fields, meadows, pastures

FLCA Location: Throughout

Pollination: Numerous bees, flies and other

insects attracted by nectar

Name: Erigeron derived from two Greek

words denoting "woolly old man"; annuus, from Latin, meaning plant is

an annual

Folklore: The common name of this annual

plant came from a belief that its dried flowers could thwart infestation with fleas, but there is little evidence of its

effectiveness as an insecticide

CANADA LILY

(Lilium canadense)



Family: Liliaceae (Lily)

Height:: 2-5'

Leaves: 4-6" long, whorled, lanceolate

Flowers: 2-3" wide, 3 petals and 3 petal-like

sepals, yellow to orange-red, with

dark spots; nodding

Fruit: Erect capsule, 1-2" long, containing 2

or more seeds

Flowering: June-August

Habitat: Wet meadows, wetland edges,

stream floodplains

FLCA Location: Stream bank in northern section of

conservation area

<u>Pollination</u>: Ruby-throated hummingbird

Name: Lilium derives from "leiron" (Grk), a

particular species of European lily

<u>Folklore</u>: Flower buds and roots of this plant

were gathered and eaten by Native Americans. It is also said to have been

used imedicinally to treat stomach disorders, rheumatism, and snake bites.

The Cherokee prepared an extract of boiled rhizomes to fatten children.

INDIAN-TOBACCO

(Lobelia inflata)



Family: Campanulaceae (Bellflower)

Height:: 1-3'

Leaves: 1-2½" long, alternate, ovate,

toothed

Flowers: ½" long, 5 petals fused into a tube

with two lips, pale violet; arranged as spike with flowers on central axis

Fruit: Capsule forms in inflated calyx, ~1/3"

long, at base of flower

Flowering: July-October

<u>Habitat</u>: Wetlands, meadows, fields, forest edges

FLCA Location: Throughout

Name: The genus was named for 16th-century

Belgian botanist Matthias de Lobel; *inflata* (Lat.) refers to the inflated calyx

Folklore: This plant, an annual, is acrid and

poisonous--especially the roots.

Nonetheless, the mashed roots of this plant were used by the Cherokee as a poultice for aches and sores; in the 19th century doctors employed it to induce

vomiting

JEWELWEED OR SPOTTED TOUCH-ME-NOT

(Impatiens capensis)



Family: Balsaminaceae (Touch-Me-Not)

Height:: 2-5'

Leaves: 1½-4" long, ovate, alternate, coarsely

toothed, underside glaucous,

Stem: Translucent, succulent

Flowers: 1" long, orange spotted with red; 5

petals, 2 fused on each side of flower; 3 sepals, one of which projects behind flower into spur-like sac containing

nectar

Fruit: Ripe 3/4"-long capsule splits explosively

when touched, expelling seeds up to 6'

Flowering: July-October

Habitat: Shores of streams or lakes, swamps

FLCA Location: Boardwalk, many other wet areas

Pollination: Hummingbirds, bees, some moths

Name: Common name may come from sparkling

beads of dew or rain on leaves

Folklore: Native Americans used juice from

stems of this annual plant to relieve itching from poison ivy and nettle

LADY'S-THUMB SMARTWEED

(Persicaria maculosa)



Family: Polygonaceae (Buckwheat)

Height:: 1-2½'

Leaves: 2-4" long, alternate, lanceolate, with

dark green "thumbprint" in middle (see photo); leaf base forms a cylindrical

sheath where it joins the stem

Flowers: ~1/8" long, no petals but 4-6 pink sepals,

in 1-2" cylindrical spikes at end of stem

Fruit: ~1/8" shiny black, one-seeded; a favorite

food of many species of birds

Flowering: June-October

<u>Habitat</u>: Moist fields, clearings, stream banks

FLCA Location: Pretty much everywhere

Name: The specific name *maculosa* (Lat.)

