



For current Museum & Griscom Bird Observatory hours, please check our website or call #215-887-6603.

The staff looks forward to welcoming the community back into the Museum & Griscom Bird Observatory in the near future!

Trails are always open dawn to dusk.

Become a Member and Receive:

- 20% program discount
- Advance registration for summer camps
- Invitations to members-only events
- Discounted/free admission to select nature centers across the nation and more!

www.briarbush.org

Event Calendar Starts On Page 4.

Kids Programs on Page 4-5!



Virtual Programs for All!

Miss our animal ambassadors?

Want a special program for school or special event?

Call to book a virtual program today!



The Nature Center will be closed on Memorial Day and July 5th in observance of Independence Day. Trails are always open dawn to dusk.

www.briarbush.org

Briar Flyer

Newsletter and Calendar

215-887-6603

May - August 2021

MONARCH NURSERY

By Dorothy Stevens, Old York Road Garden Club



Aesclepias syriaca, common milkweed, grows 2-4 feet tall, has a single stem, with long dark-green oval leaves on side branches. But why is milkweed important? You may know that it is the only plant on which Monarch larvae can feed. Milkweed is poisonous to other creatures, and so the caterpillars, filled with these toxins as they eat, are safe without needing any elaborate protections.

A few years ago, a handful of common milkweed plants appeared among the rhododendrons in the bed by my front porch. They were not interfering with anything and did not look out of place among the other plantings, so I left them alone. Mid-summer I saw a visiting Monarch butterfly, and two weeks later, I found one of the yellow-, white-, and black-striped caterpillars on a high leaf. Such a creature may have been the inspiration for the famous book The Very Hungry Caterpillar. This one chewed its way from the top of the four-foot-high plant down to the bottom, leaving a lacy trail behind. I don't know where it went from there. I asked [Mark Fallon from Briar Bush] where I might find a chrysalis. He replied that they are very good at hiding. Sigh. I knew what they looked like, having seen them on visits to commercial butterfly houses, pale-green silky capsules, with a gold stripe around the top, just over one inch long.



Fast forward to summer, 2019. By June, I had about two dozen milkweed plants. By mid-summer, I was seeing many caterpillars, and the

(Continued on page 2.)

215-887-6603

Briar Bush News and Information



In Memory of Our Beloved Friend, Betty Iris Innes

This past March, we received the sad news of the passing of Iris Innes, a long-time supporter and volunteer at Briar Bush. I first met Iris in 2004, one year after I began as the Naturalist. She and a friend, Marjorie Bayersdorfer, helped me to plan and replant the feeder area behind the Griscom Bird Observatory. From that planting, Iris immediately took on the role of transforming the cabin in the woods, the site on which Briar Bush was founded. Iris was a talented artist, who's work often included found objects assembled in whimsical, fantastic and sometimes even darkly surreal ways.

She brought the full force of her creativity to the Bird Observatory, adding changes every season, decorating a space that was getting somewhat worn at the time. I recall children's eyes brightening with wonder at the touch table on which she added obscure natural objects for people to ponder. She recruited a number of people to further her improvements: her husband Ed, a talented woodworker in his own right, provided signs and surfaces for her paintings, among other projects. Her good friend BJ Bronstein was enlisted to work in the garden and to decorate the Observatory.

Iris served as a Friends of Briar Bush board member and leader of the Facilities Committee, where she was integral in securing funding for pond renovations. She also used her passion and perseverance throughout the Township, working closely with Abington Parks and Recreation to create the "pocket park" of Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary, as well as pioneer landscape and beautification projects at multiple Abington public spaces. Iris was full of life and joy at our many events, and certainly brightened my life and career. She touched Briar Bush in ways that will last for years to come. The Briar Bush staff and volunteers that knew her all send our love and support to her family.

