



The Chinquapin

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Winter 2023/24

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Membership for the 2023/24 season begins now and ends in August, 2024. Check to see if you owe membership dues for the 2023/24 season or not. If you receive a hard copy of the newsletter, check the address label to see if you need to renew. If you receive an electronic copy of the newsletter, check the email subject line to see if you need to renew.

There are four membership levels. General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month. Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters (The Chinquapin) e-mailed to you quarterly. If you want, we can mail a hard copy to you instead. **With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.** Supporting Membership is \$10 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed as a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an invitation to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and two free tickets to our annual fundraiser.

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Cross Country Races in Tenhave Woods

by Bob Muller

The Nature Society was approached by Ryan Piippo, the coach of the Royal Oak High School's cross country team, asking if they could they alter their course to run through Tenhave Woods? I had a meeting with Ryan as to what this would involve, discussing our concerns and exactly what they proposed.

Cross Country is a sport run on natural terrain, not a track. The Royal Oak course had gone through the High School campus and Quickstad Park around, but not inside Tenhave Woods. Having an urban course also passing through a woodland would be a great addition. A gate would need to be added along the Normandy fence near Sandbar Trail. The runners would enter Tenhave at the Normandy gate, travel down the Sandbar trail, and exit at the Lexington gate. The course would pass through Tenhave twice. No spectators would be allowed to be inside the park. As deer in the nature area are so destructive, I told Ryan they would need to have people at both gates during the event to make sure deer did not enter the park. Afterwards, the gates would need to be locked.

The request from the cross county people was brought to our board and there was a unanimous affirmative vote. The cross country people then had the gate installed which would also be of great value to the Nature Society.

On September 26, there was a large cross country meet with teams from Royal Oak, Troy Athens, Stoney Creek, Farmington, Bloomfield Hills and Rochester for boys and girls Varsity and JV. In the four races, 242 kids participated. From my perspective it went smoothly and was interesting to see the runners in Tenhave Woods.

One of the ways you protect parks is to have people using them. This gives them a feeling of ownership which leads to them valuing and protecting them. Having that many young people running through Tenhave Woods and the hundreds of spectators outside the Nature Area should add to this.

Please see page 3 for a thank you from the Royal Oak High School cross country coach.



Cross Country runners entering Tenhave from the new Normandy gate

Giant Ichneumons in the Arb

by Dean Masters

If you have kept a sharp eye out at the Arboretum this past fall, you may have spotted a relatively rare and exciting insect resting on the bark of trees: a giant ichneumon wasp.

Despite the reputation of wasps, giant ichneumons are harmless to humans. Their ovipositor, instead of being a stinger, is an extremely long tube which they use for delivering their eggs. Often the first thing people notice when they see these wasps is this ovipositor, along with the hefty size of the insect overall and its bright colors.

Giant ichneumons are parasitoids. The females look for a very specific host: the larvae of horntails (also known as wood wasps). Incredibly, the ichneumon can sense the location of these larvae through the bark of trees.

It goes through a startling process of driving the fragile-looking ovipositor *through the bark* to plant its eggs on or near the bodies of the horntail larvae.

When the eggs hatch, the newly-emerged ichneumonid larva will feed on unvital parts of a horntail larva. Once it has a clear exit from the tree, it kills and consumes its host.

This species is the centerpiece of a thought-provoking essay by Jill Sisson Quinn called "Sign Here If You Exist," which is published in her book of the same name (and can also be found here: <https://catapult.co/stories/sign-here-if-you-exist>). Quinn points out that the ichneumon can afford to kill its hosts because "its host has a rapid reproduction rate. If we did not have the ichneumon wasp, we also might not be living in wooden houses, because the wood-boring insects these wasps parasitize would probably have killed all the trees."

There are thirty-seven worldwide species of giant ichneumonids, all belonging to the genus *Megarhyssa*. Four of these live in the Great Lakes region. Once you spot a giant ichneumon in Michigan, you can use a simple key to determine the species:

Is the body of the insect mostly black (without stripes or spots)? You're seeing *M. atrata*, the black giant ichneumon.

Does the body have yellow spots running down the sides? You're seeing *M. nortoni*, Norton's giant ichneumon (very rare in MI).

Does the body have brown, yellow and white stripes? You're seeing either *M. macrurus*, the long-tailed giant ichneumon, or *M. greenei*, Greene's giant ichneumon. You'll need to look close to differentiate between these last two. *M. macrurus* is usually larger than *M. greenei*, with an ovipositor three times the length of its forewings, stripes on its face, and slightly more markings on its wings than *M. greenei*. *M. greenei* will be slightly smaller, have an ovipositor only 1.8 times the length of its forewings, and a face without stripes. (See also "Key to the Species of *Megarhyssa* (Hymenoptera, Ichneumonidae, Rhyssinae) in America, North of Mexico" by Victoria Pook, Michael Sharkey, and David Wahl.)

