June Highlights

Sclaret Beebalm *Monarda didyma*. Scarlet beebalm, a popular plant for pollinator gardens, uses its striking scarlet cylindrical flowers poised above its red-tinged bracts to invite hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. The large, dark green serrated leaves provide a sharp contrast to the brilliant, showy flowerhead. As a member of the mint family, all parts of the plant emit a pleasant aroma, and the dense cluster of tubular flowers is supported by a rigid square stem. This hardy plant reaches up to 4 feet and flowers profusely throughout midsummer making it a wonderful choice as a backdrop to shorter native plants. Given its preference for sun and moist soil, scarlet beebalm is often used successfully in rain gardens. Its strong fragrance usually keeps deer away.

Prickly Pear Cactus *Opuntia humifusa*. Prickly-pear cactus is distinguished for being the only cactus widely distributed in the Eastern United States. Beginning in June, the cactus produces 2- to 3-inch yellow flowers with reddish centers and a mass of prominent stamens that sit along the upper edges of the pads. Often clump-forming, its fleshy gray-green pads contain both long spines and tiny reddish-brown barbed bristles. The cactus should be handled carefully as the bristles are difficult to remove because of backward pointing hooks that can cause an uncomfortable allergic reaction. While it can reach a height of 12’, it is often semi-prostrate. A sun-loving plant, it can easily thrive in rocky or sandy soil where broken pads can easily create new plants. The reddish-colored fruit that matures in late summer is a favorite of birds and other critters.

Trumpet Honeysuckle *Lonicera sempervirens*. A magnet for Ruby-throated hummingbirds, this woody vine can grow up to 20 feet in a growing season. Both the leaves, which are dark blue-green above and white and waxy below, as well as the trumpet-shaped flowers hold interest for gardeners and wildlife. The 2-inch flowers are narrow tubes of orange-red on the outside and yellow on the inside. They are displayed as whorled clusters at the end of long stems that provide an excellent source of nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Planting in full sun will encourage more prolific blooming throughout the summer. The vine is the larval host for the Spring Azure butterfly’s caterpillar, and birds feast on its scarlet berries in late summer.

Mountain Laurel *Kalmia latifolia*. This beautiful evergreen shrub grows in both full sun and on shady slopes. The white to rose-pink cup-shaped flowers are five-sided and can be found at the tips of the gnarled branches. Prior to opening, the flowers resemble angled balloons and are often sticky to the touch. The remarkable pollination strategy is worth a closer look, where each of the five stamens arising from the center of the flower has its anther tucked into the corners of the five-sided cup. When an unsuspecting bee lands on the flower, the stamen, which is spring loaded, thwacks the visitor, depositing sticky pollen pack on the bee’s back. You can simulate this by placing your finger in the center of a newly opened flower. Mountain laurel is the state flower of Pennsylvania.

Spiderwort *Tradescantia sp*. Three purple petals surround bright yellow stamens on this lovely perennial. With long, narrow leaves that spread up to 14”, when you look down at the plant, it is reminiscent of a squatting spider. Though the common name. Though each flower of spiderwort last just a few hours, there is such an abundance of buds in the queue, the bloom time for each plant can be several weeks. Named after John Tradescant (1608-1662), a gardener for Charles I of England, a lovely stand can be found at the lower part of the meadow just as you pull into the Preserve. It is best visited in the morning, as the flowers wither by midday.

Dogbane *Apocynum cannabinum*. This common flower of fields and forest edges may not be very showy, but it is the place to be when it comes to pollinators. Butterflies, bees, moths and beetles congregate on the small cream-colored flowers collecting nectar and pollen. After pollination, long slender pods form and split when ripe releasing hundreds of parachuted seeds. Though in the same family as milkweed, monarch caterpillars do not eat dogbane, but adult butterflies will nectar on the flowers. Oval leaves are opposite on the stem and release a milky latex when bruised. The beautiful metallic-green dogbane beetle can often be found hiding on the leaves. Almost jewel-like in appearance, this beetle feeds exclusively on dogbane. Indigenous people have made rope, string and cordage from the dried outer bark of the stems, which is said to be stronger than most other fibers.
**Paths to follow**

- **Penn's Woods to New Pond**
  One of our most gentle trails, past the Moss Garden and magnolias. Good for strollers and most wheelchairs.

- **New Pond Loop**
  View the wonderful native plants and animals that live in this special place. Handicap parking nearby. Some rough paving.

- **New Pond to Stone Bridge**
  Walk down this shady road to the 1934 WPA Stone Bridge to view Pidcock Creek.

- **Stone Bridge to Azaleas at the Bridge**
  Stroll along Pidcock Creek and take a break on a peaceful bench.

- **Gentian to Founders' Pond**
  Visit our secluded pond and experience this natural spring-fed habitat.

- **Cabin Path to Stone Bridge**
  Walk down to the historic American chestnut log cabin. Take care on the stairs down to the Stone Bridge.

- **Azalea to Millrace Dam**
  This gentle wide trail will take you down to the dam on Pidcock Creek.

- **Fern Trail to Gentian to Founders' Pond**
  These trails meander through the forest to bring you to a woodland pond.

- **Stone Bridge to Poconos Laurel**
  A brisk walk uphill from the creek rewards the effort with a visit to the most remote part of the Preserve.

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**Trail Distances**

- Evergreen - .27 mi
- Fern Trail - .20 mi
- Gentian - .14 mi
- Millrace (Temporarily closed)
- New Pond Loop - .14 mi
- Parry Trail - .08 mi
- Penn's Woods to New Pond - .17 mi
- Poconos Laurel - .11 mi
- Violet - .04 mi
- Wayside - .03 mi
- Visitor Center to Stone Bridge - .14 mi
- Stone Bridge to upper gate - .37 mi
- Ecology to Stone Bridge - .3 mi

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**Simple Rules**

Please follow these rules as a courtesy to other visitors and to protect the Preserve’s habitats and native plants:

- Stay on the trails.
- Please do not pick or collect plants, flowers, seeds or animals.
- Be alert for stinging insects and poison ivy.
- Service dogs only. Pets are not allowed (even on leash) in the fenced portion of the Preserve.
- No bicycling, fishing, hunting, swimming, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, motorcycles, snowmobiles, off-road vehicles or drones.
- Picnicking is permitted only in the Moore Pavilion and the adjacent lawn.
- No smoking inside of fence.

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**EASIER**

- Moderate
- Difficult

Good surface
Wider paths
Some inclines
Narrower paths
Some stairs or steps
Narrow paths
Inclines
Rocky sections

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**Many thanks to our generous sponsor**

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215.862.2924

1635 River Road, New Hope, PA 18938