

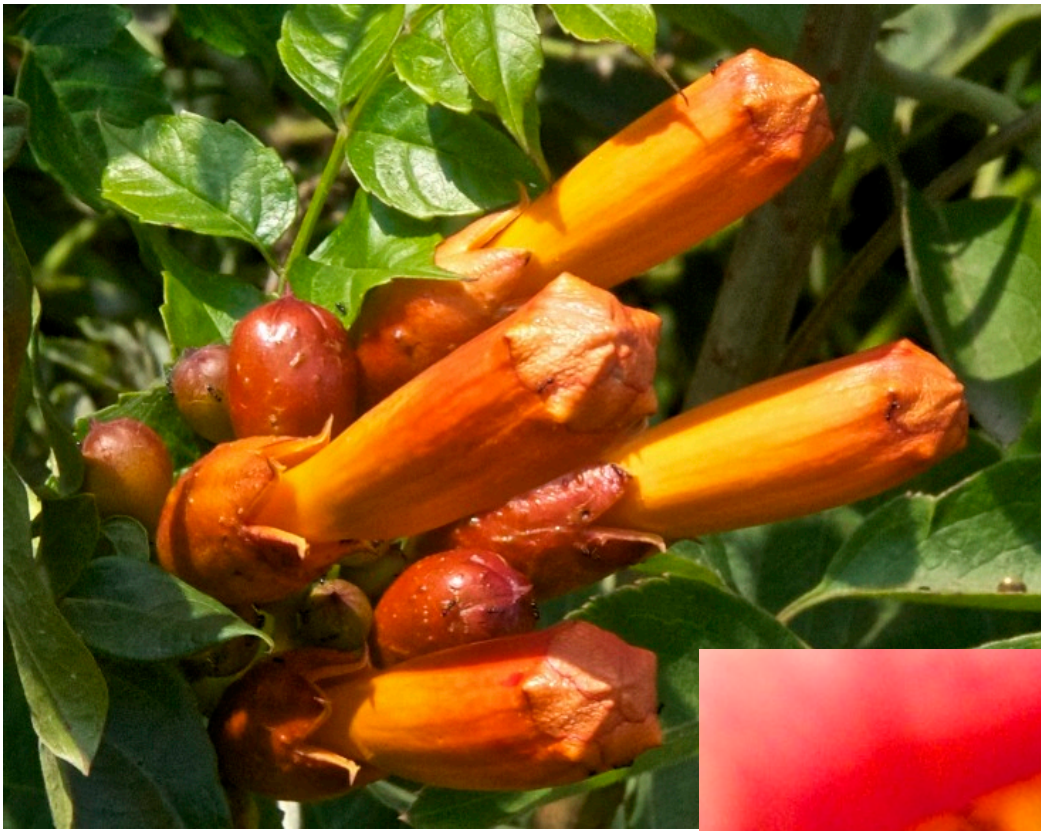
OBSERVATIONS FROM NATURE

SUMMER, 2012-PART 1

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
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In June the last of our native azaleas were in bloom. This is *Rhododendron atlanticum*, the Coastal Azalea.



The Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*) has several other common names, including “Trumpet Creeper”, “Hummingbird Vine” and “Cow-itch Vine”. The latter name refers to the ability of this plant to cause a rash in susceptible individuals.

The photograph on the left shows the flower buds before they open, bottom left shows one of the open “trumpets”, and the middle shows a view

down the throat of one of the blooms. The plant is a vine that grows 30 feet or more up into trees. Many cultivated forms have been developed, and Trumpet Creeper is seen in gardens as far north as Southern Canada.



The next few pages show some insects that have come to my lighted sheet on various nights.



Above is a Soft-lined Wave Moth (*Scopula inductata*). Larvae of this species will eat many species of plants including aster, clover, dandelion, ragweed, and sweet clover.

Below is a Pecan Carpenterworm Moth (*Cossula magnifica*). Its larvae bore into twigs of Pecan. As the larvae grow they exit from the small twigs and bore into larger branches. Ultimately they may bore into the trunk, sometimes causing serious damage.





This is a night-flying Longhorn Beetle with out-of-focus midges in the background. There are about 20,000 species of Longhorn Beetles worldwide. Some are pests, because their larvae are woodborers that tunnel into trees or untreated lumber. One species, the Asian Long-horned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) was accidentally introduced into the U.S. in the early 1990's. It's larvae infest about 25 species of our native hardwoods, and it is one of the most destructive non-native insects in the U.S.



The male Io Moth (*Automeris io*) is one of the larger moths (2.5-3.0 inch wingspan) that we commonly see. Adults are very short-lived; they do not eat and exist solely to mate and lay eggs. In Greek mythology, Io was a priestess of Hera. Zeus pursued and seduced Io, then, to protect her from Hera, Zeus turned Io into a Heifer. Hera was not fooled and sent a gadfly to pester Io relentlessly. Io eventually fled Europe crossing the strait between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The strait acquired the name Bosphorus, meaning “ox crossing”. Io escaped to Egypt, where Zeus restored her to human form.





