

WEEDS

UNTAMED WONDERS

Artwork featuring weeds of the northeast U.S.



An exhibit by
the Finger Lakes Chapter of
the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators

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An Introduction

What is a weed?

Always the first question people ask! Often, the answer is, “A weed is a plant growing where you don’t want it.” But, of course, this will mean that a weed is a weed some of the time, but maybe not all of the time.

Perhaps a plant is perfectly okay growing by the side of the road, used for food and shelter by birds and small mammals. But, what if it pops up in a farmer’s fields, threatening to take space meant for crops? What if the beautiful exotic flower you planted takes over your garden, and your neighbor’s garden, as well? These are weeds.

Can a native plant be a weed?

Yes! Some plants which are native to the United States and Canada can become problems when they grow in the wrong places. For example, ragweed is a native species that is a serious agricultural weed and health issue, and milkweed is a crucial plant for monarch butterflies but a real problem in farm fields. Cup-plant and black locust are both native plants that are on the New York prohibited species list, because, while they are important parts of their local ecosystems, they can become very aggressive in other New York ecosystems.

Are plants introduced from other countries always a weed?

Not always. Some plants brought into the country are not necessarily going to become weeds. For instance, a plant may be slow-growing, or require certain soils and growing conditions which are not easy to replicate here in the United States.

But—and this is important!—some introduced plants can become very invasive very quickly, and take away habitat from many native species. Often plants from other countries do not arrive with the pests and diseases that keep them in check in their home country or ecosystem; as a result, the non-native plants become almost impossible to control in the new habitat. Japanese knotweed is a great example of this. The plant evolved to be one of the first plants to colonize after a volcanic

eruption in Japan, but once other plants move in, it is replaced. In the United States, nothing eats Japanese knotweed and it is not attacked by any diseases, so it's never replaced. Knotweed's ability to grow almost anywhere has caused a lot of habitat destruction for native United States plants.

What is an invasive species?

An invasive species is defined by the United States government as “A non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” They can be plants, animals, insects, or diseases. Some examples of invasive species are zebra mussels, kudzu (“The Vine that Ate the South”), *hydrilla* (an aquatic weed), Japanese angelica tree, West Nile virus, and the emerald ash borer. The disease that wiped out the American chestnut tree was an invasive species, and so was Dutch elm disease that removed American elm from our forests and cities. Invasive species can be brought into the United States by accident, by hitchhiking on cargo from other countries, for example. They are also introduced on purpose, through importing ornamental plants or agricultural crops.

What will you see in this exhibit?

We've chosen a sampling of plants which have been called weeds at some point. The species are from the Northeastern United States; some are native, and some are non-native. We used the United States Department of Agriculture Plants database (<http://plants.usda.gov/>) to determine approximate distribution of the plant in the United States and Canada.

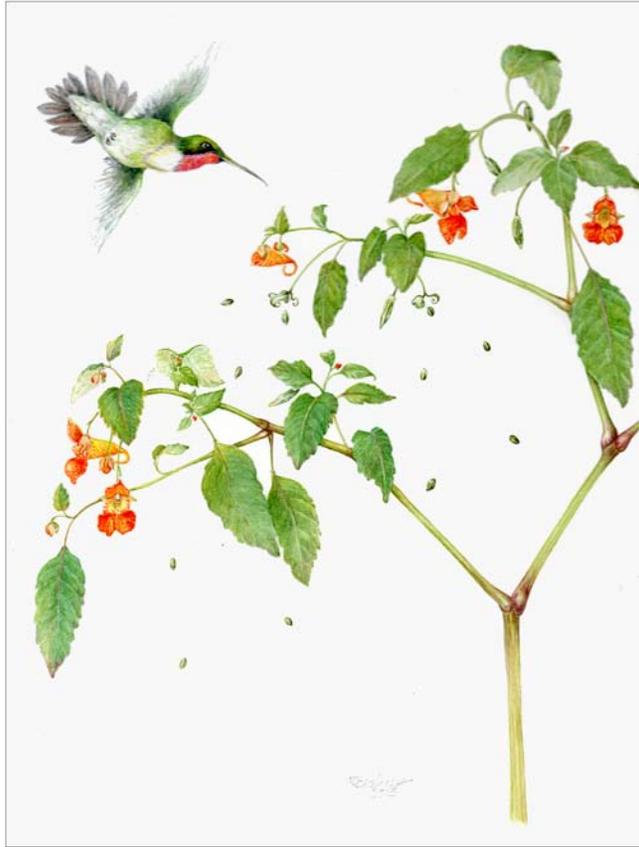
Also, each weed has its own degree of “weediness,”—each weed most likely has its own benefits, such as being ornamental, or being used by creatures in certain habitats. There are examples of plants to stay away from, as well as “weeds” which are quite beneficial. Two “weed experts” came to our early meetings. **Caroline “Carri” Marschner**, Cooperative Extension Associate (Cornell University), answered artists' weed questions, helped edit the catalog “Introduction” and individual weed narratives, and wrote up all “Weediness” sections. **Robert Welsey**, Natural Areas Field Botanist (Cornell Botanic Gardens), reviewed sketches and answered questions.

