

**The Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award
For Best Paper published in *Rhodora*
Volume 114, 2012**

presented to

**Bryan T. Hamlin, Walter T. Kittredge,
Donald P. Lubin, and Elizabeth Barton Wright
for their paper entitled**

**“Changes in the Vascular Flora of the Middlesex Fells Reservation,
Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from 1895 to 2011”**

This year's recipients of the New England Botanical Club's **Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award** are Bryan T. Hamlin, Walter T. Kittredge, Donald P. Lubin, and Elizabeth Barton Wright for their paper entitled “Changes in the Vascular Flora of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from 1895 to 2011” published in *Rhodora* 114 (959): 229-308 (July 2012).

In this paper, Hamlin *et al.* presented a study of the vascular flora of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, a suburban forest reserve in greater Boston, made over nine years from 2003 to 2011. They compiled a checklist, determining the frequency of each taxon and documenting all natural community types occurring in the reservation. Further, they compared their findings to those made in the 1890s and subsequent surveys, and attempted to explain changes in species composition and frequency. The Award Committee noted that the combination of exhaustive fieldwork and a thoroughgoing review of information from the historical record – including effective use of NEBC herbarium collections – was impressive. Equally impressive was the authors' thoughtful discussion of the multiple factors that may have influenced vegetation change in the Fells over the past century. The authors' checklist and natural communities profiles were valuable additions to the work. Last but not least, the paper was very well written: a real pleasure to read.