refers to the dark spot on the leaf

Notes: Lady's thumb is one of many smart-

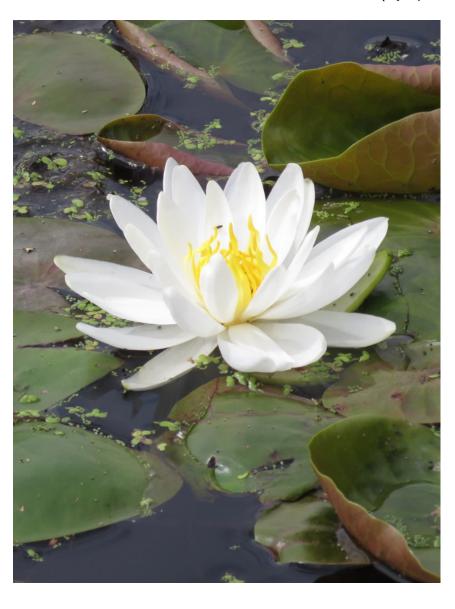
weeds--both native and non-native (as

lady's thumb)--found in our area.
These annuals belong to the same family as the invasive plant Japanese knotweed. Leaves were used to soothe

poison ivy by Native Americans.

WHITE WATER-LILY

(Nymphaea odorata)



Family: Nymphaeaceae (Water Lily)

Height:: 3-4" above water surface

Leaves: 4-10" in diameter, alternate, most are

floating, some submerged

Flowers: 3-5" wide, 20-30 white petals surrounding

40 or more bright yellow stamens

Fruit: Fleshy berry containing up to 2000 seeds

Flowering: June-September

<u>Habitat</u>: Lakes, ponds, slow-moving streams

FLCA Location: Fitzgerald Lake

Reproduction: Bees, flies and beetles carrying pollen

are attracted to pool of fragrant fluid in flower; the flower closes, trapping the insect; the pollen is washed off and fertilizes the flower; the pollinator is

then released and the flower stem recoils, drawing the flower head underwater where the seeds ripen; also spreads via rhizomes

Name: Nymphaea refers to water nymphs (Grk.),

odorata to fragrance of flower (Lat.)

Folklore: Native Americans used leaves and

roots to treat a variety of ailments;

leaves eaten by many insects, seeds by ducks and other wetland birds, and rhizomes by muskrats and beavers

WHITE TURTLEHEAD

(Chelone glabra)



<u>Family</u>: Plantaginaceae (Plantain)

Height:: 1-3'

Leaves: 3-6" long, opposite, lanceolate,

sharply toothed

Flowers: 1-1½" long, 5 petals fused into tube

with hood-like upper lip, white tinged

with pink, in terminal clusters

Fruit: Capsule splits open when dry; seeds

~1/8" long

Flowering: July-September

Habitat: Stream banks, wetland margins

FLCA Location: Boardwalk

Pollination: Bumblebees and hummingbirds

Name: Resemblance of flower to a turtle's

head is reflected in its generic name, *Chelone* meaning "tortoise" (Grk.); *glabra* means 'smooth' (Lat.); also snake head, shellflower, fish mouth

Folklore: Used extensively by Native Americans

as a laxative and to treat fever and malaria; ointment made from leaves was used to soothe sores and blisters

WHITE SNAKEROOT

(Ageratina altissima)



Family: Asteraceae (Sunflower, Daisy, Aster)

Height:: 1-3'

Leaves: 3-6" long, opposite, ovate, sharply

toothed

Flowers: ½" wide disk flowers, white, in flat-

topped clusters, on stems that usually

bear four or more flower heads

Fruit: Tiny seeds with fine white bristles at

one end that are dispersed by the

wind

Flowering: July-October

Habitat: Woods and thickets

FLCA Location: Forested hillsides

Reproduction: Seeds and rhizomes

Name: Ageratina ultimately derives from

"ageraton" meaning ageless (Grk); altissima means the tallest (Lat)

Folklore: Early settlers to New England believed

this plant to be useful in treating snake bites. It is very poisonous, however: consumption of milk or meat

from cows that have grazed on this

plant may be fatal to humans.