We have not tried to do a complete survey of plants of the Northeast, as this type of show would have taken several years to complete! We have, however, painted some of our “favorite” weeds, and hope that you will enjoy their beauty.

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Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*

Artist: ©2015 Kathy Brahney

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 16 x 12 — Mat opening: 11 1/2 x 8*

Despite its name, jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) is not listed as a weed in most major compendia of weeds. Most likely the “weed” in jewelweed’s name reflects the fact that it grows so profusely in and alongside stream beds, pond edges and marshy areas. The flowers, with their brilliant orange color, dangle on thin stems and seem to glow, jewel-like, against the green leaves, which sparkle like gems with the morning dew or after a rainfall.

Impatiens capensis is an annual, reproducing by seeds; it blooms from June to September, growing up to five feet tall. The plant has one large bell-shaped sepal from which three petals emerge, and two smaller greenish sepals on top. There is a tiny white petal-less flower found at the tip of the seed pod.

One of jewelweed’s major pollinators is the hummingbird, whose tongue can reach into the flower. Also, I have observed native bumblebees climbing into the flower and nearly disappearing in order to reach the nectar in the sepal’s spur.

I chose jewelweed as my subject because of the plant’s beauty and for its “entertainment value.” The ripe seed pods, when touched, explode with an audible “pop!” sending seeds many feet in all directions. This makes it an excellent plant to share with children—and even with unsuspecting adults.

Distribution: United States east of the Rockies, plus the Pacific Northwest and most of Canada.

Weediness: Jewelweed is a common native, but is not at all invasive. There is a non-native relative, ornamental jewelweed or *Impatiens glandulifera*, that is an invasive species.

* Art sizes throughout the catalog are in inches high x inches wide.



Heal-all, *Prunella vulgaris*

Artist: ©2015 Henrike Burton

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 16 x 12 — Mat opening: 8 3/4 x 6

Heal-all is an herb found around the world. It has been used for various medicinal infusions and ointments throughout history, and for a variety of health issues. Part of the mint family, this plant grows quickly and spreads rapidly. It is also edible, but has a somewhat bitter taste, unlike some of the other mints.

Heal-all attracts useful pollinators such as butterflies and bumblebees. While it can grow almost anywhere, it prefers moist habitats and partial shade, including woodland and roadside edges, meadows, gardens and lawns. Some gardeners recommend keeping this plant in meadow-type gardens, or contained in pots, due to the spreading nature of the plant.

Distribution: Present in most of the United States and Canada.

Weediness: Heal-all is an agricultural weed.



American hog peanut, *Amphicarpaea bracteata*

Artist: ©2015 Marla Coppolino

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 14 1/4 x 10 1/2

This shade-tolerant climbing vine of the legume family (Fabaceae) dwells in the ground layer of woodlands in medium moist soils. It is shown here with one of its pollinators, a red-belted bumblebee (*Bombus rufocinctus*).

The roots of the hog peanut fix nitrogen through a symbiotic relationship with microorganisms in the soil, and so the plant produces excess nitrogen used by neighboring plants. It has two flowers, which produce two types of edible seeds (“amphicarpaea” is Greek for “two-seeded”). One is the whitish violet blossom that allows for cross-pollination and produces a pod with seeds. The other is an inconspicuous, petal-less flower that grows low on the plant and self-pollinates, producing a pod that buries itself underground and makes a single underground peanut.

Small mammals as well as wild hogs like to eat this peanut, hence the plant’s name. Native Americans also used the seeds and the nuts as a minor food source. Today, some use it in permaculture as a groundcover.

Distribution: Eastern and central United States.

Weediness: American hog peanut is a native plant that can be aggressive in the garden.



Broad-leaf helleborine, *Epipactis helleborine*

Artist: ©2015 Marla Coppolino

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 14 1/4 x 10 1/2 — Mat opening: 14 1/4 x 10 1/2

An orchid (Orchidaceae) native to Eurasia, this plant was introduced to the United States. Its first occurrence in New York State was reported in 1879 near Syracuse, and it has since spread through most of the northeast and south to Tennessee. It is a perennial that grows in most soil types and can be a weed of gardens and also along roadsides.

