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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A green sign with black text  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A green background with black text  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A bird on a tree  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Feeling Peckish? | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This hungry woodpecker was working hard for his meal on the old apple tree in Jane Stirniman and Jeanne Wiebenga's Chautauqua garden. Jeanne took the photo last week through her window using a tripod.  When I first saw the photo, I thought it was a Downy Woodpecker. But I would never trust myself with a bird ID, so I sent it to Twan Leenders, Director of Conservation at the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.  He replied: "Oh - you picked a tough angle on a tough bird! I would call this a Hairy Woodpecker. It’s very similar to Downy and mostly told apart based on size (Hairy is bigger) and bill length (again, Hairy has a longer bill). Size is hard to gauge on a photograph, but bill seems too long for a Downy."  So I asked Jeanne whether she had taken other photos that might help Twan confirm the ID and she sent these: | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A bird on a tree  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | A bird on a bird feeder  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Bingo!   In response to my "does this help?" Twan replied: "It does actually! Hairy woodpeckers generally have a black stripe down the nape that bisects the red patch on the back of the head - Downy's don't. The woodpecker on the suet feeder is a female Downy WP - note the short bill and the lack of a red patch on the back of the head."  The fact that the Hairy was pecking for his meal on the tree in Jeanne's side garden while the Downy was 50 yards away chowing down at suet feeder in the front garden reminded me of a passage I read in John Rappole's latest book, *Bird Migration: A New Understanding*. He writes:  *When I was growing up with western New York, the species that would get food from a hanging feeder containing seed or suet was limited to a relatively small number: finches, chickadees, nuthatches, and so forth. I never saw a Pileated Woodpecker or Red-headed Woodpecker at a feeder or even heard of one. Today, half a century later, such a sight is common in some places. What changed? First, more people put out food throughout the year. This change increases the probability that an individual bird will stumble upon the fact that feeders offer an easily harvested food source. Second, once this bird learned this fact, it showed is young how to locate and use it. I have seen this process in the works with Downy Woodpeckers. An adult downy shows up at the feeder, followed by a young one. The adult flies in confidently and begins to feed. The young one follows tentatively, searching at first for how to access the food, handle it, and consume it, keeping one eye on the adult all the time. Within a day or two, everyone in the family has the message and all fly in together, adults in their worn, year-old plumage and young in their fluffier juvenal plum-age, all comfortably feeding together. House Sparrows go through similar training, except when the young are first led to the feeder by an adult, they simply sit on a perch and beg. The adults put up with this initially, picking up a seed and feeding it to the fluttering fledgling, but eventually refuse to feed them after a day or two of leading them to the source, forcing them to try it out for themselves. I suggest that it is as a result of this increased use of feeders year-round, and the training provided by adults, that we now see a vast new array of species at feeders-Indigo Buntings, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Baltimore Orioles, Palm Warblers, Carolina Wrens, and so forth.*  I hope you are safe and warm on this New Year's Eve 2023 and look forward to seeing or hearing from you in 2024!  Leslie Renjilian, BTG President | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A white desk with a white shelf and pictures on it  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Save the Date!  2024 House & Garden Tour  July 11, 2024 | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | We hope you will be able to join us for this biannual tradition. Tickets will go on sale in February. Look for the announcement in this newsletter. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A butterfly on a flower  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | 2025 Mexico Monarch Trip Update | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Betsy Burgeson and I recently had a great planning meeting about the Monarch Trip to Mexico with Chautauqua Travels and their partner, Academic Travel Abroad.  Exact dates, costs and other details will be announced by [Chautauqua Travels](https://www.chq.org/groups/chautauqua-travels/) this March, but I can tell you that it'll be about a week long with a few nights in Mexico City and a few near a reserve. In addition to sight-seeing, we will have a couple of lectures by Betsy plus tours and talks by local guides and experts. Our group size will be 15-25. We will probably visit two different monarch reserves. The hiking in the reserves is not long, but it is steep and at altitude. We will most likely ride horses for the first part of the hike and then be on foot for the final ascent.  Thank you for a great response to the preview announcement about the trip in the October newsletter. We have a robust list of Early Birds who have expressed interest in the trip and Chautauqua Travels has kindly offered to give our Early Birders a week's head start for registration before the trip is opened to the entire world wide web. If you'd like to be added to that list, please [email us here](mailto:president@chautauquabtg.org?subject=I%27m%20interested%20in%20the%20Monarch%20Trip).  Please note: Even though it may sound like I have an official role in this, I do not! But here's the history:  I visited the Monarch Preserves in Mexico last Christmas with my family and we had a *terrible* guide. After the trip, I called Betsy and said I wished that she or the Volkers or someone knowledgeable had been our guide and she and I got to scheming. We pitched the trip to the folks at Chautauqua Travels and thankfully they agreed that this would be a great addition to their 2025 offerings.  So here we are!  Betsy Burgeson will be one of the Trip Leader, along with other in-country guides, provided by Academic Travel Abroad. I plan to sign up for the trip but just as a Regular Citizen, hopefully alongside many other BTG folk!    - Leslie Renjilian - Photo by Angela James, who took this photo at Lynda Acker's house before Monarchpalooza a few years ago. Angela says she propped up a piece of white foam core behind the bud vase of Queen Anne's lace. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Make a Tax-Deductible Donation to the BTG (any amount)**](https://www.chautauquabtg.org/donate) | | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Purchase a Life Membership ($250)**](https://www.chautauquabtg.org/membership) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**View Past Newsletters**](https://www.chautauquabtg.org/newsletters) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Did a friend forward this newsletter to you? Subscribe here!**](https://chautauquabtg.us6.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=4f093175e423a691b27f7c2d6&id=b3c8a1f8af) | | |