- Mark Fallon, Director

(Monarch Nursery, by Dorothy Stevens, continued from page 1.)



milkweed leaves were well-covered with ugly black tarry material, the remains of the skin the caterpillars must shed in order to grow. They start out at 1/16" of an inch. I found one about 1/2" long hidden in one of the multi-flowered milkweed blooms. One mid-August afternoon I counted 19 caterpillars on my plants. There may have been more. Still no chrysalises to be found.

Then one day, leaving the house, I looked up and saw a tiny green thing hanging from the ceiling of my porch. Took a photo, cropped and enlarged. Sure enough. A chrysalis. How on earth did it get there? I contacted a local butterfly expert via e-mail. He replied that the caterpillars are very strong, and such a sighting was not uncommon.

A few days later, I was stopped in my tracks by a parade of caterpillars marching up onto my porch, up to my front door, up the door-frame and onto the ceiling and window frames. There were finally 9 in all. They attached themselves, by a silk thread I am told, became a J-shape, and within 24 hours were inside their green coverings. Two weeks later, the color changed to dark grey as the black markings on the wings inside gradually became visible.



Clearly, they were ready to emerge. Unfortunately, we had to leave town just before the great event.



On our return, all had flown but one, still hanging onto its clear casing, while it prepared for flight by pumping up its wings with what my insect book calls blood, an orange-y liquid that left a tiny puddle on the porch floor. I watched it fly away to a nearby feverfew before heading off on its long migratory journey. My dream for next season is to find an egg on a leaf.

Briar Bush News and Information



This Forest Has Deep Roots.

2021 Annual Appeal

Nature lovers know that flowers are beautiful, but sometimes we forget that flowers need a deep, healthy root system to bloom. In good years, plants and trees add roots, in others, they use some of those stores to get by.

For decades, generous donors like you have created a deep network of reserves, both personal and financial, that has allowed Briar Bush to hold fast through the pandemic. We continue to find ways to safely get people outside, teach creatively beyond our site, care for animals, and protect our woods. But like sugar maples with syrup, our roots need new energy to continue to be productive.

As well as finding ways to inspire wonder at the world, we have used this time to plan, to reevaluate, and to prepare. Recent initiatives include:

- A new online registration and donation system
- Renovations to office and visitor spaces
- Work to implement Master Plan improvements
- Creation of a Scholarship Fund, so *everyone* can enjoy Briar Bush programs

With spring in the air, Briar Bush is ready to bloom once more. Please consider helping us grow our roots deeper and spread our branches wider.

Sincerely,

Mark Fallon, Director
Briar Bush Nature Center

I give because I used to go there a lot when I was younger... You made my childhood better.



Robert, age 11
Lifelong Participant & Supporter

We give because Briar Bush is important in educating our communities about the environment. The more we learn, the more we can protect and nurture the environment.



Tim & Gabrielle
Longtime Participants & Supporters

I give because of the important work you are doing to sow seeds for the love of Nature in diverse groups of little learners.



Jane (pictured here in an old photo with her dad)
Founder of the McLean Nature Education Fund

We give because of the wonderful work Briar Bush does, enriching the lives of many no matter what age.



Jan & Jeannette
Longtime Participants & Volunteers

Give a Gift Today to Our Annual Appeal

Visit Our Website • Call Briar Bush • Mail a check to The Friends of Briar Bush

Programs for Children

Registration is required. Members receive a 20% discount. Abington residents receive a 10% discount.

Magic Mornings

Modified In-Person Program for ages 2-5 w/adult

Hey toddlers! Bring your favorite adult to Briar Bush for walks, animals, crafts, games, stories and more. Each week features a new theme, which repeats throughout the week (register for one day per week).
(Masks required for ages 2+.)

Time: 10:30am-11:30am

Cost: \$12/class

\$6/additional child(ren) in same household

(Additional discounts may apply.)

