

**New England Botanical Club – Minutes of the 1013<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**13 January 2006**

Karen Lombard, Recording Secretary

The 786<sup>th</sup> meeting of the New England Botanical Club, being the 1013<sup>th</sup> since its original organization, was held on Friday, January 13th, 2006, in the Lecture Room of the Fairchild Biochemistry Building, Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA. There were 30 members and guests in attendance. The meeting began with the “Sixth Segue into Sustenance and Selected Species” potluck dinner. Edible highlights included “mackleberry” pie, *Theobroma cacao* pudding, cucurbit spice cookies, cultivated *Agaricus*, a *Zizania aquatica* salad, and Huitlacoche (using *Ustilago maydis* or corn smut) made by Russ Cohen. A small raffle of books and cards raised about \$70 for the club.

The annual members’ slide show began with Don Lubin’s images of ferns put to music. This was followed by **Pam Weatherbee** showing a small, student’s book of botany from the early 1800s that has been in her family for generations. Hand-painted illustrations demonstrated botanical structures. **Russ Cohen**, author of *Wild Plants I Have Known and Eaten*, showed slides of edible plants including bluebead lily (*Clintonia borealis*), which has edible young leaves; spatterdock (*Nuphar variegata*), with ripe seeds that swell up like popcorn; and purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), which is delicious when included in gazpacho. The invasive seaweed *Codium fragile* is good in salads and in kimchee, and sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) was used by the American colonists to make tea when they were boycotting English tea. He also described his efforts to obtain the corn smut, used in the potluck earlier, from corn fields at the Plymouth County Correctional Facilities!

**Don Lubin** followed with slides of five new county records of pteridophytes he collected in New England this year. These included *Lycopodium dendroideum* from the Blue Hills in Massachusetts, *Diplazium pycnocarpon* and *Equisetum pratense* from the New England Wild Flower Society’s Hobbs Sanctuary in New Hampshire, *Lycopodium hickeyi* from Middleboro, Massachusetts, and *Polypodium appalachianum* from Brookline, Massachusetts. **Marsha Sallett** showed photos from an “Orchid Fever” trip she took to Downeast Maine, including Washington and Aroostook Counties. She had beautiful photos of five *Platanthera* species (*P. psycodes*, *P. clavellata*, *P. dilatata*, *P. hyberborea* var. *huronensis*, and *P. lacera*), as well as *Calopogon tuberosus*, *Arethusa bulbosa*, and *Pogonia ophioglossoides*. **Jenn Forman Orth** headed to warm Baja this year, to Los Cabos and the San Jose Estuary. There she saw many legumes, including the purple bushbean (*Macroptilium atropurpureum*), an endemic yellow morning glory, *Merremia aurea*, and several invasive species including the tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

Closer to home, **Bryan Hamlin** showed several plants that had special meaning to him, the majority of which were in the Boston area. Highlights included *Cardamine concatenata* and *Trillium cernuum* from the Middlesex Fells, and *Spiranthes lacera* var. *gracilis* from the side of the Mass Turnpike in the Berkshires, where his car died. **Keith Williams** followed with photos of a New York Botanical Garden trip to the Amazon, co-led by Garrett Crow of UNH and Scott Mori and Carol Gracie of NYBG. They visited in flood season and saw many aquatic plant species including the giant Amazon water lily (*Victoria amazonica*), which blooms at night, and many beautiful orchids. He also saw several aquatic plants that are extremely invasive in the U. S., including water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and the water fern (*Salvinia molesta*) -- the latter from the pool where they type of that species was collected. **Kanchi Gandhi** then showed us images of two genera of succulent plants in the Asclepiadaceae, *Stapelia* and *Coralluma*, which show convergent evolution with other succulent plants and are distinguished by the structure of their corollas. These plants have enormous flowers and smell like decaying flesh.

Although **Nancy Eyster-Smith** was in the Yucatan this month, she was able to share several slides of her trip via e-mail, including one of her relaxing in a hammock! **Lisa Standley** followed with images of her trip to the east coast of Australia, from Queensland to Tasmania. Not only did she see spectacular coastal heathlands and many orchids and species of Proteaceae, but she pulled her eyes away from plants to see fruit bats, echidnas, and cassowaries. **George Newman** finished off the evening with slides from three trips, including *Sarracenia rosea*, *Gentiana pennelliana*, and native orchids from the wiregrass prairies of the Florida panhandle; striped coralroot (*Corallorhiza striata*) from Flower Pot Island near the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, and *Lophiola americana* from western Nova Scotia.