The glossy creature to the left is a Grapevine Beetle (*Pelidnota punctata*), also called the Spotted June Beetle. It is a member of the family of beetles called “scarabs”. The adult beetle eats the leaves and fruit of grapevines.



The little (one inch wingspan) moth to the left is a Yellow-fringed Dolichomia (*Hypsopygia olinalis*). Its larvae feed on Oak trees.



Above is a False Crocus Geometer (*Xanthotype urticaria*) or a Crocus Geometer (*Xanthotype sospeta*). The two species are very difficult to distinguish.

Below is a One-spotted Variant (*Hypagyrtis unipunctata*). The larvae are not very specific in what they eat. They consume a wide variety of deciduous trees and shrubs.





Another nighttime visitor is this Spiny Oakworm Moth (*Anisota stigma*). The larvae of this species feed on various types of Oaks.





To the left is a Lesser Maple Spanworm Moth (*Speranza pustularia*). The strange species name “*pustularia*” refers to the second yellow mark in from the tip of the wing. It looks (to some) like a pustule which has ruptured and has dripped a line of pus droplets down over the wing (indicated by the bracket).

The tiny (less than one inch) moth below is a Moonseed Moth (*Plusiodonta compressipalpis*) named because its larvae feed on the Moonseed vine (*Menispermum canadense*). Moonseed bears red berries in the Fall, and the seed inside each fruit is the shape of the crescent moon. All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans (but not to Moonseed Moth larvae).



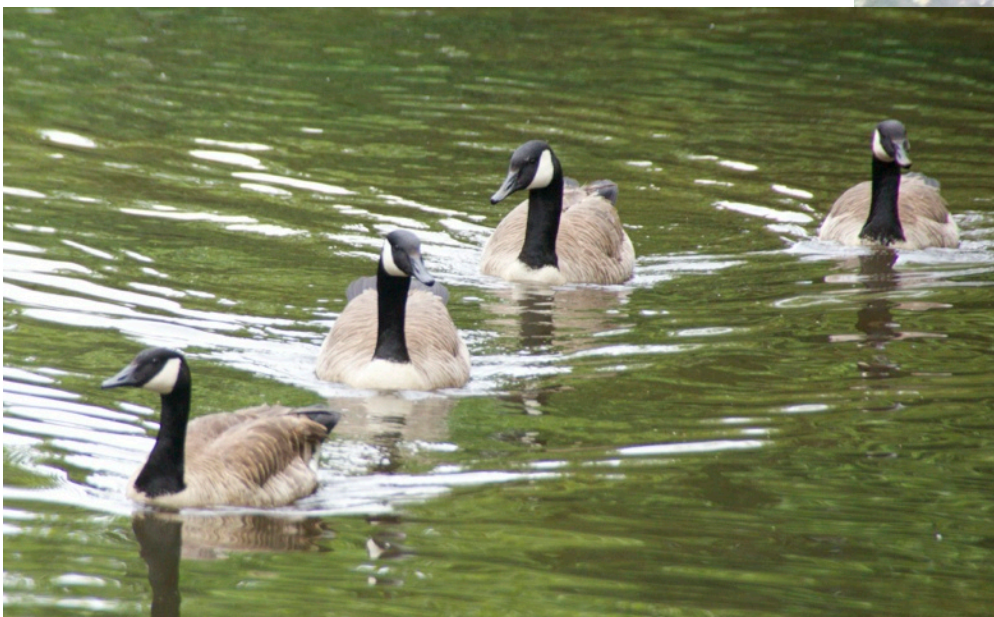


Along a roadside in South Georgia these Swamp Rose Mallows (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) were growing. They like wet sites. Marsh Mallows are in the same family (Malvaceae) as Cotton and Okra. Many cultivars have been developed from this plant or its hybrids with closely related species.





A visit to the Athens City Park turned up some neat creatures. Above is a Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) with a mouth full of bread contributed by our grandson. To the right a Water Snake, probably a Banded Water Snake (*Nerodia sipedon*). Below a phalanx of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in search of any scraps left over by the turtles.





Our grandson, Jack, spotted this colorful dragonfly perched on our back deck. It is an Eastern Pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*). This is a female, the male is uniformly pale blue. Below is a Calico Pennant (*Celithemis elisa*). This is a female or immature male. Mature males have red spots on the sides of the thorax.





Two views of Bambi...the first is standing in our driveway. The photograph below shows one that we spotting standing on the side of the road. Naturally, it waited until oncoming traffic had almost reached it before it darted across the road. Luckily, the driver of the RV was alert, and the young deer made it across without mishap.





Lots of Climbing Butterfly Peas (*Centrosema virginianum*) are blooming in our small field. These are in the bean (Legume) family, and will be followed by slender pods containing several seeds. They are normally pollinated by bees.





Here are two views of the flowers of Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). The cluster in the top photograph is being visited by a fly in search of pollen or nectar. Butterflyweed can be seen growing along roadsides in quite dry habitats. It is tempting to try to transplant some to a home garden, but the plant has a very deep taproot so most attempts fail. However, the plant is commonly available in commercial nurseries.



This plant is the host plant for the larvae of the Queen (*Danaus gilippus*) and Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) butterflies. Monarchs are famous because of their long-distance migrations to the mountains of Mexico.