FORKED BLUECURLS

(Trichostema dichotomum)



Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)

Height:: 6-30"

Leaves: ³/₄-2½" long, opposite, lanceolate,

untoothed

Flowers: ½-¾" long, blue, 5 petals; upper lip

consists of 4 fused petals; the fifth, recurved petal comprises the lower lip; 4 blue, curled stamens project from

corolla

Fruit: 4 'nutlets'

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Grasslands, fields, sandplains

FLCA Location: Shady areas along trails and fields

<u>Pollination</u>: This plant is pollinated by a variety of

native bees

Name: Trichostema refers to its hair-like

stamens; dichotomum means "forked"

(Lat.)

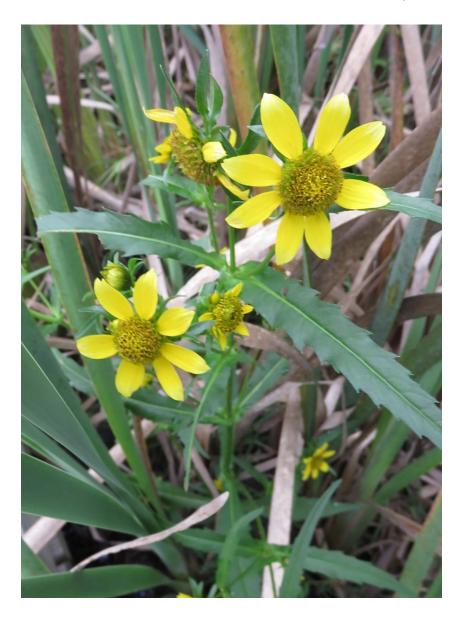
Notes: This elegant little flower, an annual,

does not appear to have been put to use for either practical or medicinal

purposes

NODDING BEGGAR-TICKS

(Bidens cernua)



Family: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

Height:: 1-3'

Leaves: 2-6" long, opposite, lanceolate, toothed,

attached directly to stem

Flowers: 2" wide heads, numerous dark yellow

cone flowers at center surrounded by 6-10 bright yellow ray flowers; heads

droop (i.e., nod) when mature

Fruit: Achenes with 4 barbed bristles that

attach to fur of animals, feathers of birds and clothes of humans; eaten by ducks

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Shores of ponds and streams; wetland

edges

FLCA Location: Boardwalk

Pollination: Many different species of native bees

Name: Bidens refers to teeth or bristles on

achene; cernua means "nodding" (Lat.); "tick" reflects ability of fruit to stick to fur,

clothing, etc.; also, bur marigold

Folklore: There is little evidence that this annual

plant was used for medicinal or other

practical purposes

WATER HOREHOUND

(Lycopus americanus)



Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)

<u>Height</u>:: 6-24"

Leaves: 1-3" long, opposite, lanceolate,

coarsely toothed, fuzzy underneath

Stem: Square, hairy

Flowers: ½" wide, tubular with 4 fused petals, white,

densely clustered in the leaf axils

Seeds: 1/8" long nutlets, eaten by waterfowl

Flowering: June-September

<u>Habitat</u>: Wetlands, edges of streams and ponds

FLCA Location: Stream banks

Reproduction: Pollinated by bees and flies; also spreads

via rhizomes

Name: Lycopus derived from Greek lycos or

"wolf" and *pous* or "foot"; common name believed to come from Old English words

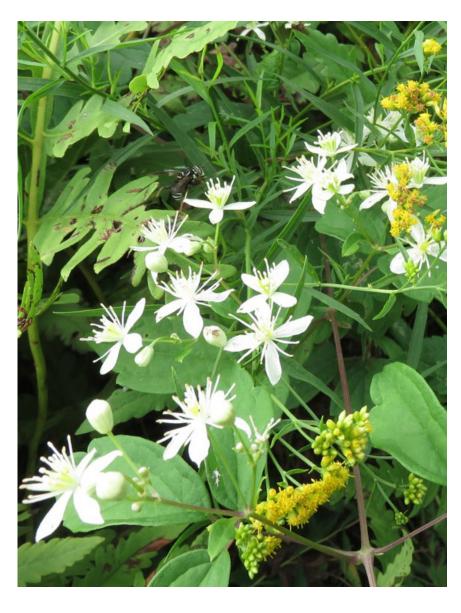
for "downy plant"

Folklore: Reported to have been used by Native

Americans as an analgesic and to treat gastrointestinal problems. Though in the mint family, this plant is not aromatic.