The flowers produce fragrant nectar that contains two narcotic compounds: vanillin and oxycodone. This nectar lures insects, such as the green striped sweat bee (*Agapostemon virescens*), and other pollinators, which, after sipping the sweet concoction, become sluggish and drunken. Smaller pollinators have been observed to enter a state of stillness, and larger ones like the American hoverfly (*Eupeodes americanus*) have been observed to fly away in a drunken looping spiral pattern. I have observed slug slime coating the flowers, suggesting that slugs are also pollinators and presumably became tipsy (and truly sluggish) after sipping the nectar.

Distribution: Northeastern United States, and eastern Canada, the Midwest, as well as the west coast of the United States and Canada.

Weediness: Broadleaf helleborine is naturalized throughout the Northeast, but is not considered invasive in this region. It is an issue in parts of Wisconsin, and is a prohibited species there.



Common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*

Artist: Margaret Corbit

Medium: Digital screen print with colored pencil

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 13 3/4 x 10

The common milkweed is a perennial native plant, commonly found in roadside ditches, disturbed sites, and flood plains. Milkweed becomes a “weed” when it wanders into farm fields, where its deep roots successfully hide below plow depth, making it very hard to control. Even though each of its dramatic seed pods sends a cloud of fluffy seeds into the air in the fall, the plant expands its territory primarily by way of its spreading roots.

I have first started sketching the milkweed while broken down on the side of the northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike and recently included it in the design of the 1st Street Mosaic Project in Ithaca, New York. The more I looked at the plant, the more confused I became. How does a cluster of more than 30 flowers end up producing only one or two seed pods? The mechanism is still a mystery, but the sequence is shown in this piece.

Although milkweed is an important host for the endangered monarch butterfly, I show it with the insect I found on my study plants, the *Ailanthus* webworm moth, an invasive species hitch-hiking here on the tree of heaven.

Distribution: Most of the eastern United States and Canada, except Florida; extending west to Montana, the Dakotas, and Texas; also Oregon.

Weediness: Common milkweed is native to the northeast, and helpful to other organisms. It is aggressive in gardens and is considered a serious agricultural weed due to its toxicity to livestock. Control of this plant has been so thorough in the Midwest that it has been virtually eliminated from the region, with serious repercussions for monarch butterflies.



Carolina geranium, *Geranium carolinianum*

Artist: ©2010 Camille Doucet

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 9 3/4 x 13 1/2

Also known as Carolina cranesbill, this native plant grows well in harsh soils, and can spread easily by reseeding. Seeds may remain viable for many years, and spring back to life later when conditions become favorable again. It is well-suited to dry, partially shaded areas, including road edges, partially open wooded areas, and gravelly soils.

Various bees, including some species of long-tongued and short-tongued bees, will drink the nectar; mourning doves will eat the seeds of *G. carolinianum*. The plant has some medicinal uses, but is very bitter-tasting.

Distribution: Native to most of the United States, and much of Canada.

Weediness: This native plant can be weedy in landscaping and abandoned lands.



Groundnut, *Apios americana*

Artist: ©2010 Camille Doucet

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 14 x 10 1/2

The groundnut has had many names, including potato bean and hopniss, and its golf ball-sized, tasty tubers were used in the past as food by many native American groups. The roots of this legume spread far and quickly.

Despite the un-glamorous name, the groundnut is a pretty herbaceous vine; the flowers are a range of pinks to purples, from a dusty pink to deeper burgundies. It can grow eight to ten feet tall if it can find a climbing host. My plant at home covers my fence every summer and disappears completely in the winter.

The yellow collared scape moth (*Cisseps fulvicollis*), pictured with the groundnut, flies about during the day, rather than at night as most moths do. The moth is found through most of the United States and southern Canada.

Distribution: Eastern United States and Canada, extending westward to the Dakotas, Colorado, and Texas.

Weediness: Groundnut is a native plant which may grow quickly and to great heights.



Hedge bindweed, *Calystegia sepium*

Artist: ©2016 Kate Fady

Medium: Gouache on watercolor paper

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Matte opening: 10 x 14

Hedge bindweed, of the morning glory family, is a climbing, perennial with funnel-shaped flowers that are generally white but sometimes have a pink tint. It twines itself around other plants and structures. Like other morning glories, hedge bindweed blooms in the morning, and closes its blooms in the afternoon. The plant is both native and introduced to the United States; some subspecies of the plant may have come from Europe and Asia.

The plant spreads from rhizomes or by reseeding, and its seeds can live for many years, making it difficult to get rid of. Its root system is shallow and fibrous extending into the ground up to ten feet.

Hedge bindweed is often confused with another common bindweed species, field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), and with closely related genus, weedy morning-glories (*Ipomea spp.*). Both bindweed species are perennial, while morning glory weeds are annual. Field bindweed is non-native, has smaller flowers and leaves, and prefers more open areas. The lobes at the base of hedge bindweed leaves have squared off ends; those of field bindweed are pointed.

