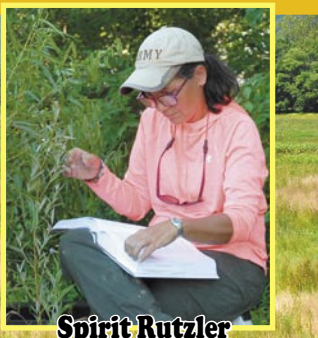


Native Plants

This photo is of the Minsi Lake dry bed. The lake is currently having the dam rebuilt. Estimated to reopen November 2019.

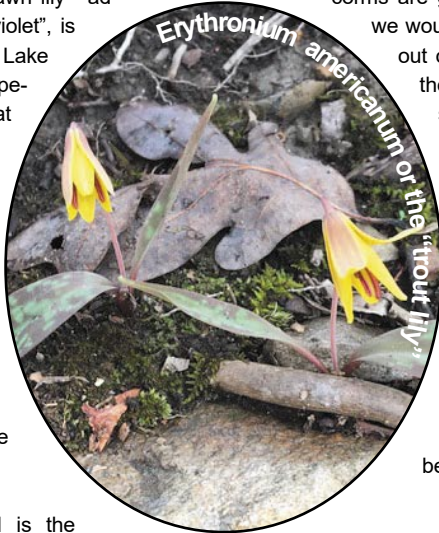


Spirit Rutzler

This column is exclusive to the **Blue Valley Times**

Spring is in full swing and the ephemerals (early flowering plants) are busy! While walking this week at Minsi Lake a host of newly sprouting plants are easily seen. Look for the foliage of skunk cabbage replacing the flowers have wilted away. Spring beauty and wood anemone are in bloom and the pussy willow catkins have lost their white fuzz and have matured into bright green and yellow fruits that will quickly come to seed.

However, if you are looking for something unique to photograph, there is plant in bloom now that will have you hunting for them every spring. *Erythronium americanum* or the "trout lily", "fawn lily" "adder tongue" or "dog tooth violet", is plentiful on the trails at Minsi Lake County Park. This native species is so plentiful in fact, that you will not be able to miss it. Standing only about 3 to 4 inches tall it most easily identified by its green and brownish maroon mottled leaves. Look for the little leaves in the center of the trail, well before you get to the first bridge from the eastern parking lot and then throughout the trail all the way to the western lot.



Its reproduction method is the cause of its abundance. *E. americanum* sends out small shoots that form bulbs call corms nearby. This process is repeated over and over again until some areas are like little green mottled mats of lily leaves. Unbelievably, researchers have found that some colonies of this plant can be as much as 1,300 years old; however, they average about 150 years.

Finding the plants is an easy enough task, but finding the ones showing their off their yellow bloom is quite

a different story. This may be because it can take 4-7 years for the corms to reach maturity and bloom. Until then, the corms send up only a single leaf every year. If you want to experience this little lily, I found that it seems to mature more to the side of the trails where the ground is not as wet and packed from being walked upon. Look for the yellow and brownish blooms around tree trunks and in the leaf litter no more than 5 feet or so off the trail and you should find it.

Interestingly, a few sources list the *Erythronium americanum* as edible. While this may be true, the corms are generally so small that it seems like we would spend more calories digging them out of rocky Pennsylvania soil than what they offer nutritionally, so that it doesn't seem like a good trade off. A word of warning: *E. americanum* is not endangered in Pennsylvania and we are fortunate. On the other hand, some states have listed the plant with special concern and Iowa has it listed as endangered there. Loss of habitat and harvesting the plants are the top reasons cited for plant decline. Help preserve our native wildflowers and always follow Leave No Trace policy; leave nothing behind and take only pictures.

Spirit Rutzler is a resident of the Slate Belt. She is employed by Northampton County as a Coordinator for the Penn State Extension Master Gardener Program. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from East Stroudsburg University with a B.S. in English and Secondary Education. She is currently completing her M.S. in Conservation Biology from Green Mountain College.

Spirit Rutzler is a committee member of Friends of Minsi Lake.

Friends of Minsi Lake Mission Statement: To support Minsi Lake and improve the area's conservation value, encourage economic development and enhance recreational opportunities for everyone who lives, works and/or plays in Northampton County.