VIRGINIA VIRGIN'S BOWER

(Clematis virginiana)



Family: Renunculaceae (Buttercup)

Height:: Climbing vine with 6-20' woody stem

<u>Leaves</u>: Opposite, compound leaves, with 3

toothed, often lobed, 3"-long leaflets

Stem: The stems of this plant twine around

nearby shrubs and bushes

Flowers: 1" wide; no petals but 4 petal-like,

white sepals arising from leaf axils; numerous stamens or pistils on male

or female plants, respectively

Reproduction: Single, 0.1" dry seed (achene) in

spherical head with feathery "tails" that are dispersed by wind; pollinated by bees and wasps; also spread by rhizomes

Flowering: July-September

<u>Habitat</u>: Stream banks, wetland edges

FLCA Location: Boardwalk

Name: Common name may relate to Queen

Elizabeth I or to Virgin Mary; also Old Man's Beard, Devil's Darning Needle

<u>Folklore</u>: Though toxic to mammals, Cherokee made

an infusion of virgin's bower with milkweed

to treat backache, induce dreaming

NEW ENGLAND AMERICAN-ASTER

(Symphyotrichum novae-angliae)



Family: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

Height: 3-6'

Leaves: 1-5" long; lance-shaped, untoothed,

fuzzy underneath; leaves clasp stems

Stem: Covered with sticky hairs

Flowers: 1-2" wide, each head has 35-45

bright purple ray flowers surrounding multiple yellow disk flowers at center

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Meadows, fields

FLCA Location: Cooke's Pasture

Name: Aster is from Greek, meaning "star";

name of genus comes from the Greek

words *symph* meaning "coming together" and *trich* meaning "hair," referring to the fused or connate

anthers of this flower

<u>Folklore</u>: Though the brilliance of this flower is

attention-getting, it has not been used much for practical purposes. It has been reported, however, that Native` Americans burned both flowers and leaves to relieve various maladies

WHITE WOOD ASTER

(Eurrybia divaricata)



<u>Family</u>: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

Height:: 1-3'

Leaves: 2-7" long, alternate, heart-shaped,

coarsely toothed

Stem: Often zig-zagged

Flowers: 1" wide, 6-10 white ray flowers with disk

flowers that turn from yellow to burgundy;

flowers in cluster at top of stem

Fruit: Dry, seed-like, tipped with whitish tufts;

seeds eaten by songbirds

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Open forests

FLCA Location: Widespread in woodlands

Reproduction: Pollinated by bees and butterflies; also

spread by rhizomes

Name: Aster is from Greek word for "star";

Eurybia is derived from Greek "wide and few," possibly referring to ray flowers; divaricata means "spreading at wide

angle" (Lat.)

Folklore: This plant has not been exploited

extensively for practical use

PURPLE-STEMMED AMERICAN-ASTER

(Symphyotrichum puniceum)



Family: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

Height:: 3-6'

Leaves: 2-6" long, alternate, lanceolate, finely

toothed

Flowers: 1-1.5" wide; tubular yellow disk flowers

at center surrounded by 30-60 pale

violet ray flowers

Reproduction: Dry seed with tuft of white hair;

also spreads via rhizomes

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Marshes, swamps, wet meadows

FLCA Location: Boardwalk

Name: Aster is from Greek, meaning "star";

name of genus comes from the Greek

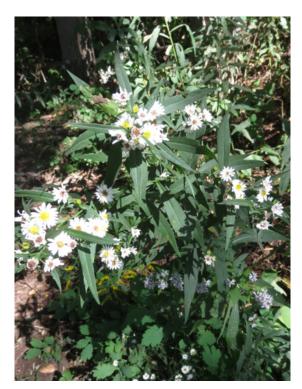
words symph meaning "coming together" and trich meaning "hair," referring to the fused anthers; puniceum is from Latin "purple" also swamp aster, red-stem aster

Folklore: Roots said to have been used by

Native Americans to treat fever, colds,

pneumonia and typhoid

SOME OTHER ASTERS FOUND AT THE FLCA



Lance-leaved American-aster



Heart-leaved American-aster Symphyotrichum cordifolium



Calico American-aster Symphyotrichum lateriflorum



New York American-aster Symphyotrichum novi-belgii

GRASS-LEAVED GOLDENROD

(Euthamia graminifolia)



