

A Refugee at Newport Forest

Newport Forest Tuesday October 20 2009 2:53 - 6:15 pm

weather: prec. 4 mm; RH 72%; BP 99.7 kPa; calm; cld/sun, T 18° C
purpose: to get out of the house
participants: Kee

Electricians are re-wiring our house. I was urged to go someplace like Newport Forest where I would be out of the way. In spite of this being the first unplanned visit ever, it turned out nicely. On arriving at the trailer I found a vehicle already parked there. Who could it be? I set up camp, noticing an unusually large number of ladybeetles about, coating any sun-warmed surface (trailer and van) A while later, our own Bruce Parker strolled out of the woods, so we sat in the Nook for a bit while Bruce explained some Monarch arcana such as a protozoan parasite called *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (must check that one out)

It was pleasant to walk to the river with Bruce, one of our most active Newport Stewards. Passing the deer feeder, I noticed a Brown Snake slipping off the road. (first sighting this year!) I changed the card on the new trail cam. At the landing we split up, Bruce for home and me for the TR Trail. In the RSF I took the spur line to the Sand Bar (SB) to (finally) locate my hazel and pawpaw trees. With the dieback of vegetation, they were all easy to spot and doing well. The pawpaw has doubled in height since it was planted four years ago (?). Back on the main trail, I noticed an unusually high concentration of dead Bitternuts (which mostly fell in the summer of '06) littering the riverside slope of the HB. (P)

In the BCF I checked a log with some roundish patches of yellow on it. Closer inspection revealed a probable fungal growth stained with and surrounded by a chlorophyte alga (judging from the colour). (P, S) Back in camp I rested in the Nook, noting an almost complete absence of birds. A lone Redbelly visited the feeder and squawked once or twice. I left the property and drove to Eva Newport's for tea, a frequent ritual with us. When I told Eva about the puzzling appearance of so many lady beetles, she declared herself to be besieged as well and cleared up the mystery, at least in my mind: "What happens is someone takes their beans off and suddenly the ladybugs have no more aphids to eat, so they have to go looking someplace else."

At home, when I loaded the trail cam images into the iMac, deer practically leapt out of the screen, does and bucks, the latter with early-stage horns. Day and night scenes both, with time stamps to tell you exactly when the pics were taken. The greenish growths turned out to be (in part) *Desmococcus*, a common subaerial alga. The fungus might be *Orange Poria*, but I'm not listing it until I know. Greg Thorn of UWO has agreed to be our official fungal consultant !

new species:

'Treegreen' *Desmococcus viridis* RSF KD Oc20/09

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



"Waldsterben:" dead Bitternuts litter slope of Hogsback

(click on image to enlarge)



A yearling buck (note fawn spots along backbone) has early horn growth -- called "buttonbucks" by hunters

Cautionary Note: Does sometimes develop vestigial horns after overdosing on testosterone.

(click on image to enlarge)



How many robins can you find in this image? Give the correct number and ID the warbler to win special gift.

(click on image to enlarge)



Pawpaw at Sand Bar still has a few leaves on it. (beaten up by taller nettles and ragweed)