Pollinators include several species of long-tongued bees, day-flying sphinx moths and beetles.

Distribution: Present in most of the United States, except some of the southern states.

Weediness: Hedge bindweed is a pernicious agricultural and garden weed.



Goldenrod, *Solidago* spp.

Artist: ©2016 Gretchen Kai Halpert

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 10 x 14 — Mat opening: 13 3/4 x 10 1/2

More than 100 species of goldenrod grow in the United States, 32 of which are found in New York. The specimen pictured here is indigenous to the Finger Lakes, growing in much of our area. *Solidago* comes from the Latin, meaning, “strength”. Many believe they are allergic to goldenrod, but goldenrod’s pollen is transported primarily by insects and does not become airborne. Ragweed, blooming at the same time, is the more likely culprit for allergies; it is wind pollinated, produces copious pollen, and is a common allergen. Goldenrod grows rapidly, and is often considered a weed, appearing uninvited in yards and fields.

As with many native weeds, *Solidagos* are important pollinator plants for bees, wasps, flies, and butterflies, and a food source for butterfly and moth larvae.

An interesting historical note about this plant lies in its natural rubber content. Thomas Edison conducted research on extracting rubber from goldenrod; Henry Ford presented Edison with a Model T outfitted with tires made from the goldenrod.

Distribution: Native to most of the United States and Canada.

Weediness: Goldenrod is a common, aggressive native plant; it is considered weedy in gardens and farmland but is an excellent resource for native butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.



Coltsfoot, *Tussilago farfara* and Black raspberry, *Rubus occidentalis*

Artist: ©1996 Bente King

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 9 3/4 x 14

Coltsfoot is a European native, which is now naturalized in parts of the United States and Canada. It grows best in moist areas, such as along the edges of wetlands; it prefers areas which are shaded for part of the day, and can also be found along roadsides and other transitional habitats.

Coltsfoot can be very competitive, and may crowd out native plants. It spreads both by underground runners, as well as by seed. It can form dense colonies that leave little room for other plants; coltsfoot's big leaves shade the ground and prevent other plants from sprouting.

Distribution: Northeastern United States and eastern Canada, as well as some areas of the Midwest and also the Pacific Northwest.

Weediness: Coltsfoot is an aggressive non-native that is prohibited in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Alabama and Oregon, but not in New York.

Black raspberries are one of the weedy members of the genus *Rubus*, which includes raspberries, blackberries and dewberries. These plants are also known as brambles. Raspberries like to grow in open sunny locations along roadsides and hedgerows; seedlings may pop up in mulched landscape beds. These plants have thorns on their stems and can form prickly impenetrable thickets. When left untended, raspberries can be a troublesome weed, slowly encroaching on the yard edge.

However, the benefits to wildlife are many. Berries are one of the most preferred summer foods by wildlife, utilized by birds such as the ruffed grouse and ring-necked pheasant, catbirds and cardinals, grosbeaks and orioles, cedar waxwings and bluebirds, and others, as well as mammals such as raccoons, foxes, squirrels, bears, and people, too! Black raspberries are sold at farmer's markets, and are used in specialty desserts and ice creams. It has been used to create several hybrid commercial raspberry cultivars. Fruits and stems are eaten by cottontail rabbits and white-tailed deer, and the thick brambles provide cover for many species.

Distribution: Midwestern United States to eastern United States and Canada, excluding Florida.

Weediness: This native species plant can form thickets but is beneficial to wildlife.

We have added this painting by Bente Starke King to our show to honor our friend who passed away in 2005. Bente was a teacher of botanical art at the Cornell Plantations, and the botanical illustrator at the L.H. Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University for many years. She was a friend and wonderful teacher to many of us in the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, Finger Lakes chapter. We remember her as a talented artist who shared her love of nature with us all through her beautiful paintings.



American pokeweed, *Phytolacca americana*

Artist: ©2016 Beth Lalonde

Medium: Colored pencil

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 11 x 8

Pokeweed is a fast-growing native perennial, growing four to ten feet tall. Parts of this plant can be used for food, but some parts are highly toxic! Very young stems and leaves are only edible once boiled several times to remove toxins, but are a significant part of the American food heritage; roots and berries are always toxic. Farmers might want to avoid the plant since it is an aggressive grower, and can be poisonous to human beings and livestock. Gardeners may like this plant since it is attractive and deer resistant, too. The plant also draws in birds and butterflies, and other native pollinators.

The berries can be processed for dyes to be used in industry. And, the toxins can also be used in control of unwanted species such as the zebra mussel.

Distribution: Eastern half of the United States and Canada, as well as the Midwest United States and the West Coast of the United States.

