

Newport Forest

Sunday September 4 2005

2:30 - 5:15 pm

Weather: prec. 3 mm; RH 52%; calm; sun/cld; LM 26 C; FCF 22 C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Pat & Kee

As usual, watering dominated all other activities. I watered the gate trees so heavily, that I needed the van to take the jugs up to the gate. Pat pointed out that I had accidentally run over a Brown Snake (our third encounter with this species since we began. We noted the two field marks (besides small size) that distinguish this animal: top of head black, two parallel rows of black dots along the back.

On our way to the trailer with the van full of water, we stopped at two ancient fruit trees at the top of the FC bluffs, an apple and a pear, taking samples of both kinds of fruit. We later made the apples into a serving of apple sauce. It was sweet and slightly tart. Pat thought it might be a “yellow transparent,” a common tree in the early twentieth century. The pears were atrocious, extremely gritty, with a sour, unpleasant taste. Both trees bore heavy crops of fruit.

We watered the Gf trees, as well as half the SC trees, then went back for another load to finish the SC and complete half the SC, intending to finish the watering on the morrow. In the course of watering, I noticed that the Catalpas were the ones to first show drying stress, with leaves hanging limply from their petioles. Four of the ten or so *Populus* saplings have entered early dormancy. (Eastern Cottonwood, Quaking Aspen, Large-tooth Aspen)

After nightfall, I decided to try an experiment. After baiting the Nook with DBs, I sat out in the nook very quietly, with a weak flashlight on my lap aimed at the giant log. I allowed only my head to move from time to time, and very slowly at that. After about five minutes, a masked bandit peered at me, bearlike, rearing up from behind the log. Then it proceeded to eat the items distributed along the log. A second, rather burly fellow came in from the FC Trail exit and proceeded to clean up the DBs on the nook floor, passing within a few feet of me several times as I sat very quietly watching the pair. Suddenly, both raccoons looked up (to the east) and promptly scattered. What was coming?

Nothing, apparently, because within a few minutes they were back foraging. This lasted only a few minutes, however, as the “Burly Brothers” decided to depart. About ten minutes later, one of them returned to search for more DBs, then departed after a minute or two.

We heard a Screech Owl calling from the BCF. Although we checked the Hickory tray feeder several times, we saw no Southern Flying Squirrels on it. Later, when we came out to admire the Summer Triangle, I spotted a younger Raccoon on the Hickory, just below the feeder. Had it learned to catch SFSs or was it just after the seeds? Somehow, it looked guilty as I wagged a finger at it, promptly scabbling down the bark. The overnight low was 7 C.

In the early morning, Pat was sitting out on the deck when a hummingbird flew within a few feet of her face. Out for a morning bird-walk, Pat saw a large number of warblers on their fall migration, stopping to rest in the LM Walnut tree. She also spotted a Red Squirrel along Edgar's Trail at the bend. Meanwhile, I finished the watering with a final trip to the water tank for a half-load of water.

At 1 pm Al McGregor (former news anchor for CFPL TV and area videographer) came for his prearranged visit. We walked both the two-bridge trail and the TRT. The idea was that he would make a promotional video of Newport Forest, but this evolved into a video about the Thames River and the forests along it. We noted that everywhere but along Edgar's Trail the Wingstem Plants were extremely limp, their leaves hanging limply down their stems. We spotted a Raccoon in the old BM on the HB.

Just before we left, I changed the bottle on the RL malaise trap.

Note: We must contact the Municipality of West Elgin to find out their plans for the recently filled-in slumps along the road above the creek bluffs.

New Species:

Ash Leaf-spot

Mycosphaerella effigurata

FCF KD

Phenology: Ebony Jewelwings gone? (none today)