

C H A U T A U Q U A



BIRD  
TREE  
&  
GARDEN  
CLUB



## What's in Bloom?

Behold the false spirea (*Sorbaria sorbifolia* 'Sem') in full bloom along the Amp side of the Carnahan Jackson Garden. [Click here to learn more about the Carnahan Jackson Garden](#), the delightful sunken Asian garden just south of the Amp. The link will take you to

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the BTG **ExploreChq** web app which contains historical photos, plant lists, and photos of the garden in snow.

If you're a Northside Amper, it's worth a stroll around to the south side to see the garden and the false spirea covered in blooms and bees this week. (We have not yet determined what kind of bees they are, but we hope **John Wentzel** can tell us this week when he's here - see below for his scheduled talks).

I love plants with names like false spirea. It's like an automatic excuse for misidentifying the plant. "Of course you thought this was spirea - everyone does - that's literally why we named it false spirea."

Or the even smarter-sounding version of you're-not-dumb is when the acknowledgment is embedded in the scientific name - *pseudo*. Take the Douglas Fir - *pseudotsuga menziesii* - or "false hemlock." Those botanists had a little fun there. I think it went like this: "since this tree confused us, we might as well make the scientific name a tongue-twisting nod to our justifiable confusion." But that's just my theory. You may have your own and your own favorite false names. I hope you'll share them with us!

- Leslie Renjilian

- photo below shows a close-up of the false spirea flower with the mystery bee. If you can ID it, please email us!





Above: John Wenzel, PhD, will lead **TWO** events this week for the BTG. Thank you, John!  
See below for details.

## Day by Day by the BTG

### Monday, July 4



**4:15 PM** [Lake Talk: "Lake Insects" with John Wenzel, PhD](#)

Location: Heinz Beach

### Tuesday, July 5



**12:15 PM** [BTG Brown Bag Lecture: "Beyond the Waterfall: Seeking Meaning from Nature in the Tropics" with Jon Wenzel, PhD](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

Feel free to **bring your lunch**

\* see below for info about Tuesday Ticket Sales for the 2022 House & Garden Tour, which

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will be on July 14.

**4:15 PM Garden Walk with Horticulturalist Joe McMaster**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside

**Wednesday, July 6**



**4:15 PM Tree Walk with Forester Jack Gulvin**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside patio

**Thursday, July 7**



**7:30 AM Bird Walk with Ornithologist Ruth Lundin**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall entrance

\* Binoculars encouraged, dogs discouraged!

**4:15 PM Purple Martin Chat with expert Jack Gulvin**

Location: Purple Martin Houses by the Sports Club

**Friday, July 8**



**9:00 AM Nature Walk with Naturalist Jack Gulvin**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside

**12:30 PM Garden Walk with Betsy Burgeson, Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes, CHQ**

Location: Discovery Garden (to the right of the Main Gate)

**\* Most BTG walks involve some uneven ground. We suggest sturdy shoes.**

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# What's a - Buzz ?



## Lake Flies

What people commonly call “**lake flies**” are members of the largest family of dipterans called *Chironomidae* (chironomids) or **non-biting midges**.

The Order Diptera is a huge insect group that **includes house flies, mosquitoes** and many other common insects placed together in the classification of insects because they exhibit only one pair of wings (most insects have two pairs). Many chironomids resemble mosquitoes, although none are blood feeders, and almost all spend their reproductively immature stages in a wide variety of **freshwater habitats**, including tree holes, temporary ponds, wet soil, and even the “pitchers” of pitcher plants. Almost none live in the oceans, although some are found in brackish pools near marine environments.

They periodically occur in **numbers large enough to be annoying** near Lake Chautauqua, and other bodies of water.

Although they don't live long as sexually mature, flying adults, their numbers can become immense. Depending on their species, adults emerge (“hatch”) **one to several times**

**each summer, eat very little, mate, lay their eggs and die.** When the flying adults emerge to mate, the males of many species congregate in large clusters to attract females. As immatures, they feed on algae and detritus in the water and are a very important part of many aquatic food chains, **providing food for fish and other insect-eating aquatic animals and, in their airborne stage, for birds, such as our Purple Martins and bats.**

However, if enough of them land on houses, their droppings and dead remains can stain paint or bricks and may accumulate enough to cause bad odors. They're often said to smell like the bottom of the lake, which is where they lived and fed before emergence. Because they're periodically abundant, they are partially responsible for the buildup of spiders over the summer as well, but spiders are more annoying than harmful to humans. Spiders don't have to eat often and can wait for their next meal until another midge emergence occurs.

Chironomids evolved millions of years ago and are distributed worldwide, on all continents including Antarctica. They constitute perhaps 10,000 living species worldwide – nearly 1000 in North America. Fossilized members of the family were so widespread and diverse **that they were instrumental in establishing patterns of continental drift and the Theory of Plate Tectonics.** More recently investigated species were very important in demonstrating patterns of evolutionary diversification and geographical distribution.

Many species are sensitive to narrow limits of environmental variables and **serve as reliable indicators of short- or long-term water quality.** They are notoriously difficult to identify to species, and the careful study of their DNA has revealed many species that can be told apart in no other way, especially in their immature stages.

I'm often asked how people can avoid Lake Flies, and my stock reply is "Look at the name! They were here first. If you're annoyed by them, move away from the lake." That may seem too glib or dismissive, especially to those rare individuals who react allergically to them, but it's probably good advice. **They were here for millennia before any of us were, they serve a beneficial ecological role in the life and health of the lake ecosystem, they may be annoying but are relatively harmless to human health,** and we can minimize their invasion or damage of our homes. When we go into their world, perhaps we should try to tolerate them.

Each time they emerge, their numbers will dwindle shortly.

- Dennis McNair, PhD and BTG Entomologist
- photo by Angela James, BTG Photographer

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## House & Garden Tour Tickets

\* The BTG House and Garden Tour will be on Thursday, July 14. Online tickets have sold out, but you can buy tickets in person before the Brown Bag Lecture this Tuesday and next at Smith Wilkes Hall. Tickets are \$45 and we will have a cash box and a credit card reader from 12:00 - 1pm. Make checks payable to the Chautauqua Bird, Tree and Garden Club.

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