

Volume 20
4

Winter 2000



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Newsletter of the Arkansas Native Plant Society

President's Message

The holidays are over-as evidenced by all the beautiful seed catalogs arriving daily now. This may be a "down" period for outside activities but your Native Plant Society is staying busy. We've had a presence at the latest Arkansas State Trails Council meeting at Lake Fort Smith State Park and will be present at a planned meeting of the Advisory Council of Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs as they look for like-minded organizations to perhaps pool resources and strengths to achieve some common goals.

Wayne Owen, formerly the biologist of the Ouachita National Forest and now at Forest Service Regional Headquarters in Atlanta, has successfully contracted a seed company to prepare the packets of *Coreopsis tinctoria* as approved at the fall meeting in Mountain View. These will be available for distribution this spring and will have the ANPS listed on the packet as a sponsor. These packets will be sent to anyone on request and hopefully will be given away at plant fairs, lectures, etc.

Our web site (www.anps.org) continues to undergo revision. Suggestions for improvements to the page or for added links to a favorite pertinent site are welcomed. Ron Doran has graciously agreed to add the responsibility of "webmaster" to all the other things he does for the society as editor. THANKS! Our more artistic members might try their hand at creating a logo for the society to put onto the web page as well as society letterhead (the Executive Committee will review submissions at the spring meeting and possibly choose a winner then — prize to be determined).

Robert Wright has obviously worked hard to make the spring meeting at Petit Jean informative and enjoyable. I hope to see you all then.

John Simpson

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, March 18, Crooked Creek and Little Missouri Falls.

Lana and Bruce Ewing ((501-394-4666) will lead a day hike to see more Ozark Trillium than you could imagine, as well as Hepatica, trout lilies, and other early wildflowers. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Big Fork (about 20 miles east of Mena) on Highway 8, at the community building. Bring your own drinks and food.

Spring General Meeting

Friday-Sunday, March 31-April 2, Petit Jean State Park. Spring General Meeting. Highlights: early spring flowers and other natural wonders of the park.

Friday 4:00-6:00 p.m. Registration

6:30 p.m. Served meal at Mather Lodge (**sign up for the meal by March 24 with Robert Wright, (501-771-0312)**)

7:30 p.m. "Petit Jean Scrapbook", presented by Steve Dunlap, a Park Interpreter

8:15 p.m. "The Seasons", a slide program on Petit Jean flowers by Carl Slaughter

Saturday 9:00 a.m. Meet at Mather Lodge for morning hikes and walks

(lunch Saturday on your own)

1:30 p.m. Meet at Mather Lodge for afternoon hikes and walks

5:00 p.m. Executive Board meeting

6:30 p.m. served meal at Mather Lodge

7:30 p.m. business meeting of ANPS members

8:00 p.m. "Arkansas' Natural Heritage" video presented by Bill Shepherd

8:45 p.m. "The first 20 years of ANPS" by Carl Amason (**be sure to send Carl your slides and snapshots ahead of time**)

Sunday: breakfast and hiking on your own

Reminder: get your reservations in pronto if you haven't already

Mather Lodge: 1-800-264-2462

Cedar Falls Motel: 1-501-727-5630

EconoLodge in Morrilton: 1-501-354-5101

Best Western in Morrilton: 1-501-354-0181

Saturday, April 15, Big Creek.

Oralee and Don Price (501-362-6781) will lead a walk to see crested Iris and other woods and streamside flowers. Meet at Visitor Center at Greer's Ferry Dam, Highway 25 North out of Heber Springs, at 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch and something to drink.

Saturday, May 20, Baker Prairie.

Bernetta Hinterthuer (501-582-0467) will show us late spring prairie flowers. Meet at 11:00 a.m. in Harrison on Goblin Drive adjacent to the high school on the west side of the city. Bring your lunch and drinks.

MONPS Special Invitation

The Missouri Native Plant Society (MONPS) has scheduled one of its quarterly board meetings to be held on the weekend of 14-16 April 2000 in West Plains Missouri.

On behalf of the MONPS I would like to invite the members and friends of the Arkansas Native Plant Society to join us. You are familiar with the usual general format of our weekend meetings: a short mixer-gathering on Friday evening, field trip on Saturday, business meeting starting at 6:00PM on Saturday evening, and perhaps a short half-day field trip on Sunday morning. Jack H. Harris, President MONPS. (314-894-9021) jahar@stlnet.com

Chapter News

Ouachita Chapter

Year 2000 greetings to our members and friends of the Ouachita Chapter of the Arkansas Native Plant Society.