Weediness: American pokeweed is a native plant with many beneficial characteristics, but it is also a serious agricultural weed and very toxic to humans and livestock.



Common dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*

Artist: ©2016 Iva Lesky

Medium: Colored pencil

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 10 3/4 x 15 1/4

The common dandelion is an uplifting beautiful and highly beneficial plant. The whole *Taraxacum* genus is part of the very large plant family Asteraceae, which includes sunflower, asters and daisies.

The common name for *T. officinale* is derived from “dent de lion,” French for lion’s tooth; a reference to its pointy toothlike leaves. The dandelion was introduced to North America from Europe and quickly became naturalized. Until the 1800s people used to pull out grass to allow rooms for dandelions and other so called “weeds” such as chickweed and chamomile.

Common dandelions are important flowers for pollinating insects, and provide honey bees with early nectar. Many mammals, such as rabbits, mice, deer, bear, cattle, and people, too, eat its leaves. Though not the fault of the plant, the addition of herbicides to the environment to eliminate this plant is perhaps the most serious problem associated with it. I personally love it most for the lovely sunny flowers that serve as a glorious harbinger of spring.

Distribution: Widespread through the United States, and much of Canada.

Weediness: Dandelion is a significant weed of perennial and low-till agriculture, turfgrass and gardens. Its ability to resprout from taproot fragments left in the ground makes it hard to control. Dandelion greens and flowers are often consumed in salads and drinks, and are sometimes grown commercially. There is another subspecies in the western US that is native to the United States and Canada.



Staghorn sumac, *Rhus hirta*

Artist: ©2016 Liisa Mobley

Medium: Watercolor and colored pencil

Frame size: 10 3/4 x 15 1/4 — Mat opening: 14 3/4 x 12

Staghorn sumac, considered a weed tree species by some, beautiful roadside adornment by others, is native to the US. This plant can grow quickly in disturbed habitats such construction sites and fire zones, and at the edges of roads and fields. Due to its fast growing nature, it may crowd out other species. Its characteristic red fuzzy staghorns, which are the red seed-containing fruits, are found on female plants.

Sumac is beneficial to many bird and mammal species as a food source during the middle of winter after other food sources have been depleted. According to the New Jersey Audubon Society, over 300 species of birds in the United States are known to eat sumac seeds. Large clumps, or colonies of sumac may be used for shelter and nesting. Perhaps an American goldfinch, as shown here, will use staghorn sumac for food or shelter. In the early spring, sumac blooms with small flowers which attract pollinators, including butterflies and bees.

I've always loved the bright, intense colors of sumac in the fall landscape.

Distribution: Eastern United States and Canada, and parts of the Midwest.

Weediness: This native can be aggressive in gardens, forming dense thickets. It is fast-growing and energetic.



Duckweed, *Lemna spp.*

Artist: ©2016 Liisa Mobley

Medium: Oil

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 15 1/2 x 19 1/2

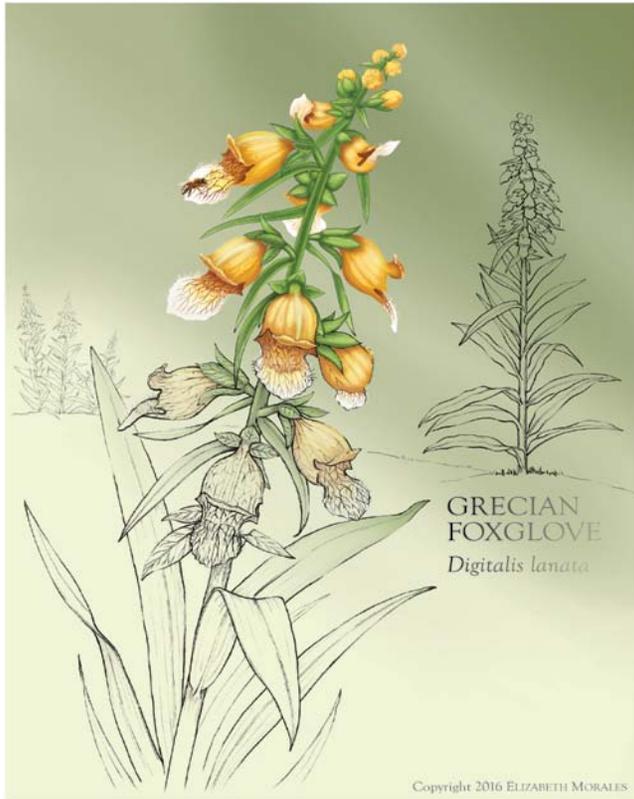
Duckweed plants are frequently found covering all or part of ponds and other small bodies of water. The plants may be beneficial, as some species of ducks, as well as snails, will eat duckweed. The plant also provides shelter for turtles, such as this duckweed-covered painted turtle shown here, although generally shelter is better underwater below the duckweed! Fish, frogs and snakes may also find refuge under the green layer of leaves, to help them avoid being eaten by creatures such as the great blue heron, pictured here.