I have seen more than one long-tailed ichneumon, *M. macrurus*, visiting the snag in the center of the Arb in the fall. Keep an eye out in the coming year, and perhaps you will be lucky enough to see one of these bizarre and beautiful creatures yourself.



Megarhyssa macrurus, long-tailed giant ichneumon, seen on the snag in the Arboretum. Author's photo

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If you want to be an Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (see p.5 for the form & instructions) and mail it along with a check to the Royal Oak Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost).

Through your donation (tax deductible), you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we provide.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail us the information asked for on our membership form (see below) and send that information to: naturesociety@romi.gov.

For those who choose not to continue being members, you are still welcome to come to our monthly speaker programs as well as our nature walks. Those programs and walks are, and always will be, free to anyone who enjoys learning about nature.

ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

Our programs are usually Power Point presentations focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions. Our current speaker programs will be held at the **Royal Oak Historical Museum** (Webster & Crooks), and begin at **7:00 pm**. There is no cost for our speaker programs and registration is not required.

“25 Common Ferns of Michigan” will be held on Thursday, **January 11th**. Join naturalist Don Drife, Royal Oak Nature Society’s botanist, for this presentation on ferns commonly seen in Michigan. Michigan’s 108 named pteridophyte species are a manageable group to learn. This talk will start you on your way to learn this group or be a review of the species. Basic terminology will be reviewed and species key characters will be shared along with numerous pictures showing the plants in their natural habitats along with closeups showing key characters.

“Giant Trees: Sequoia and Kings Canyon Parks” will be held on Thursday, **February 8th**. Join Don Drife and Bob Muller on a trip to see the largest living things on earth. Not only were the giant trees magnificent, but the rest of the forest where they grew was also majestic. There was a surprise when going to Kings Canyon. As you cross over the mountains, the Giant Sequoia forest turns into a desert within just a few miles. If you have never been there, join Don and Bob as they talk about their experiences.

Woodward Dream Cruise Parking

On August 19th, Woodward Dream Cruise Day, the Nature Society was once again in charge of parking at Gunn Dyer Park. The weather cooperated by being a beautiful dry day with the temperature around 80 degrees. Money-wise, the Nature Society made \$835 this year which is more than we had made in each of the two prior years. Hopefully, next year’s take will continue the upward trend.

We want to thank Pam & Mike Brady, George Gomez, John Herrgott, Bonnie Michalak, Tanner Poppema, Robert Schneider, Vanessa & Robby Schultz, Richard & Patricia Stoll, Ted Vickers, Wanda Warsinski, and Michelle Watson for volunteering to help us with parking at Gunn Dyer Park plus John Fedele from the city and his crew for getting the park ready for vehicle parking.

When the call goes out next year for volunteer help, we hope you will consider being part of our Dream Cruise parking crew.



Tanner Poppema is collecting money from the driver of a Dream Cruise classic at this year's Woodward Dream Cruise.

A Thank you Note from Cross Country Coach, Ryan Piippo

The addition to the trail through Tenhave Woods has definitely elevated our cross country course. Both our athletes and athletes from other local teams raved about getting to run through such a beautiful environment. The other coaches in our league and parents of runners all loved the addition, as well. We are hugely grateful to the

Nature Society (especially Bob Muller) for working with us to make this dream a reality. Our team looks forward to volunteering with the Nature Society on projects in Tenhave so that our athletes can give back and take ownership over this unique addition to a suburban cross country course.

ALL NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.

NATURE WALKS & PARK PROGRAMS

Normally, there is at least one naturalist lead walk per month with additional ones added during the spring wildflower and fall color seasons. An emphasis is put on understanding the different forest types found in our parks. Further information is given on individual plant and animal species, geology and human history of the area. Wearing boots is recommended in the winter and spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer. All public nature walks are free & registration is not required.

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park is just east of Meijer. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay.

TENHAVE WOODS: Park is just east of Royal Oak High School. For nature walks & park programs, park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the owl hoots, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ROYAL OAK ARBORETUM: Park and meet on the north side of the Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais).

For park location maps, please click on the following link: <https://www.romi.gov/1013/Park-Locations-Trail-Maps>

"Mammals of Tenhave" is being held at **Tenhaye Woods** on Sunday, **December 3rd**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Come and learn about the mammals that live in Tenhave Woods. We will look for signs of these mammals and have skulls and skins with us to help describe them and how they live.

"Winter Tree Identification" will be held at **Cummingston Park** on Sunday, **January 14th** beginning at **2:00 pm**. The trees will be identified by looking at their buds, bark and twigs.

Nature Society Citizen Scientists

We are looking for people to help us look for Ash Tree saplings at **Tenhaye Woods** on Sunday, **February 11th** beginning at **2:00 pm**. Meet at the Lexington entrance. No special skills are required. It has been 20 years since the Emerald Ash borer killed our ash trees. The question is, are they coming back?

