

**The Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award For
Best Paper published in *Rhodora*
Volume 124, 2022**

presented to

**Olivia A. Asher and
Naveed Davoodian
for their paper, "Boletes
in the Bronx and beyond:
A study of Boletales
(Agaricomycetes,
Basidiomycota, Fungi)
specimen records of New
York City"**

**Stacy Taylor-Bennetts
and Foster Levy
for their paper, "Factors
associated with the
transition to weediness in
the granite outcrop
endemic, *Phacelia dubia*
var. *georgiana*
(Hydrophyllaceae), and
dating the time of the
transition"**

This year there are two recipients of the New England Botanical
Society's Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award.

Asher and Davoodian's paper is in *Rhodora* 124 (997), pp. 1-16.
Taylor-Bennetts and Levy's paper is in *Rhodora* 124 (998/999), pp.
287-300.

The Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award Committee identified no fewer than a dozen papers in *Rhodora* Volume 124 worthy of consideration, including five in the double issue celebrating the life of Robert Lynch Wilbur. The scope and depth of field work and scholarship evident in the contributions from Robert I. Bertin *et al.* ("Patterns and changes in the nonnative flora of Franklin County, Massachusetts"), James L. Luteyn ("A nomenclator of Neotropical *Macleania* (Ericaceae: Vaccinieae) with historical notes about early introductions into

cultivation"), and Peter W. Fritsch *et al.* ("Systematics and evolution of *Vaccinium* sect. *Cyanococcus* (Ericaceae): progress and prospects") make *Rhodora* Volume 124 a particularly rich collection of botanical research.

The paper by Asher and Davoodian draws attention to an often overlooked and under-appreciated group of organisms—Boletales, and explores the role that public databases that aggregate systematic records can play in scientific research. In this case, the authors queried MyCoPortal, a public database of fungarium collections, to generate a species list of all Boletales collected from New York City in the past 123 years (89 species in 12 families). Public online databases are not without limitations, and the authors recommend that attention must be paid to taxonomic accuracy. The raw species list of Boletales included 25 outdated synonyms or species not in the group. We especially appreciate that Asher and Davoodian are also drawing attention to systematic and floristic research in urban environments.

In their paper, Stacy Taylor-Bennetts and Foster Levy explore factors related to a transition to weediness of a granite outcrop endemic, *Phacelia dubia* var. *georgiana*, using information gleaned from the field, the herbarium, and in common garden experiments. The Committee was particularly struck by the evidence from a close examination of herbarium collections, which pinpoints a decade-long window, beginning half a century ago when weedy varieties of *Phacelia dubia* first began to appear. When the Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award was proposed in the early 2000's by Les Mehrhoff and David Bufford, their aim was in part to recognize the ongoing role that collections play in exploring natural phenomena. In the face of a rapidly changing climate to which plants across the landscape are responding, Taylor-Bennetts and Levy provide a great example of how both experimental data and collections can be interrogated to better understand what we see in the field in real time.

The Merritt Lyndon Fernald Award Committee is pleased to recognize these two outstanding papers for the Fernald Award for *Rhodora* Volume 124.