Duckweed is considered a weed when it covers ornamental ponds, or interferes with recreational activities, such as swimming. The genus has other important attributes, though, such as helping to clean water of unwanted excess nutrients, as well as helping to conserve water by reducing evaporation.

I decided to paint duckweed because I had taken a few photographs of the heron and turtle at Stewart Park in Ithaca, New York; the duckweed-covered turtle always made me giggle a little.

Distribution: All of the United States and Canada.

Weediness: This native plant is a great wildlife resource, but can be aggressive particularly in small ponds.



Grecian foxglove, *Digitalis lanata*

Artist: ©2016 Elizabeth Morales

Medium: Graphite and Adobe Photoshop™

Frame size: 16 x 12 — Mat opening: 10 1/4 x 7 1/2

Native to Europe, this beautiful plant was introduced to North America for use as an ornamental garden flower. Grecian foxglove will readily escape into wild and disturbed areas, and, in some areas, will compete aggressively with other native plants.

Grecian foxglove is a perennial plant in the *digitalis* genus, and is related to common foxglove, a regular addition to many gardens. Flowers are about two feet high, and the flowering stems are woolly. The plant contains chemicals which are poisonous and irritating to the skin. However, foxgloves are also beneficial sources of heart medications called cardiac glycosides.

Distribution: Northeast United States, and parts of the Midwest, as well as parts of Ontario.

Weediness: This species can be noxious and threatens local plant communities in some states. The plant can be highly toxic to people and animals.



Poison ivy, *Toxicodendron radicans*; shown with Fragrant sumac, *Rhus aromatica*; Boxelder, *Acer negundo* and Tick trefoil, *Desmodium glutinosum*

Artist: ©2016 Margaret Nelson

Medium: Adobe Illustrator™, colored pencil, and photograph. Key: Adobe Illustrator.™

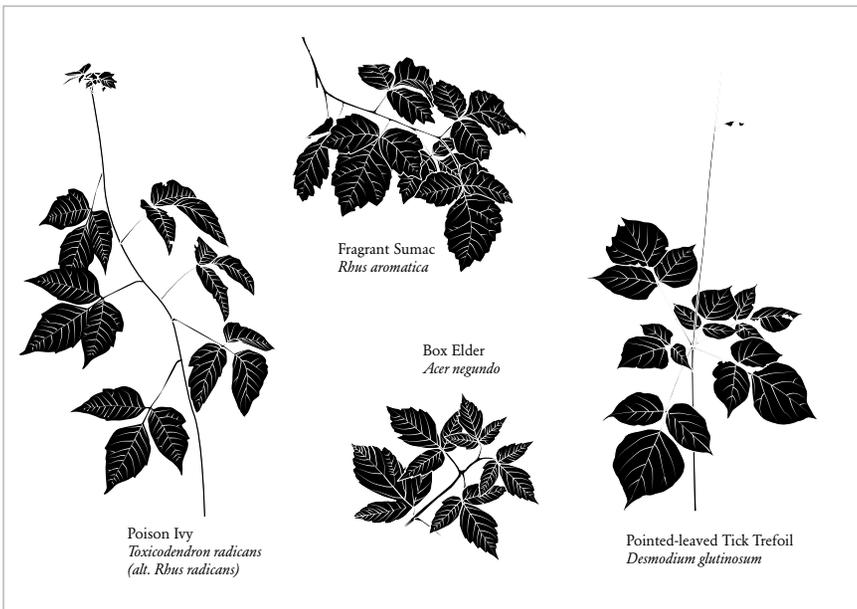
Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 12 x 16

Before I began this project, I thought that I was an ace at identifying poison ivy, but I have learned better, having confused it with both box elder and fragrant sumac while looking for specimens. So I have included some of the other wild plants that are often confused with poison ivy. The old mnemonic, “leaves of three, let them be” will keep you away from poison ivy, but will also demonize a number of other plants that grow in the same habitats and happen to have three leaves. Box elder (a species of maple) is very similar in its seedling stage; fragrant sumac, a relative, is extremely similar except that all three leaves are short-stemmed (the central leaf of poison ivy has a longer stem); tick trefoil is similar, but its leaves all grow in a rosette from a central stem. These are just a few examples—there are a number of other wild plants that can be mistaken for poison ivy.