First of all, since Pinnacle Mountain Visitors center is being remodeled we had to find a new place to meet. Carl Hunter contacted the Game and Fish Commission in Little Rock and we were given permission to use the boardroom from **10:30 until 3:00 on Saturday, the 22 of January.**

The Game and Fish building is in the Natural Resources Complex on Natural Resources drive off of Markham St. Turn east at the intersection of Shackleford and Markham St. Pass under 430 and watch for Natural Resources Drive. Then drive to the Game and Fish Building.

Secondly, please bring refreshments as you did last year when we met at Pinnacle Mountain. We can just snack for lunch.

Our program will include presentations by Douglas Zollner (director of Conservation, Nature Conservancy, member of ANPS). Dr. John Simpson (president of ANPS, charter member of the board of directors of the Arkansas Chapter of Nature Conservancy) will also be speaking. You will here from Bob Byers (Curator of Garvan Gardens, Secretary treasurer of the Ouachita Chapter), Carl Hunter (Author, past Deputy Director of the Game and Fish Commission, member of the Board of Directors of the ANPS, Ouachita Chapter member, and John Pelton (photographer, Past President of ANPS, President of the Ouachita Chapter) as well. Plan to come for fellowship, discussion, planning and entertainment. We are Blessed!

John Pelton, President
(501-316-1057)

Northeast Chapter

...naturally you are welcome to join our Northeast Chapter. We had three super field trips this past year. Found a new species for Arkansas: *Echinaceae simulata*, which is listed as a taxon near Bull Shoals Lake in southern MO. We have planned another great year, 2000, the turning year of the millennium. Please join as has Carl Amason, Carl Hunter and others. A 5-dollar investment in our chapter gives you compounding benefits!

Best wishes come true for you in the New Year!

Bob Clearwater, President
(501-884-6752)



Calion Field Trip Report

December 11, 1999

By Carl Amason

The Saturday morning was mild and cloudy and possible rains were in the forecast. As the day progressed it remained cloudy, mild and no rain developed, leaving the day neither wet nor dry, neither hot nor cold. It was a day to be remembered as excellent for field tripping and enjoying a full day in late autumn. There was some lingering fall coloring on a few of the deciduous trees and here and there a lingering flower or two as no killing frost had occurred. The ground was dry in spite of some surface moisture that gave the false impression that ground moisture was sufficient to give maximum plant growth for lush conditions.

Shortly after the first arrivals, which were Dr. Dale Thomas and two graduate students, Chris Doffit who is doing his Master's Thesis on the Flora of Ouachita County, Arkansas and Herbert Young, doing his Master's Thesis on the flora of Nevada County, Arkansas and then things, all good, began to happen. It was a welcome crew from Monroe, Louisiana because Dr. Thomas and Chris Doffit and Herbert Young have young mentally alert minds and they see "everything" and they eagerly helped with identification of any plant that gave any problems to any of the participants. Many of the field trippers were old timers but most were new to the manners and problems of being on a field trip that at times would be organized and at times just as disorganized. All of which contributed to the spontaneity of a good time being had by all. Raymond and Patsy Higgins of El Dorado are always amazed at the knowledge and also plant beauty to be found, and certainly not the most knowledgeable but interested people were Winifred Dawson, an internationalist who is six months in Canada and six months in Malvern with her Malvern fellow traveler Francis Smith. Winifred frequently

expresses the differences between flora and climate of near Ottawa, Canada and her winter domicile at Malvern. Two well-known regulars who are well known and respected for their interests were Sandra and Bob Gamble. Sometimes people wonder what others know and just as often what they don't know. Such is the camaraderie of a field trip. Regardless there are always some things different or unusual seen or at least it is seen through different eyes. Melissa Finley and husband came from Little Rock where they spent the night with her parents on Calion Lake. Two members of the Arkansas Fish and Game Commission Blacklands Prairie near Columbus were Donna Hertlein and John Lane who came from Nashville.

