



About Our Cover

On the cover is western or yellow skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*), also known as swamp lantern, a monocot found in wetland areas of the Pacific Northwest. Named for the skunky odor it emits, skunk cabbage uses its strong smell to attract scavenging flies and beetles that it seduces for pollinating. The flowers of the skunk cabbage are housed in a prominent cylindrical spadix that is ensheathed by a large, showy yellow spathe and are some of the first flowers to appear on the monochromatic spring landscape of northern British Columbia, where this photograph was taken. Skunk cabbage is the largest-leaved plant within its range, but this is not evident until well after the plant has flowered and gone to seed, after which it produces several leaves that can grow up to nearly 1.5 m tall and half as wide. These leaves were reportedly used by indigenous peoples for wrapping food and as drinking vessels, among other things. An interesting attribute of the skunk cabbage is its ability to produce heat that it can use to clear surrounding snow to get a jump-start on spring and to imitate the warm and rotting flesh of animals, which attracts pollinators. The photograph was taken near Prince George, BC, by Roy Rea (reav@unbc.ca), with a Canon 5D camera and Canon Zoom lens EF 24-105.

Contents

Quick Fixes

- Creating Clay Models of a Human Torso as an Alternative to Dissection**
Help your students learn anatomy in a creative and constructivist manner.
Gwendolyn Shipley 146
- Biology Blogs: An Online Journal Club & Assessment Tool**
Tap into technology to improve science communication skills.
Janet A. De Souza-Hart 149

Articles

- The Ecology of Death: Forensic Entomology as a Teaching Tool**
CSI in the classroom.
James McNeil 153
- Environmental Education & Ecology in a Life Science Course for Preservice K–8 Teachers Using Project Wildlife in Learning Design**
Comprehensive approaches to environmental education for preservice teachers.
Allan Nelson 156

Inquiry & Investigations

- A Skeleton Tells Its Own Story: Forensic Analyses of Skeletal Elements for the Science Classroom Laboratory**
Using bones to teach the scientific method.
Virginia L. Naples, David Breed, Jon S. Miller 162
- Plants in Your Ants: Using Ant Mounds to Test Basic Ecological Principles**
Students get down and dirty in these hands-on experiences.
Jennifer A. Zettler, Alexander Collier, Bil Leidersdorf, Missa Patrick Sanou 172
Available online at <http://www.nabt.org/websites/institution/index.php?p=551>
- Making the Most of the *Daphnia* Heart Rate Lab: Optimizing the Use of Ethanol, Nicotine & Caffeine**
Knowing what to expect makes this experiment more effective.
Frank Corotto, Darrel Ceballos, Adam Lee, Lindsey Vinson 176
- Crayfish Behavior: Observing Arthropods to Learn about Science & Scientific Inquiry**
Bring the outdoors indoors.
Charles J. Rop 180

How-To-Do-It

- Using a Five-Step Procedure for Inferential Statistical Analyses**
A handy template for statistical inference tests.
Lawrence F. Kamin 186

Departments

- From the President** • *It's a Digital Tsunami Out There!* • Bunny Jaskot 141
- Editorial** • *Announcing a New ABT Department: Classroom Materials Reviews* • Bill Leonard 143
- 2010 Buyers' Guide** 191
- Biology Today** • *An Eighteenth-Century Woman* • Maura C. Flannery, Department Editor 197
- Book Reviews** • Elizabeth Cowles, Department Editor 202
- Classroom Media Reviews** • Jeffrey Sack, Department Editor 205
- NABT 2010 Professional Development Conference** 209
- Index to Advertisers** 212

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