



Every ice flower design is unique. PHOTO BY PATRICK COIN

FLORA
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“A little research revealed that I’m not the first to observe ice flowers. Ice flowers are delicate ribbons of ice that encircle the stems of certain plants when the temperature falls below freezing. According to Forrest Mims (www.sas.org/E-Bulletin/2003-12-19/mimsci/body.html), the flowers ‘are formed when liquid water inside freezes and splits the stem open. Water and water vapor inside the stem are emitted directly into the air, and transformed into delicate ribbons of ice.’

“Ice flowers do not form on just any plant. I’ve found no explanation for ice forming on some plants and not on others. The plant

best-known for forming ice flowers is frostweed, *Crocianthemum canadense*, in the Rock-rose family. *Verbesina virginica*, white crown-beard, and *Verbesina alternifolia*, wingstem, both in the Aster Family, also form ice flowers. My ice flower plant, wild oregano, is in the Mint family.

“How big are ice flowers? I mistook the smallest ones for packing peanuts, but the largest were fist-sized. When do ice flowers form? I first noted them in a cold spell in mid-December. On a walk at 8:30 p.m., I shone a flashlight beam on the rocky bank, and tiny whorls of ice were beginning to form. How long do ice flowers persist? Once the morning sun heats the forest floor, 8:30 a.m.

on this particular slope, the delicate whorls melt away. Where do ice flowers form? The only place I’ve seen them form in my forest is along a 50-foot stretch of my driveway where wild oregano flourishes. I must point out that I am not typically hiking at 7 a.m. on January mornings, so perhaps they occur on other plants! At a meeting of Garden staff last January, I asked if anyone else had noted ice flowers. Most people admitted they’d never heard of, much less seen, the phenomenon.

“I noted ice flowers frequently in December and early January but not afterward. I hypothesize that as winter progressed, the wild oregano stems dried out, so less water and sap was available for freezing. Clearly I have many more questions than answers about ice flowers, but I urge you to be on the lookout for these ephemeral, never to be found in herbaria, ice flowers.”

Thank you to Carol Ann for sharing her observations of these seldom-seen phenomena and to Patrick Coin for the beautiful images.



If it takes a village to raise a child, then when those children grow up successfully shouldn’t they thank those village elders? That was the inspiration behind the Dec. 19 tribute held for former Troop 835 Scoutmaster Paul Trembley, 84, of Lillington. Paul, who led Troop 835 from 1955-76, served as a critical role model for thousands of Chapel Hill boys. Listen to what David Kirkman, 56, of Chapel Hill says of his old mentor:

“I have long believed that my friends and I could not have grown up in Chapel Hill-Carrboro at a better time. It was still a small place. Everyone knew one another. People in the town were addressing important issues like civil rights and economic justice in a mostly positive and progressive manner: UNC basketball was on the rise again under a young coach named Dean Smith. The best new musical talent in the world came to town every April for UNC’s Jubilee Week-

end. Also making the town such a special place for boys like me were very active Boy Scout organizations like Troops 9, 39 and 835. I was in 835, led by Paul Trembley and a dedicated group of parents. Paul took us everywhere, from Pisgah Forest in the dead of winter to places like California, Canada, the Everglades and Europe during summer vacations. We were active in the community, doing all kinds of worthwhile projects.”

Kirkman adds: “I once thought that I was a member of Troop 835 during its heyday (‘65-’70). I was wrong about the troop’s best years. That was probably from 1969 through the early ‘70s, when it planned and conducted activities jointly with Girl Scout Troop 59, led by Jean Holcomb. Members of the two troops had some wonderful times together, doing the same sorts of things and taking the same trips that we did during the previous decade. It was a

novel approach to scouting. You could tell from the comments of members of both troops last weekend that some of the fastest friendships and best lessons in leadership and personal development occurred during those years when the two troops operated together. The young people from those two troops probably worked their way through the gender equality issue much sooner in life than their peers and their predecessors did.”

Former Scout Tom Kip agrees: “He did bring us together in a memorable brotherhood in a special brotherly way that I’m not sure we can truly impress our wives and our children with...”

David Swanson of Chapel Hill helped organize the event and took this photo in which Paul, wearing his old Scoutmaster’s uniform and Philmont Scout Ranch jacket, is bracketed by devoted former Scouts, left to right, Bill Blake of Chapel Hill, Tom Kip of Valle Crucis and Cotton Tyler of Chapel Hill (partially hidden). About 70 Scouts and family members attended the tribute held at Extraordinary Ventures on Elliott Road. Swanson said the Troop 835 tribute and testimonial reunion honoring Paul Trembley “was really special.”

A THOUSAND WORDS
BY JOCK LAUTERER



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