

Long Island Botanical Society

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First report of *Rhododendron carolinianum* (Ericaceae) spontaneous in the Manetto Hills of Long Island, New York

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Recent field work by Greller in the Manetto Hills, Nassau County, New York revealed spontaneously occurring individuals of *Rhododendron carolinianum*, the first report of the species for the state. We consider these individuals escaped from cultivation because nursery plants occur nearby in landscaped residential properties. A voucher was collected by Greller and will be deposited at The New York Botanical Garden herbarium. Common names of *R. carolinianum* include Carolina rhododendron, Carolina azalea, and punctatum.

We do not consider this species truly naturalized in New York. For a species to be naturalized it first needs to be introduced into the wild and then spread from where it was initially introduced. This process takes at least two generations. In the case of *R. carolinianum* on Long Island, the species has taken the first step towards naturalization; the initial introduction into the wild (escape from cultivation) has been documented but it remains to be seen if it spreads. For now, this species can be categorized as having an unknown nonnative status in New York (following Werier 2017) until more evidence of it being naturalized has come to light. Many species have been found outside of cultivation in New York but have not gone on to become naturalized.

Rhododendron carolinianum is a Southern Appalachian endemic. Its center of distribution is in and near the Great Smoky Mountains in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee; it occurs in rocky summits, heath balds, high elevation forests, and moist slopes (Weakley 2015). Haines (2011) included *R. carolinianum* as a nonnative member of the flora of New England occurring in Connecticut and Massachusetts.



Figure 1. *Rhododendron carolinianum* at the Manetto Hills, Long Island. Photo by Andrew Greller, 2020.

In April 2020, Greller began hiking on trails in the Manetto Hills and found approximately 10 individuals of *R. carolinianum* in the southern wooded border of Northern State Parkway about 200 m east of Sunnyside Blvd.; additionally, one seedling was found near the grassy border of the parkway.

Habitat for *R. carolinianum* is near trails and borders of Mixed Oak Forest dominated by black oak (*Quercus velutina*), white oak (*Q. alba*), and scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*). The understory is dominated by heath family shrubs including blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.) and black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*); poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) and common greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) also are common. The herb layer is composed of large colonies of hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) and Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)

with scattered individuals of wild oats (*Uvularia sessilifolia*), white wood aster (*Eurybia divaricata*), wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), pink lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), and large whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*). Haircap mosses (*Polytrichum* spp.) are common. Nonnative species include tea viburnum (*Viburnum setigerum*), linden viburnum (*V. dilatata*), and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*).

The Manetto Hills are complex geological features associated with the Ronkonkoma Moraine. Fuller (1914) described them in *The Geology of Long Island, New York*. The Manetto Hills are older than the glacial till deposited on top of them. Fuller (1914) discussed and provided maps of "massive hills of irregular outline . . . different in age and origin" from the

(continued page 27)

Long Island Botanical Society

Founded: 1986 • Incorporated: 1989

The Long Island Botanical Society is dedicated to the promotion of field botany and a greater understanding of the plants that grow wild on Long Island, New York.

Visit the Society's Web site
www.libotanical.org

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Society News

Carol Johnston steps down as LIBS Treasurer after more than 30 years of service. Carol is a founding member of LIBS and was honored with the Distinguished Service Award in 2016. She served on the LIBS Executive Board for many years and hosted Flora Committee meetings at Planting Fields Arboretum. Carol has led many field trips and has written articles for the *LIBS Newsletter*. She was instrumental in LIBS obtaining 501c3 tax exempt status and has taken the lead in preparing grant proposals. Carol attended LIBS anniversary trips to Newfoundland, Florida, and the Sierra Nevada, CA. Thank you so much Carol, for your years of service to LIBS!

Kathy Gaffney, the new LIBS Treasurer. After a smooth transition in 2020, Kathy is now in charge of the many responsibilities of Treasurer. Kathy is a Life Member of LIBS who rarely misses a monthly meeting. She has served many years as co-chair of the Hospitality Committee and frequently attends field trips including the LIBS anniversary trips to Florida and the Sierra Nevada, CA. Welcome aboard, Kathy.

