

June 27, 2011



PARK PICKS
by
FRIENDS OF THE ALLENTOWN PARKS

Join us today! Become a member and help make Allentown's great park system even better.

June Discovery Walks

“Bug Walk”

On June 11, **Dr. Marten Edwards**, Muhlenberg College professor and entomologist, led a discovery walk in Cedar Creek Parkway that, despite rainy skies, yielded a treasure trove of six-legged specimens that delighted his audience, young and old. Mayfly to dragonfly, mosquito to water strider, airborne, land-based or water-dwelling – he’s enamored with them all. And his enthusiasm is infectious.



Nets in hand, participants scoured the trees and scooped up pond residue to inspect the tiny creatures that comprise more than half of all known living organisms. Dr. Edwards welcomed all questions – obvious to obscure – and took great pleasure in passing along his knowledge, as well as his passion, for insects of all persuasions.



“Isn’t that a fabulous bug?” he exclaimed with a wide smile.



Perhaps he’s influenced a new generation of entomologists. At least one young participant was later reported to be searching his yard for subjects to capture and study. So it may be “A Bug’s Life” after all.



Interested in these and other Friends programs? Have suggestions for future issues of Park Picks? Please contact us. Ideas are always welcome. See you in the parks!



Friends of the Allentown Parks
3000 Parkway Boulevard
Allentown, PA 18104

Phone: 610-437-7750
info@allentownparks.org
www.allentownparks.org



Wildflower Discoveries

It’s hard not to get caught up in the excitement of mosses, lichens or trailside plants when **Claudia Steckel** heads up a discovery walk. On June 25, the Allentown botanist and native plant specialist led a group of wildflower enthusiasts on an exploration and discussion of plants that are beneficial and those that are invasive during an hour-long walk along the Little Lehigh Creek.

Starting from Bogert’s Bridge, just off 24th Street in Lehigh Parkway, the group surveyed the diverse plant life that grows along the creek and under trees that blanket the hillside in the fertile upland soil. Many of the specimens she identified might ordinarily be dismissed as weeds or unattractive undergrowth, to be cut back and discarded. But Claudia enthusiastically explained the richness of this riparian plant community and the important contributions made by native species: increased insect and bird life, as well as improved health for aquatic life in the stream.



Discussion and identification of plants in this ecosystem ended with a history lesson as the group returned to Bogert’s Bridge, the oldest covered bridge in Lehigh County.



Mike Gilbert, supervisor of the Allentown’s trout nursery, explained that the Korper family had built the Hunter’s Cabin, the oldest home in Lehigh County, on the north side of the bridge in 1741. The Bogert family later took ownership of the cabin and the land, constructing a farmhouse, barn and the bridge – all still standing. Watch upcoming editions of “Park Picks” for more on the Bogert family’s contributions to the local area.