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
April	6	7	8	9
	13	14	15	16
	20	21	22	23
	27	28	29	30
May	4	5	6	7
	11	12	13	14
	X	19	20	21
	25	26	27	28
June	1	2	3	4
	8	9	10	11



Summer Camp Aide

Volunteer Program for ages 13+



Briar Bush Nature Center is seeking hard-working, patient, fun-loving, and energetic teens to volunteer for our Camp Aide Program. The program is designed to give teens the opportunity to serve alongside Summer Camp staff while gaining naturalist, leadership, and communication skills, earning community service hours, and building resume experience all while having a fun-filled summer.

Apply here: www.briarbush.org/camp-aide-application

The deadline for applications is Friday, May 7, 2021.

(Camp Aides must volunteer for a minimum of two weeks.)

Streaming Nature For Kids

Virtual Program for ages 2-5

Streaming Nature is a pre-recorded virtual program. It includes an intro lesson, story-time, craft demo video, themed activity modeled by an educator, an Animal Encounter Experience, and supplemental activities.
(Activities are geared toward spring and summer.)

Cost: \$5/program per household

Programs for Children

COVID Policies and Updates: Masks are required for ages 2+. Our Mitigation Plan for Modified In-Person Programming & program information is subject to change; visit our website for the most current information.

Escape to Nature: After School

Modified In-Person Program for Grades K-6

Join our educators in nature play and scientific discovery during our After-School Programs! Register for one weekday or all five - any combination of days that works with your schedule.

Day/Time: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri - 3:30pm-5:00pm

Cost: \$30/participant/session

Day/Time: Wednesdays - 1:30pm-4:30pm

Cost: \$50/participant/session

(Additional discounts may apply.)

School's Out? Get Outside!

Modified In-Person Program for Grades K-6

Briar Bush understands the importance of nature play and scientific discovery in a child's development. Our half-day *School's Out!* program offers an opportunity for children to safely experience the wonders of nature with their peers.

Date: May 18, 2021 - Primary Election Day

Time: AM Session - 9:00am-12:00pm

PM Session - 1:00pm-4:00pm

Cost: \$50/participant/session

(Additional discounts may apply.)



Escape to Nature: Summer Camp

Modified In-Person Program for Ages 4-12

Week-long Camps June 21 - September 3, 2021

Summer is a time when learning and play go hand-in-hand. Briar Bush Summer Camps give your child(ren) the opportunity to experience the wonders of nature through scientific discovery, hikes, crafts, live animal encounters, games, and free-play time.

Our 12.5 acres of forest serve as the perfect summer camp setting in the middle of the suburbs. We look forward to providing your child with memories full of excitement, new experiences, nature exploration, and all-around fun in the outdoors.

Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6
Limited Availability - Book Today!



Full-Day Camp for Ages 6-12
Full - Call to be placed on our waiting list.



DON'T FORGET - MEMBERS GET DISCOUNTS AND ADVANCED REGISTRATION NEXT YEAR!

Programs for All Ages

*Registration is required; No Walk-Ins.
Members receive a 20% discount. Abington residents receive a 10% discount.*

Summer Nights in Nature

Modified Outdoor In-Person Program for All Ages

Bring your family and friends to BBNC for summer nights of nature-based fun! Join the Briar Bush educators in games, activities, live animal shows, guided hikes, and more, all relating to the theme of the night.

(Registration Required; No Walk-Ins)

Time: Select Wednesday nights in July & August from 7:00pm-8:00pm

Cost: \$4/member; \$5/non-member



Owl Prowl - Wednesday, July 14, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, July 15, 2021)*

Can you hoot? How about whinny, screech, or hiss? There's a lot more to owls than most people think. Come learn about these fascinating nocturnal flyers and likely meet a live owl guest!

Creepy Crawlies - Wednesday, July 21, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, July 22, 2021)*

Some have six legs, some have eight, and some have many, many legs...they are the creatures that creep in the night! See some of Briar Bush's insects and their relatives up close before heading out on the trails for a creepy crawly scavenger hunt.



Sensory Adventure - Wednesday, July 28, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, July 29, 2021)*

Get ready to explore Briar Bush using your senses. What are rods and cones and how do they help us to see? Learn which animal smells with their tongue. Use your eyes and hands for an "I Spy..." texture scavenger hunt.

