

## Plant Profiles



*the compound leaf of a Staghorn Sumac*

## Staghorn Sumac

*Rhus typhina*

### Taking a Closer Look

One of the most brilliant plants in our fall landscape is the victim of plant prejudice. Because of Staghorn Sumac's toxic relatives, Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac, and its tendency to grow in "waste places," we often overlook the finer qualities of this species.

Few plants in Connecticut can rival the intense yellow, orange, and scarlet fall color during the first week in October. The branches themselves have a furry pubescence reminiscent of deer antlers. Additionally, female plants have torch-like clusters of red fruit terminating the branches. Unfortunately, many people do not differentiate Staghorn Sumac from Poison Sumac and avoid the entire lot.

Staghorn Sumac is the most commonly seen of the

sumacs colonizing dry, sunny locations. A pioneer plant, it colonizes open fields and abandoned sites. The seldom seen Poison Sumac grows in wet locations in and around swamps.

At Highstead Arboretum, we value Staghorn Sumac for its outstanding fall color and its ornamental fruit. In addition, we have observed bluebirds feeding on the fruit in late winter. We are taking steps to encourage the regeneration of our sumac colonies.

Situated in the right spot in the landscape, Staghorn Sumac can add color, texture and attract wildlife to the landscape. It is a neglected native plant that deserves a closer look.

*answers to inflorescence quiz:*

1.B, 2.C, 3.F, 4.E, 5.A, 6.D, 7.G, 8.C, 9.A, 10.B, 11.G, 12.E

## Highstead Saturday Walk Programs

*Highstead Arboretum invites members and guests for walks and talks on the second Saturday of each month. Come dressed to walk and plan to stay 1 to 2 hours. Reservations are suggested; call ahead for weather-related rescheduling.*

### Spring 1999

#### Cutting Back

*Saturday, March 13, 10am*

Don't sit under the apple tree! This demonstrative lecture by the Highstead staff will show the proper method for pruning an apple tree for both aesthetics and fruit production. Learn why both form and function are important considerations when shaping your fruit trees.

#### Digging In

*Saturday, April 10, 10am*

Take the mystery out of soil testing with David Bulpitt, co-owner of Brookside Nursery and lecturer at New York Botanical Garden. Mr. Bulpitt will demonstrate how to test your soil and analyze the results.

Considerations of pH, nutrient content and soil type will be addressed, as well as the best ways to improve your soil before planting.

#### Setting Your Sites

*Saturday, May 8, 10am*

Look before you leap. When planning the home landscape, one of the most overlooked aspects is site analysis. Drainage, sunlight, soil, and utility placement are just a few of the considerations necessary to selecting plant material and location. Learn how to "read" your landscape and make an educated decision.

#### Open Days

*June 12 & 13*

Join us in June for a series of informative and inspiring lectures and walks for our members and their guests. Invitations and a program list will be sent in early May.

*For further information, call Highstead Arboretum at 203 938 8809, 9am-4pm Monday-Friday.*

*There is a non-member fee of \$5.00 per program.*

## Highstead Arboretum

127 Lonetown Road  
P.O. Box 1097  
Redding, CT 06875





# Highstead Log

Spring  
News 1999

## Highstead Arboretum

### Gatherings

Searching for leaves can be an education and a passion. Both were involved at this year's leaf hunt. Children and adults alike were found scurrying along the trails, matching as many fallen leaves as possible to those in Highstead's Guide Book. Congratulations to Isaac Knoernschild, this year's winner!

From the 17th through the 19th of November, Highstead was host to the first grade classes of Redding Elementary School. Reinforcing what had been taught in the classroom with actual field work, students, chaperones and teachers took to the woods in groups. Close attention to leaf margin and shape was the key to collecting a complete set of leaves. Many thanks to Sandee Kinney for her assistance in organizing this field trip.

### One or More Flowers

Botanists consider plants with flowers to be more evolved than plants that reproduce by different methods, like the cone structures on coniferous trees.

Of the flowering plants, including trees, many species have large, showy, individual flowers such as the majority of tulips and the magnolias. More common than plants with these single flower structures are those that have multiple flowers clustered into a recognizable shape called an inflorescence.

The following garden plants all have these clustered flowers. Try to match each plant with the correct type of inflorescence shown in the margin (answers on reverse page).

1. *Highbush Blueberry*
2. *Horse Chestnut*
3. *Flowering Dogwood*
4. *Sugar Maple*
5. *Pachysandra*
6. *Rose Daphne*
7. *Double Viburnum*
8. *Common Lilac*
9. *Grey or Paper Birch*
10. *Japanese Wisteria*
11. *Common Trumpet Creeper*
12. *Mountain Laurel*

### The Woodland Demonstration

Old trees in Connecticut are rare. Not long ago, most of Connecticut's land was pasture or hay fields, and the little woodland that existed was so actively harvested

for lumber, charcoal production, and firewood, all the larger trees had been sawn down.

Our present woodlands look as if they have been there "forever," when actually they are less than one hundred years old. Only our older residents have witnessed this dramatic change of open farmland of the early part of the century to the wooded, dense growth we see today.

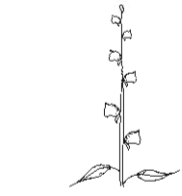


As the woodlands became fractured with more housing developments, land management has also had to change. Tree work has replaced field mowing, and although the arborist is quite knowledgeable in the care of trees around the home, little is known about the management of our woodlands.

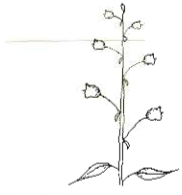
To address this issue, Highstead has started a woodland demonstration area focusing on two management techniques. The first is the selective removal of trees to allow the strongest to have space and resources to develop. The second is protection from deer browsing. Since deer have a preference for specific plant species that they eat first, their selective browsing is having an effect on the forest's regeneration, and which tree species will be a part of the woodland succession.

Two one-acre sites containing different aged woodlands have been chosen for this demonstration. Selected trees have been culled from a managed area, with a control area for comparison. Deer fencing excludes our local herd from half of the demonstration area.

Although much of our demonstration will take several years to show recordable results, we are anticipating a noticeable change between the different management schemes next year. Come join us as we tour these demonstrations during our Open Days program in June.



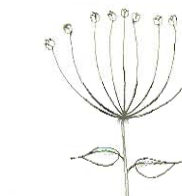
A. Spike



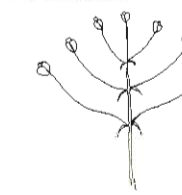
B. Raceme



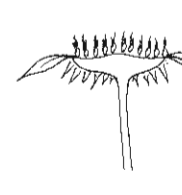
C. Panicle



D. Umbel



E. Corymb



F. Head



G. Cyme