John Potente returns to the LIBS Executive Board. John has accepted an appointment to serve as Corresponding Secretary and Chair of the Programs Committee. John previously served on the LIBS Board from 1998 to 2011 and was Editor of the *LIBS Newsletter* from 2000 to 2003. John was instrumental in editing *Tidal Marshes of Long Island, New York*, published in 2010 by the Torrey Botanical Society in association with LIBS. Welcome back, John.

West Brook update. Last year, John Turner wrote an article in the *LIBS Newsletter* (vol. 29: 30-31) on the natural revegetation of West Brook, a tributary of the Connetquot River in Oakdale, following the failure of a dam. LIBS members conducted two floristic surveys of the newly created riverside marsh habitat in 2019 (Aug. 30 and Sept. 26) and identified approximately 70 species of vascular plants including rarities and invasives. On August 3, 2020 LIBS members Eric Lamont, Enrico Nardone, and David Werier conducted another survey and found approximately 50 additional species not reported in 2019. A full report is in preparation for an upcoming issue of the *LIBS Newsletter*.

LIBS in the Covid Era. The last gathering of LIBS members was on February 29, 2020 on a field trip to North Fork Preserve. Spring programs were cancelled as well as the annual BBQ and the first Rich Kelly Day at Caumsett. Field trips were also cancelled and it is with a hope of better times to come that LIBS is sponsoring three field trips this Fall 2020 (see p. 28, this issue). Hope to see you in the field on beautiful Long Island in autumn. Safety protocols for field trips:

For field trips, you MUST:

- Register for the trip. Registration will be limited, so don't assume there is room for you unless the trip leader tells you. If you register and become unable to attend, please cancel so someone else can take your place.
- Wear a face covering for the duration of the trip.
- Try to "socially distance" yourself from other trip participants.

Rediscovery of *Rubus cuneifolius* (Rosaceae) in New York

Eric E. Lamont and Stephen M. Young

Rubus cuneifolius, sand blackberry (Fig. 1), is a species adapted to dry, sandy soil and is near its northern range limit in southeastern New York. Weakley (2015) described its range: "CT and NY (Long Island) south to s. FL and AL, MS, and se. LA, primarily on the Coastal Plain." In *A Flora of the State of New York*, Torrey (1843) reported: "I think this species grows in Suffolk County, Long Island. It is abundant in New-Jersey; certainly within a few miles of New-York." Hollick and Britton (1879) collected *R. cuneifolius* from Staten Island (Richmond Co.); Jelliffe (1899) reported it from Forbell's Landing (Kings Co.) but we have not seen a voucher to verify this report; Taylor (1915) reported it as "rare on L.I. and S.I., apparently unknown elsewhere in New York;" and Young (2019) reported it as "historical" from Richmond and Suffolk counties and not known elsewhere in the state. The most recent collection of *R. cuneifolius* from New York before this report is from Montauk, Suffolk Co. (June 24, 1939, L.H. Bailey 410, BH). Stanley Smith from the New York State Museum recorded observations of this species from Long Island between 1959 and 1967.

While conducting field work in 2015 and 2016 in the pine (*Pinus rigida*) barrens east of Calverton, Suffolk Co., Clara Holmes of the New York City Parks Department found a colony of *R. cuneifolius* along the edge of a dirt trail. The sighting went unreported until 2018 when it was brought to the attention of Steve Young and a map was provided of its location but no photographs were taken. In 2020, before the pine barrens report could be confirmed, David Laby observed the species in sandy habitat in Centereach and Port Jefferson Station (both in Suffolk Co.) on August 15 and 16 and posted them to iNaturalist. The observations were forwarded to Gerry Moore