Poison ivy is a native American plant that grows in many situations, but is often found in hedgerow/disturbed areas and wet areas. It grows luxuriantly under the right conditions (some jokingly call it the climax species of Cape Cod) and can present as a vine, a small shrub, or even a small tree under favorable conditions. It really only gets its bad reputation from its effect on human beings. The fact is, most other animals eat its foliage and berries without harm—including deer, rabbits, and many birds. According to one source, some gardeners even plant it on purpose as an ornamental, in areas where humans do not need to come into contact with it.

Distribution: All of the eastern half of the United States and Canada, from South Dakota to Texas, and Arizona.

Weediness: While most gardeners will want to carefully remove and NOT burn this plant from their gardens, poison ivy is only considered a weed because of its toxicity to humans. It is fairly easy to control mechanically and responds readily to herbicides. Its rhizomes can re-sprout after pulling, so multiple visits will be required to remove a patch of poison ivy; make sure to wear protective clothing and wash thoroughly after contact with this plant.





Bittersweet nightshade, *Solanum dulcamara*

Artist: ©2011 Margaret Nelson

Medium: Adobe Illustrator™

Frame size: 16 x 20 — Mat opening: 11 1/2 x 15

Bittersweet nightshade is an invader from Europe and Asia, but has been in North America for at least 200 years. Though its close relative deadly nightshade is indeed deadly, *S. dulcamara* is less so, though you would NOT want to eat it. It is mildly poisonous to us and to livestock, but some bird species apparently find it quite delicious and nutritious. The beetle which accompanies it in this print, the Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) is quite happy to feed on it; *L. decemlineata* is a specialist on the Solanaceae, the family to which nightshade belongs. That family includes many of our favorite food plants: tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers among them.

Distribution: Present in most of the United States, except some of the southern states.

Weediness: Aggressive invasive, hard to eradicate. This plant is prohibited for sale, transport, purchase or planting in New York due to its invasive characteristics.



Veronica, *Veronica persica*

Artist: ©2016 Louisa Sandvik

Medium: Watercolor

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 13 1/2 x 9 1/2

Veronica persica, also known as bird's eye speedwell or Persian speedwell, is widespread throughout most of North America. It is native to parts of Europe and Asia, but has spread far and wide, and become naturalized in many locations. *V. persica* will grow rapidly by seed, and individual plants can produce over 6000 seeds. It grows well in many types of soils, including poor and disturbed soils.

The plant has small blue flowers which are visited by various bees and flies. A bitter plant, it has sometimes been used medicinally.

Distribution: Introduced in much of the United States and Canada.

Weediness: One of several common species in the speedwell (*Veronica*) genus, Persian speedwell is a winter annual (germinates in the fall and flowers early the following year) that is weedy in cool season crops, lawns, gardens and waste areas. In this area you will see its tiny blue flowers decorating lawns in springtime along with its near relative corn speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*).



Porcelainberry, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*

Artist: ©2006 Kathy Schlough

Medium: Watercolor and colored pencil

Frame size: 16 x 12 — Mat opening: 11 x 7 1/2

Porcelainberry is a very invasive plant, and is restricted in some states as it will crowd out native shrubs and young trees, killing them with a lack of sunshine. Many people like the appearance of this decorative vine, as it has uniquely colored speckled, porcelain-like berries. The fruits are varied in color, and may be aqua, pink, or even a deep bluish purple.

Plants may be spread as people plant them in gardens for their ornamental value. Birds and animals may also eat the berries, and spread the seeds through their droppings. Once planted, porcelainberry vines can grow quickly and take over the area for a long time! A single plant can grow 15 feet in one season, and the seeds can remain in the soil, ready to sprout for several years. Once you've got a porcelain plant, it may take years of follow up to fully eradicate the weed.

Distribution: Midwest and Eastern United States.

Weediness: Aggressive invasive, hard to eradicate. This plant is prohibited for sale, transport, purchase or planting in New York due to its invasive characteristics. A good alternative to porcelainberry in the garden is Virginia creeper or peppervine; both are attractive vines with blue-black fruit.



Virginia creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

Artist: ©2015 Kathy Schlough

Medium: Watercolor and colored pencil

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 18 3/4 x 15

This native plant has many names, such as American ivy and five-leaved ivy, although it is not a true ivy. This woody, deciduous vine can climb very high—more than 60 feet on trees and poles, sometimes covering buildings and fences with a thick blanket of foliage. Virginia creeper is very fast growing, and may choke nearby trees and shrubs if it is not controlled.

The plant provides cover and food for small birds and mammals, but is not recommended for human consumption. Songbirds, such as the palm warbler shown here, eat the small blue berries with bright red stems. In the fall, the leaves turn a bright, intense red. Virginia creeper is sometimes confused with poison ivy, but has five leaves instead of three.

Distribution: Eastern half of United States and Canada.

