

COMMUNITY

Nature's Ways ...

Butter-and-eggs brighten fall days

By MARK NALE

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The brightly-colored butter-and-eggs loves late September and early October weather. This beautiful wildflower is around all summer, but seems to get a second life in mid-September.

Butter-and-eggs, as its common name suggests, is a buttery yellow flower with a large orange spot, about the color of an egg yolk, in the center. This snapdragon-like flower's reproductive parts are completely hidden by the closed upper and lower petals.

The orange spot may add beauty, but it also has a practical purpose. It serves as a target for large bees, such as bumble bees, which are the major pollinators of butter-and-eggs. When a bee lands on the orange spot, the lower petal bends downward, exposing the nectar to the hungry bee. The bee picks up pollen when crawling in to sip the sweet juice and then spreads the reproductive dust (pollen) to the stigma of the next flower, thus facilitating cross-pollination.

Butter-and-eggs is covered with many narrow, stalkless flax-like leaves. The one-half to three-inch-long leaves are pointed at both ends. When viewed from a distance, its foliage has a bluish or silvery tint. This perennial usually grows one to two feet tall and has dense flower clusters at the tops of its stems. The flowers make an attractive addition to arrangements, and they last a long time in a vase.

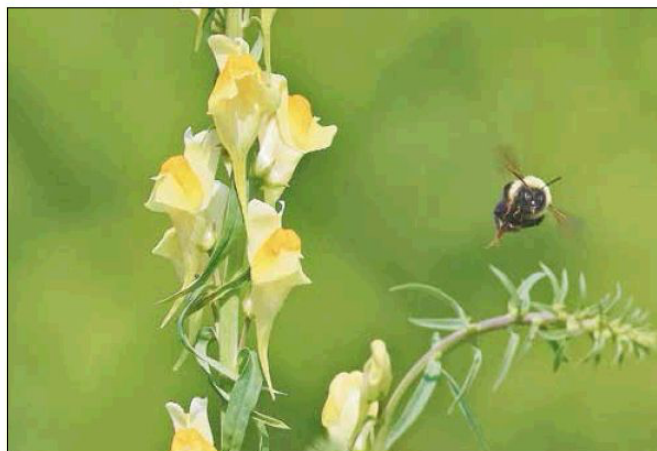
Butter-and-eggs' genus name, *Linaria*, refers to flax, and its species name, *vulgaris*, means common. It is also known as common toadflax. Some people think that the flower looks like a frog or toad's mouth opening when you squeeze it.

Roadsides, railroad right-of-ways, field edges and streamsides are the most common habitat for butter-and-eggs. It prefers sandy or gravelly well-drained soil of a neutral pH. Dry substrate limits competition, but if its environment gets too dry, the foliage will die back to the ground, only to sprout back following a soaking rain.

Northern Asia and parts of Europe are the original homes for butter-and-eggs, but it soon was cultivated throughout Europe for its beauty and believed medicinal properties.

In Germany, the flowers were also used as a source of yellow dye. Colonists, as early as 320 years ago, brought it to North America for medicinal purposes. It now grows wild in all lower 48 states and throughout Pennsylvania. It is non-native and can sometimes be invasive. Colorado and New Mexico list toadflax as a "noxious weed."

An ointment made from butter-and-eggs was used to treat liver and skin disorders, jaundice, hemorrhoids and eye inflammations. Before you concoct your own toadflax medicine, you might also want to know that, in Sweden, the plant was boiled in milk and used as a fly poison.



MARK NALE/For the Gazette

LARGE BEES are the major pollinators of butter-and eggs.

Butter-and-eggs spreads through its roots and rhizomes and therefore is often seen growing in clumps and colonies. It produces minute winged seeds, which are dispersed by wind or attachment to animals. The seeds remain viable in the soil for up to eight years. Plants bloom during their second year. The oldest, tallest and heartiest specimens have the largest flow-

er spikes and are usually in the centers of the colonies.

Although toadflax begins blooming in early summer, autumn rains and cooler temperatures tend to foster rapid growth and profuse flower production. Unless killed by a hard frost, the plant is most visible at this time of year. Watch for it on your fall outings.

CVIM to be honored with 2021 Madison Award

Submitted by Constitution Day Centre Inc.

STATE COLLEGE — Centre Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM) will be the 2021 recipient of the Madison Award for Civility in the Community, sponsored by Constitution Day Centre Inc.

The award honors individuals or organizations that have made longtime contributions to civility and community service, the hallmarks of American democracy.

The Madison Award will be presented at the Sept. 26 Constitution Day Celebration event. A U.S. Constitution Jeopardy game with local nonprofits will be held at 1 p.m. on the outdoor patio of the American Legion Post 245, 1950 Pine Hall Road, State College.

The award presentation will follow. This event is free and open to the public.

Launched in 2003, CVIM has provided free comprehensive health care to thousands of Centre County residents without insurance.

Community professionals and volunteers teamed up to offer medical, dental, case management, and medication assistance services to working people with little or no access to affordable benefits.

The 2020-2021 annual report estimated over 1,100 unique patients used at least one of their services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CVIM became an essential part of the effort to vaccinate the community. Staff and volunteers toiled tirelessly to schedule many vaccine

clinics for residents. By August 2021, CVIM estimated it administered 28,875 injections, while continuing to provide free health care.

"The State College community is blessed to have the medical staff and volunteers of CVIM active in our community," said Mary Watson, president of Constitution Day Centre Inc.

"During the COVID pandemic, they have addressed the needs of all citizens with intelligence, skill, diligence, energy, and integrity. We are all grateful to CVIM for their dedication during this unprecedented time."

"The board, staff and volunteers are honored to be chosen for the 2021 Madison Award for Civility in the

Community," said Cheryl White, CVIM executive director. "Since our inception in 2003, it has always been our belief that all are entitled to have access to quality healthcare, regardless of their insurance status or their ability to pay."

Constitution Day Centre Inc. is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting learning about the U.S. Constitution and civil conversations among people of all beliefs. Activities include annual events and the Madison Award for Civility in the Community.

Pat Daugherty of the Tavern Restaurant was the inaugural recipient in 2019.

More information is at www.constitutiondaycentre.org.



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