

**The Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award
For Best Paper published in *Rhodora*
Volume 110, 2008**

presented to

William F. Nichols and Virginia C. Nichols

for their paper entitled

**“The land use history, flora, and natural communities of the Isles of
Shoals, Rye, New Hampshire and Kittery, Maine”**

This year's recipients of the New England Botanical Club's Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award are William F. Nichols and Virginia C. Nichols for their paper in *Rhodora* 110: 245-295 (Summer 2008).

In this paper, Nichols and Nichols have done an admirable job of covering many aspects of the phytogeography of the Isles of Shoals, providing an excellent overview of the historical background and putting the work into a good regional context. For this study, the authors did exhaustive field work on all of the islands; previous floras focused only on the larger islands. The analysis included consideration of historical accounts, state and regional floras, natural community types, species/area richness, and non-native invasive and rare plant taxa. Their natural community descriptions and key to natural community types on the Isles are likely to be copied and brought into the field on the Shoals as well as other coastal maritime areas in Maine and New Hampshire, giving the paper a broader utility. The award committee agreed that this paper represented a clear and complete assessment of an interesting component of the Northeastern flora.