Weediness: Virginia Creeper is a native plant; it's a spreading plant that can shade out neighbors if unattended, but doesn't form dense monocultures.



Pale yellow iris, *Iris pseudacorus*

Artist: ©2016 Bridget Bossart van Otterloo

Medium: Oil

Frame size: 20 x 16 — Mat opening: 20 x 16

I chose to paint the pale yellow iris—also known as yellow flag iris—because I have often admired its graceful beauty around local ponds. On a recent artist’s retreat, I had the opportunity to do some plein air painting around a pond that was slowly being invaded by these pale yellow irises. I took several source photos that I used to create the oil painting for this exhibit.

Pale yellow iris is perennial, wetland plant, growing from a stout rhizome. The leaves are sword shaped, and the yellow flowers form on a leafless stalk. The plant will form dense colonies, crowding out native wetland species and reducing plant diversity. Large clumps of the plant may restrict water flow in irrigation and flood control ditches. The glycoside levels in leaves make the plant unpalatable to livestock and wildlife; animals are likely to avoid eating palatable plants growing next to the irises, as well.

Also depicted in my painting is a blue dasher dragonfly. Larvae are very tolerant of wetlands with poor water quality and low dissolved-oxygen levels, where pale yellow irises can often be found as well.

Distribution: Present in most of the United States, except some of the western and mid-western states.

Weediness: Aggressive invasive, hard to eradicate. This plant is prohibited for sale, transport, purchase or planting in New York due to its invasive characteristics. It is also prohibited in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Receptions

Cumming Nature Center: 1 - 3 p.m.; Saturday, April 16, 2016



left to right: Liisa Mobley, Bridget Bossart van Otterloo, Elizabeth Morales, Gretchen Kai Halpert, Louisa Sandvik, Kate Fady.
Photo: Unclaimed candid

Boyce Thompson Institute: 5 - 7 p.m.; March 30, 2017



left to right: Gretchen Kai Halpert, Iva Lesky, Bridget Bossart van Otterloo, Liisa Mobley, Margy Nelson, Kathy Brahney, Marla Coppelino, Elizabeth Morales, Camille Doucet and Henrike Burton
Photo: Lucy Gagliardo

Exhibit Committee:

Liisa S. Mobley
Lucy Gagliardo
Margy Nelson
Norm Frisch (catalog)

Exhibit Venues

Cumming Nature Center (RMSC); 6472 Gulick Road, Naples, NY
EXHIBIT: February 26 - April 24, 2016 — RECEPTION: 1 - 3 p.m.; April 16, 2016

Thanks to:

Nathan Hayes, Director, Cummings Nature Center
William Holowka, Senior Preparator
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Kathryn Murano, Senior Director of Collections and Exhibitions
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Nevin Welcome Center at Cornell Plantations; Ithaca, NY
EXHIBIT: May 2 - June 30, 2016 — RECEPTION: 2 - 4 p.m.; May 15, 2016

Thanks to:

Diane Miske, Exhibit and Youth Program Coordinator

Boyce Thompson Institute, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
EXHIBIT: January 24 - July 31, 2017 — RECEPTION: 5 - 7 p.m.; March 30, 2017

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History of the Finger Lakes Chapter of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, Inc.

The Guild of Natural Science Illustrators (GNSI) was created in 1968 as a way to network among the illustrators of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. It has rallied thousands of otherwise isolated natural science artists around the nation and around the world, through the web and through the Guild's famous week long summer conference. In 2003, out of this long and fruitful Guild collaboration, the Finger Lakes chapter was created. We meet several times a year, and enjoy our camaraderie in artistry! We "show and tell" our current work, and also share advice about art techniques and professional tips. We offer mini workshops from time to time, and, also, meet to paint at chosen locations. In recent years, we have worked with the Cornell Plantations to invite teachers of professional interest.

We strive to have group shows on a regular basis. Our shows often have themes, such as: "The Sweet-voiced Bird Has Flown: Portraits of Common Birds in Decline;" "Marsh Madness," which was a show about wetlands of upstate N.Y.; and "Weeds: Untamed Wonders." Our group has shown at various venues in New York State, including the RMSC Cumming Nature Center in Naples; the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca; Mann Library at Cornell University, Ithaca; Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Pleasantville; New York Hall of Science in Queens, and Upstate Medical Health and Science Library in Syracuse, the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, the Community School of Music and Art in Ithaca, and the Lime Hollow Nature Preserve in Cortland.

In 2008 we hosted the national GNSI conference in Ithaca, N.Y.

For more information about the national Guild, please visit the website

www.gnsi.org

If you are interested in the Finger Lakes Chapter, please contact us at

gnsi.fingerlakes@gmail.com, *or visit our website at*

<http://gnsifingerlakes.wix.com/gnsi-fingerlakes>