Friends of Minsi Lake

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*Owner of Slate
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Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Reading is Fundamental

I like the saying "hindsight is always 20/20". It makes Monday morning quarterbacks seem much more intelligent than they were on Sunday. That's not to say there is nothing to be learned from observing the mistakes of others as well as our own and growing from them so as not to repeat them. I see many pieces of equipment that I know will never work properly because others have not read the instruction book prior to doing an installation.

Problems can range from something as minor as making the equipment hard to service because of accessories in the way all the way up to impairing performance sometimes as much as 50%. Just because air is invisible doesn't mean it doesn't have other qualities. It occupies space, it absorbs moisture and it doesn't like being pushed around just to name a few. Disrespecting it by trying to force it into a space it can't possibly fit through will result in resistance. There are a lot of flexible ducts used on new air conditioning jobs because they are easy to install. There are rules to the use of these ducts but they must be printed in Martian because I never see them observed. These ducts are like a slinky covered with a thin plastic then wrapped with insulation. They must be tugged tight before they are finished to make them as smooth as possible inside. They must also be sized larger than a smooth metal duct would be for the same amount of airflow. The bends in the duct cannot be sharp, they must be gradual. When these rules are not observed air is like a car flying down a bumpy, winding dirt road. It can't move nearly as fast as if the road was smooth. Since that air is carrying the cooling power for every room in the house there will be consequences for slow travel.

Air filters are another poor design trait of every brand on the market. There is really no place for a filter in the fan unit so they make a little flap or narrow door and want you to stuff a filter in there. It would be like McDonalds saying every soda comes with a free pencil holder and expecting you to use your cup for that after you drink your soda. Oh boy, thanks a lot.

Add on air filters are not expensive but the time to install them is when the equipment is being replaced. Request information from your installer when it's time to upgrade your air conditioner.

Ken Field is the owner of Field's Service, Inc. and Slate Belt Energy Services. He has over 40 years of experience in heating, air conditioning and is certificated by RESNET and BPI in various areas of energy conservation. He can be reached at 610-599-8832 or at www.SlateBeltEnergy.com

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PEN ARGYL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENTS



The Pen Argyl Area School District is offering a property tax rebate program. You may qualify if:

1. You have owned and occupied your home during the period for which you are claiming a rebate. Rebates are granted for your primary residence only; and
2. (a) You or your spouse (if living with you) were 65 years or older as of December 31, 2018; or
(b) You were a widow or widower during all or part of 2018 and were 50 years old or older as of December 31, 2018; or
(c) You were permanently disabled during all or part of 2018, and you were unable to work because of your medically determined physical or mental disability which is expected to continue indefinitely; and
3. Your total annual income, including the income of a spouse residing with you, was \$35,000 or less in 2018. (**IMPORTANT:** only report 50% of your Railroad Retirement benefits and 50% of Federal Social Security Act benefits); and
4. 2018/19 Pen Argyl School District Real Estate Taxes were paid in full.
5. Only one member of your household may file a claim.
6. Delinquent taxes **DO NOT QUALIFY.**

The deadline for filing an application is June 30, 2019

Applications are available at the Pen Argyl Area School District Office, or call the District Office at (610) 863-3191.

Northampton County Accepting Applications for CIPP Grants

By Bartlett

EASTON - Lamont McClure and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) announce that the County of Northampton will begin accepting applications for 2019 Community Investment Partnership Program (CIPP) grants on May 13th.

CIPP grants can be used to improve the quality of life for the County's older citizens, and to create opportunities to stimulate, attract, and sustain economic development. On average, eligible organizations can apply for \$50,000 per application or project. In 2018, 37 projects were awarded through this program for a total of \$829,202.

Municipalities and non-profit organizations may apply for funding in one of the following categories: Façade Grants, Capital Improvement

Grants, Operations Grants, and Community Planning Grants. The application process opens on Monday, May 13th, and closes on Friday, July 12th. Approvals scheduled to be announced in November. Details and applications can be found on the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) webpage: <https://www.northamptoncounty.org/CMTYECDV/Pages/Apply-for-Funding.aspx> The funding for CIPP grants comes from the Northampton County's share of the revenue from table games under the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act, 4 Pa.C.S.A. §§ 1102, et seq. Grants are awarded via a competitive process through a committee consisting of the DCED staff and two members of County Council.



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