Family: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

Height:: 2-4'

Leaves: 2-5" long, alternate, narrow, elongated,

pointed

Flowers: ½" wide, bright yellow, with 8-12 disk

florets and 10-20 ray florets in flat-

topped clusters of heads

Fruit: ~1/8" long achene with tiny seeds; eaten

by goldfinches and swamp sparrows

Flowering: July-October

Habitat: Fields, meadows, edges of wetlands

FLCA Location: Cooke's Pasture

Reproduction: Pollinated by bees, wasps, moths and

butterflies; also spread via rhizomes

Name: Euthamia means "well-crowded" (Grk.),

graminifolia derives from Latin words for

"grass" and "leaf"; also goldentop

Folklore: Infusions widely used widely by various

Native American tribes to relieve chest pain, cure fevers and as an analgesic or

astringent

BLUE-STEM GOLDENROD

(Solidago caesia)



Family: Asteraceae (Aster, Sunflower, Daisy)

1-3' Height::

Leaves: 2-5" long, alternate, elliptic, tapering

at both ends, toothed, sharply pointed

Flowers: 1/4" long, yellow, composite heads, with

> 4-5 disk florets and 4-5 ray florets in clusters emerging from leaf axils; scattered along reddish-purple stem

and with larger terminal cluster

~1/8" long achene with tiny seeds; eaten Fruit:

by songbirds

Flowering: August-October

Habitat: Woodlands, forests

FLCA Location: Throughout woods

Pollination: Pollinated by bees, wasps, flies; also

spreads via rhizomes

Name: Solidago derives from Latin solidus

> meaning "whole"; caesia means "light blue" (Lat.); also, axillary goldenrod

Note: There is little evidence that blue-stem

goldenrod was used for medicinal or

other practical purposes

SOME OTHER GOLDENRODS FOUND IN OUR AREA



Rough-stemmed Goldenrod Solidago rugosa



Early Goldenrod Solidago juncea



Canada Goldenrod Solidago canadensis



Tall Goldenrod Solidago altissima

GOLDENRODS FROM GRAVES FARM



Zig-Zag Goldenrod Solidago flexicaulis



Silverrod Solidago bicolor

AMERICAN WITCH-HAZEL

(Hamamelis virginiana)



Family: Hamamelidaceae

Height: Shrub or small tree to 30'

Leaves: 3-6" long, oval, with rounded

teeth and lopsided base

Flowers: 1" wide, 4 petals, yellow, spidery,

on leafless twigs

Fruit: ~½" long, in woody capsule; small,

black seeds can be ejected for a

distance of 20-30' when capsule bursts

Flowering: October-November

Habitat: Forest, floodplain, swamp

FLCA Location: Fishing Place trail, dam; throughout

forested areas

Name: "Witch" derives from an old English

word meaning pliant or bendable;

also called winterbloom

<u>Folklore</u>: Extracts of leaves and bark used as

a mild, aromatic astringent by Native Americans, later in commercial lotions; forked branches also used as divining rods by dowsers in search of under-

ground water

BERRIES



Red Baneberry

Actaea rubra



Jack-in-the-Pulpit Arisaema triphyllum



Common Winterberry

Ilex verticillata



Partridge-berry Mitchella repens



Eastern Spicy-wintergreen Gaultheria procumbens

The Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area harbors many flowers and shrubs that produce colorful berries or fruits, usually in late summer or autumn. Some, however, like red baneberry, produce their fruit much earlier in the season. While they are pleasing to human eyes, they appear to be even more appealing to birds' eyes, which are particularly sensitive to red and black. Although these colors may mean "food" to a bird, there's something in it for the plant as well. Birds pick the fruit--essentially packaged seed--digest the nourishing pulp, then disperse the undigested seeds in their droppings. In this way, they spread the species throughout the surrounding habitat.

Maple-leaved Viburnum Viburnum acerifolium

SOURCES

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Indian Tobacco (https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs loin.pdf)

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