

The Green Way

KINGSTON GREENWAYS ASSOCIATION

A NEW JERSEY NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

www.kingstongreenways.org

Fall 2019 No. 34

COMING EVENTS

FALL FOLIAGE WALK

Sunday, October 27, 1:30 PM

Walk along the bed of the former Rocky Hill Branch Railroad with Railroad Historian John Kilbride. We will start at the Kingston Locktender's House just off Route 27 at the D&R Canal in Kingston, continuing to Rocky Hill and back to Kingston. The walk should take about 90 minutes.



Railroad Depot & Canal, Kingston, c.1910--Collection of The Historical Society of Princeton

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, December 15, 2019

The Kingston segment of this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count begins at 7:30 AM at the Locktender's House in Kingston and goes until noon. After a break for lunch at Palace of Asia in Kingston, the count continues in the afternoon. Join us for morning, afternoon, or both.

Experienced birders and novices are equally welcome to participate. Dress warmly, and bring binoculars if you have them. If interested, give Karen Linder a call (609-683-0483) or an email (karen.e.linder@gmail.com) for more information and to register.

RECENT EVENTS

STREAM STOMP

Saturday, August 17, 2019



Photo by Colleen Schantzer



Photo by Kirstin Ohrt

On the banks of the Millstone River in Kingston, D&R Canal State Park Naturalist Stephanie Fox introduced participants to a teeming, fascinating world of water critters, and explained how they can be indicators of water quality. With nets, magnifying lenses, and aquatic macro-invertebrate charts, "stompers" had a cool time in the water!

KGa ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM ON MUSHROOMS

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Jim Barg of the NJ Mycological Association presented "A Brief Introduction to Finding and Identifying Wild Mushrooms," a look at what mushrooms are, how they grow, and how beginners can go about starting to identify the mushrooms they find. Jim is a semi-retired graphic designer who is currently employed as a freelance wild food and mushroom forager for several restaurants in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania area. He is a past President of the New Jersey Mycological Association and is one of their veteran mushroom identifiers. He also serves as art director for the Association's bimonthly newsletter. In addition, Jim is a consultant to the New Jersey Poison Control Center, acting as one of several mushroom identifiers who are called in cases of suspected mushroom poisonings.

A brief summary of his talk follows:

Jim used the words mushroom and fungi interchangeably in his talk. Fungi cannot make their own food, as plants do, so they rely on their substrate (that on which they grow) for sustenance. The business end of the mushroom is IN the substrate. What is visible is the fruiting body, which produces spores--like single-celled seeds. Spores under the right conditions form hyphae, similar

to a cotton ball in appearance, which is the way fungi achieve growth. Spores can be dispersed in a variety of ways. For instance, the dog stinkhorn attracts flies to its viscous spore mass, which then spread its spores when the flies die and disintegrate.

Spore prints may be made by placing the mushroom cap on a piece of white paper, covering it with a bowl, and waiting for the spores to drop. The prints can be beautiful as well as useful in identification, due to their distinctive appearance.

Fungal cells are similar in composition to those of shrimp and crabs, as they are made of chitin, and not lignin. Fungi either assist the growth of plants, or hasten plants' breakdown by extracting nutrients. Parasites feed on plants, eventually killing the plants and themselves, making way for the decayers. But the majority of fungi are mycorrhizals that have a symbiotic relationship with their trees. As the fungi thrive, they serve the vital function of keeping moisture going into the trees.

Tree identification is an asset in mushroom identification, as most fungi are only able to grow under or near specific trees. For example, the prized morel is found only under tulip poplar, white ash, dying apple trees, or dead elms. Hen of the woods is a parasite of oak.

In attempting to identify wild mushrooms, it is crucial to be obsessively observant. There are lots of look-alikes. The macro characteristics must be looked at in detail. These include the general shape or profile or silhouette--cap, stem, and base-- as well as the texture, color, appearance of the bottom, the underside of the cap, gill formation, odor (fresh specimens only), and the presence of a ring or veil.

Where is it growing? On the ground? On a tree? Under a tree? On another fungus? (The medicinal mushroom cordyceps grows on dead caterpillars!) Is where it's growing dry or wet, sunny or shady? What is the soil like? What kind of trees are nearby? What season is it? All fungi have their own season. Is it growing singly, or in groups? Edible chanterelles grow under beech and black birch in summer, and singly--but a close look-alike, Jack-o-Lantern, grows in a mass attached at the base and is poisonous. (True to its name, it also glows in the dark!)

If there are gills, are they attached to the stem, or not? Does the mushroom change color when stroked or cut? Does it produce "milk"?