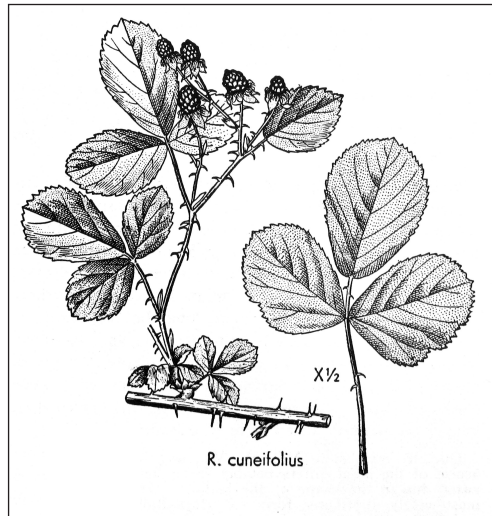


Figure 1. Illustration of *Rubus cuneifolius* from Britton & Brown's *Illustrated Flora* (Gleason 1950)

who confirmed the identification. On August 20, 2020, Eric and MaryLaura Lamont surveyed the Calverton locality and counted 82 individuals of *R. cuneifolius*. A voucher was collected and will be deposited in The New York Botanical Garden herbarium. Most individuals occurred a few feet off the trail in a relatively open grove of *Pinus rigida* and a few grew in the middle of the sandy trail. The shrub layer was sparse and included scattered individuals of sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), and hillside blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*). The ground layer was sparse with a few individuals of golden heather (*Hudsonia ericoides*), sickle-leaved golden aster (*Pityopsis falcata*), wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), and Gray's flat sedge (*Cyperus grayi*).

Although many species of *Rubus* are notoriously difficult to identify, *R. cuneifolius* is easy to identify in the field on Long Island. Its stems are erect or nearly so and heavily armed with stout, often recurved, broad-based prickles. The leaves are compound, usually with 3 leaflets. The leaflets are distinctly widest above the middle and densely hairy beneath with white or gray hairs.

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(*Rhododendron carolinianum*, continued from cover page)

Ronkonkoma Moraine, including from west to east "the Westbury, Manetto, Half Hollow, and Dix hills." Geologically, the Manetto Hills extend from eastern Nassau County into western Suffolk County and include what we now call the West Hills.

After exploring and recording the flora and vegetation of the Manetto Hills, Greller found more spontaneously occurring individuals of *R. carolinianum* at Bethpage State Park, Nassau County and West Hills County Park, Suffolk County.

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FIELD TRIPS

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020 (SUNDAY) 10:00 AM

Ashley Schiff Preserve, Stony Brook Univ., Suffolk County, NY

Trip Leaders: Sue Avery & Andy Greller

Register at: suea483@gmail.com

Sue & Andy will guide us through this 26-acre preserve on the Stony Brook University campus. Located on the Harbor Hill Moraine, the preserve features 75 plant species including trailing arbutus, Lycopodium sp., mountain laurel, spotted wintergreen, and partridge berry, all native to the deciduous forest.

Directions: Meet at the Ashley Schiff Preserve kiosk, situated on Circle Road. There is a visitor parking lot, free on weekends, also on Circle Road next to the Life Sciences building. <https://goo.gl/maps/n6zaH43pMXxJr4Ci7>

SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

Registration is limited, wear a face covering for the duration of the trip, try to “socially distance” yourself from other trip participants.

OCTOBER 24, 2020 (SATURDAY) 10 AM

Cranberry Bog Preserve, Lake Ave., Riverhead, Suffolk County, NY

Trip Leaders: Andy Greller & Eric Lamont

Register at: elamont@optonline.net

Andy has been leading trips to this botanical gem for more than 50 years.

Directions: Meet at the entrance to Cranberry Bog Preserve on Lake Ave. (Route 63), approx. 1.1 miles south of the Riverhead traffic circle (the traffic circle south of Peconic River; there are two traffic circles in Riverhead).

NOVEMBER 8, 2020 (SUNDAY) 10 AM

Oakland Lake, Queens County, NY

Trip Leaders: Andy Greller, Ian Resnick, and Nancy Tognan

(joint field trip with Queens County Bird Club)

Register at: ajlindberg@optonline.net

Meeting place and other info will be emailed after registration.