

C H A U T A U Q U A



BIRD
TREE
&
GARDEN
CLUB



**What's in
Bloom?**

Ironweed!

By Betsy Burgeson

Although there is never a wrong time to visit a garden, my favorite time in Chautauqua is from mid-August through mid-September. The display of color and texture is mesmerizing.

With so many beautiful flowers in bloom this time of year, it's hard to choose just one to highlight but the stand out plant in week 9 has to be **New York Ironweed**. *Vernonia noveboracensis* is a low maintenance native perennial wildflower in the Aster family and talk about an eye catcher! It's hard to describe just how magnificent the color is and even harder to capture the true richness and depth of the purple in a photo. The color is so regal, it makes me think of royal robes of purple velvet.

Not only is its color incredible but the overall size of this plant is awe inspiring and creates a dramatic focal point in any garden. To think it can grow **over 8' tall in one season** AND put on the spectacular floral display is mind boggling. If you want to see just how big Ironweed can grow in one season (and get a great photo), there is an extraordinary specimen in the southern portion of the garden in front of the Athenaeum Hotel.

Any plant that can grow at that rate is a fun plant to grow with kids of all ages which is one of the reasons we planted Ironweed in the butterfly garden at the Children's School!

Ironweed isn't just a stunning beauty however, it's ecologically valuable and even grows in **CLAY SOIL** - what more can a gardener ask for! It is a favorite **nectar source of a variety of pollinators and numerous species of songbirds love the seeds**. It's hard to find tall, upright plants that don't flop over and need staking as the season goes on but Ironweed fits that bill.

In fact, where spacing is limited or power lines are an issue, I have recommended using Ironweed as an alternative to small trees. One species of Iron weed, **Giant Ironweed** (*Vernonia gigantea*), can grow up to 12' in a season which is taller than most ornamental hydrangea trees.

However, if your garden isn't suited for an 8-10' beauty, another perk of ironweed is that **it can be cut back in the spring to varying heights** that will create breathtaking purple crescendos in ascending layers inviting native birds and pollinators to come enjoy your garden as much as you do.

Betsy Burgeson
Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes



Above: [Paul Tukey](#), Director of Environmental Stewardship at Glenstone Museum will present our Tuesday Brown Bag Lecture this week. Details are below with more information on our website.

Day by Day by the BTG

Monday, August 22



6:30 PM [Lake Talk: "Medicinal Native Plants" with Jonathan Townsend](#)

Location: Heinz Beach

Tuesday, August 23



12:15 PM [SPECIAL BTG Brown Bag Lecture: "Sustainability: Learning from the Sustainable Landscape Program at Glenstone Museum" with Paul Tukey](#), Director of Environmental Stewardship at Glenstone Museum

Glenstone is the largest and most acclaimed private art museum in the U.S, located outside of Washington D.C. Sustainability is a core value for Glenstone, and they have spent millions of dollars on reforestation, stream restoration, green roofs, permeable surfaces, invasive species eradication, and sustainable business operations. Like Chautauqua, they are managing an integrated natural and cultural landscape and have an education mission. Feel free to **bring your lunch** and listen to Paul present a program on sustainable landscapes, followed by a panel discussion that will feature:

[Mark Wenzler](#), Director of Climate Change at CHQ

[Betsy Burgeson](#), Supervisor of Gardens and Landscape at CHQ

[Jennifer Francois](#), VP of the Chautauqua Bird, Tree and Garden Club

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall

4:15 PM [Garden Walk with Horticulturalist Joe McMaster](#)

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside

Wednesday, August 24



12:00 PM **Flower Arranging Flash Mob** **

Come help us create arrangements to give to the amazing Chautauqua Institution Staff. Bring clippers and old florist vases if you have any to donate. (Or drop vases off at Smith Wilkes on Tuesday if you aren't free on Wednesday). Thank you!

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside patio

** Not binding, but if you think you might be able to help out with this, [please email me](#) -Leslie

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

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall - lakeside patio

Thursday, August 25



7:30 AM **Bird Walk with Ornithologist Jim Berry**

Location: Smith Wilkes Hall entrance

* Binoculars encouraged, dogs discouraged!

Friday, August 26



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: Main entry to the Amp.

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

Batty

The baby bat
Screamed out in fright,
'Turn on the dark,
I'm afraid of the light.'

- Shel Silverstein

Turn on the Dark!

The little poem above is short and sweet and of course all good Chautauquans love bats, but did you know that the dark is also important for birds?

The text below is from a sample letter the National Audubon Society provides on their website for citizens to use when writing to elected officials about the need for Lights Out programs in their areas. If you want to lead an effort in your community, that's great, but in the meantime, you can help out by **just turning off your own outdoor lights**. Easy peasy!

National Geographic reports that humans on North America are responsible for the loss of 3 billion (that's billion with a B) since 1970. Turning off lights during migration season is one thing we can do to atone and slow the decline of our feathered friends. Turn on the dark, friends.

Here's that clip from Audubon:

Because **many birds migrate at night** using natural light cues like the moon and stars, bright lights and sky glow can confuse them, causing some to collide with windows and walls while others circle in confusion until exhaustion

overcomes them. From our best current scientific understanding, **millions of birds die in the U.S. every year** because of this.

Fortunately, a **simple thing like turning out lights** can help birds navigate our environment and protect them from unnecessary harm. A landmark study conducted by the Field Museum in Chicago showed that by turning the lights off in one building, the number of birds killed there dropped by over 80 percent.

What can we do here? Participating in Lights Out is simple, building managers only need to:

- Turn off unnecessary lighting (especially near the tops of buildings)
- Put necessary lighting on timers (off from midnight to sunrise) or use motion sensors
- Make sure external lighting is down shielded
- Dim or extinguish lobby or atrium lighting

It is particularly important to take these measures **between the hours of midnight and sunrise** (when most night migrants are flying) and during spring and fall migration periods (April/May and September/October).