Outside Group Volunteering

Outside groups have been an important part of the stewardship of Tenhave, Cummingston and the Fred A. Erb Arboretum. We want to thank the following groups for their community service to help improve our arboretum in the 2022/23 season

On September 16, 2022, nine members of **Retail Bloom** laid down cardboard and mulch to help smother English Ivy & Myrtle in the arboretum's mushroom garden.

On June 2, 2023, nine members of the group **Human 8** did work in the arboretum, moving leaves dropped off by the city and taking them to conifer garden where the leaves were used as mulch.

On June 30, 2023, nine members of the **Lawrence Technological University Physician Assistant Program** volunteered their time by helping to expand the butterfly garden in our arboretum.

ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY FRIENDS OF FUNGI

Friends of Fungi (FOF) is a group that promotes the understanding of, and an appreciation for, fungi in general and especially those fungi found in Tenhave, Cummingston, and the Arboretum. Mary Fredricks, mycologist for the Nature Society, heads this group. At the present time, no in-person meetings are being held. However, the FOF sponsors fungi walks from April through October on the fourth Saturday of each month at 10 am. There is no cost for our walks and programs and registration is not required. Please see the Royal Oak Nature Society website or Facebook page for more information.

The Nature Society is on YouTube! Check out our first virtual Fungi Walk hosted by Mary Fredricks. See some of the fungi (and more) that was in Cummingston Woods in July 2020.



YouTube

Just go to YouTube and search for "Royal Oak Nature Society" to find our channel. You can Subscribe to our channel and get notifications when new content is added. It is free!

You can also click here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTBfeN1EIWtF90P4tu6EpcQ>

Please check out our Facebook page & "like" the Royal Oak Nature Society.

<https://www.facebook.com/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society-228095233882566>



Please check out our Instagram page:

<https://www.instagram.com/royal.oak.nature.society/?hl=en>



Instagram



Tree First
ARBORICULTURE

www.treefirst.org
info@treefirst.org

Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable to:
Royal Oak Nature Society

Mail completed form & check to:
Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. Campbell Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (household members) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

1 year Household Membership (September-August)

- General (free)
- Associate (\$5)
- Supporting (\$10 & up)
- Patron (\$50 & up)

Receive newsletter by:
 Regular mail OR
 E-mail

Payment amount \$ _____ Date _____

For more membership information, please click onto:
<https://www.romi.gov/410/Membership>

NATURE SOCIETY GROUPS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of the following groups:

Stewardship: Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummingston Park and the Fred A. Erb Arboretum.

Communications: Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board including publishing our quarterly newsletter.

Education: Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

Fundraising: Is responsible for our fund-raising efforts including our annual fundraiser normally held in April.

Programming: Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods and the arboretum.

Ways & Means: Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President & Programs: Bob Muller

Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers

Education: Open

Fundraiser: Open

Stewardship- Tenhave Woods & Fred A. Erb Arboretum: Jack Novak & Jeremiah Sandler

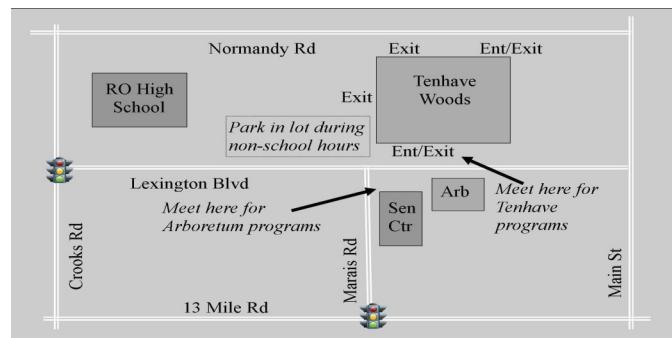
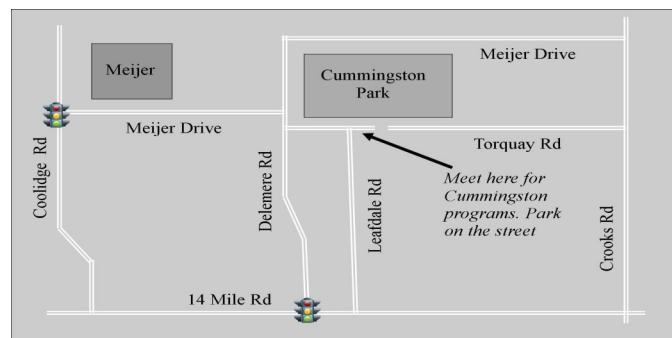
Stewardship-Cummingston: Mary Fredricks

At-large- Karen Blenc, Robert Schneider and Alyssa Beavers

Scout Representative: Richard Stoll

Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum

Traffic Light



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingston Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a non-profit education group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them. In addition, we are in the process of developing an arboretum in the Woods East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs for children and adults.

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