All About Bears - Wednesday, August 4, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, August 5, 2021)*

They are cute and cuddly when they are teddy bears, but don't get too close Goldilocks! They come in different colors such as black, brown, and white, but how big do they get? Do they live in cities like Philly or Chicago? Join us for a night filled with stories, songs, and facts about bears.



Creatures of the Night - Wednesday, August 11, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, August 12, 2021)*

At night, the Briar Bush forest is filled with animals we may not see during the day: raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, owls, and insects. Meet some nocturnal animals during a live animal encounter! Then, learn more about these creatures by visiting each station and participating in the activities.

Herp, Herp, Hooray! - Wednesday, August 18, 2021 *(Rain Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021)*

Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians. But what is the difference between these two classes of animals? Join us as we learn how to distinguish between the two with the help of some of our resident animals, a pond exploration, and other fun activities.



Programs for Adults

Covid Policies and Updates: Masks are required for individuals ages 2+. Visit our website to review the Mitigation Plan for Modified In-Person Programming. The Mitigation Plan and program information are subject to change. Check our website for the most up-to-date policies and program information.

Streaming Nature for Adults

A Live Virtual Program for Adults

Join a **LIVE webinar** with Educator, Katie Fisk to learn more on topics of interest relating to the environment. (Registration is required; call (215) 887-6603 to register.)

Time: Select Fridays from 1pm-2pm

Cost: \$8/members; \$10/non-members

Herpetology 101 - May 7, 2021



Hooray for herps! Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians and in this week's program, we'll learn more about what sets these fascinating animals apart, as well as get to know some of our local herp friends. We'll have some cameos from some of Briar Bush's many reptiles as well. Hop to it!



The Nature of Families - May 21, 2021

Just like human families, families in the animal world all look very different. Some young stay with their parents for a long time, some are on their own from birth. Some parents work together to raise their young, while others are single parents, and for some it's a whole family affair! Learn about all the fascinating diversity in animal families along with some very special animal guests.

A Walk in the Woods

Modified In-Person Program Tailored for Adults

Join Director Mark Fallon on interpretive guided hikes around Briar Bush and Alverthorpe Park.

(Registration required; call (215) 887-6603 to register.)

Time: 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM

Cost: FREE/BBNC Members
\$5/Non-Members

Day	Date	Location
Saturday	May 1 st	Briar Bush Nature Center
Thursday	May 20 th	Alverthorpe Park



Save the Date Feather Our Nest

The Friends of Briar Bush's
31st Annual Gala & Auction Fundraiser

Friday, October 1, 2021

Moonlight at the Manor



At the Abington Art Center



1212 Edge Hill Road
Abington, PA 19001
215-887-6603
www.briarbush.org



Outdoor Animal Walk-Through

Modified Outdoor In-Person Program

Missing Briar Bush and our Animal Ambassadors? Join the Briar Bush staff for a special walk through the preserve featuring some of your favorite Briar Bush resident animals!

Date: Friday, June 4, 2021
(Rain Date: Saturday, June 5, 2021)

Time: 4:00pm-7:00pm

Cost: \$20/groups up to four participants
\$5/additional participant
(Maximum of 10 participants per group)

This is a timed-ticketed program.
Call 215-887-6603 to register.

*Participants ages 2+ are required to wear masks.
Visit our website to review the Mitigation Plan.*

Private Naturalist Programs

Modified In-Person Program for Families & Adults

These unique and personal experiences with our talented educators are a great way to honor special occasions or to participate in deep learning catered to your interests.

Great for Adult Birthdays, Anniversaries & Date Nights!

Reservation Required/Dependent on Availability

Cost: \$60 for 30-minute program
\$20 for each additional 15 min
(Up to 6 guests including the Guest of Honor)

Themes: Our staff is well-versed in a wide-range of local ecological and seasonal topics. Call for Details!