No one got lost in "metropolitan downtown" Calion and perhaps word of mouth had simplified the way to get together but any place, large or small is a dreadful place to get lost and especially when there is a time to assemble. Renee Arehart came from Little Rock and a quiet person, she had a radiant personality and it was obvious that she enjoyed the field trip. Clint and Francis Sowards were from Hot Springs Village and A.J. and Gloria Higgenbottom from Murfreesboro rounded out a full company of field trippers and away the group went, fanning out into groups reorganizing and getting into small groups again and again.

What plants did the group see?

There are always so many things to see in anyone's woodlands but red berries were conspicuous and well known by everyone. American holly, Chinese holly, yaupon, and deciduous holly were all well represented. For orchid fanciers there was foliage of *Tipularia bicolor* [crane-fly orchid] found underfoot almost everywhere and the remaining evidence of *Habenaria repens*

[water-spider orchid] was seen in a badly needed-of-repairs pool where it grows as an aquatic, somewhat safely from the browsing of hungry deer. Only a few sprigs of the native witch hazel *Hamamelis virginiana* and a near by dry pool gave several green spots of *Micranthemum umbrosum* [shade mud-flower], a plant that has also cropped up in some wet, well watered nursery areas in El Dorado. Somehow it superficially resembles the Corsican mint. One exotic bulbous plant that certainly pleased Melissa Finley was *Narcissus cantabrigiae* 'Nylon', a white winter flowering white petticoat daffodil. Some other flowering exotics that pleased the strollers were some *Camellia sasanqua* cultivars, which suffered greatly from the extended droughty conditions, and a few *Camellia japonica* cultivars were just beginning to bloom. For the fern fanciers, there was one *Botrychium lunarioides* [grape fern] with its green prostrate winter foliage – the fertile frond develops latter -- and in the pinewoods close by are two other *Botrychium*, both with fertile fronds but one is a large green infertile frond, The other is a smaller purplish infertile frond, otherwise they look very much alike. Of course there are other ferns about the place. No frond of the common *Ophioglossum crotalophorides* [adder's tongue fern] has had enough moisture to emerge from the soil. Of the many *Ilex vomitoria* plants there are several yellow berried bushes, and one is particularly well fruited.



In due time a stroll along the county paved road was begun. Dr. Thomas had a real field day as there were quite a few lingering plants in flower or conspicuous seed heads and the only hazard to beware of were fire-ant hills. Growing side by side for easy comparison were *Andropogon virginicus*, broom sedge bluestem, and *Andropogon ternarius*, split-beard bluestem. In the winter afternoon these two are easily told apart, split-beard bluestem has tufted seed heads on its stems that could be seen as far away as the grass could be seen. The broom sedge bluestem showed no mature seed heads at this time. Bluestem is a name for all of these related true grasses but that name is no real help to the amateur. Also, with a few open flowers, was *Gaillardia aestivalis* var. *flavovirens*, a perennial yellow blanket flower. Also in this sandy soil were winter rosettes of *Coreopsis lanceolata* and of *Rudbeckia hirta* [black-eyed Susan]. Woody plants in the fence row included three species of *Vaccinium*: *V. arboreum*, the winter sparkleberry with dangling black fruits; *V. elliotii*, the Mayberry whose sought after fruit is used in home cooking and canning; and *V. virgatum* late huckleberry -- really a blueberry -- on stoloniferous sprouts that creates colonies of fruiting bushes. Further on a clump of the destination plants were found in fruit (*Acanthospermum australe*). This is a South American native plant and how the world it escaped into Union County, Arkansas is not known but it used to be all along the graded road, but since the road is now blacktopped the entire length, it is becoming rare. Then, a little further, a fruiting groundcover colony of *Smilax pumila* was found. It was well covered with red fruit and was a beautiful sight in the dry wood just beyond a ditch where it was growing happily. One of the common names is sarsaparilla vine and here again Dr. Thomas added so much to the field trip by telling that the roots are good stomach tonic and that it is also a source of flavoring and that the dried leaves can give a delightful flavored tea. This thorn-less

"briar" is a very common woodland component in south Arkansas but finding a fruiting vine – usually less than 2 feet long – is unusual but here was a beautiful colony in fruit. On the woodland edge was an oak sapling of *Quercus velutina* [black oak] and Dr. Thomas again cut through the rough bark to show the orange cambium layer, which is a very distinctive diagnostic feature of this oak at any time. Quickly the group turned about faced and headed for the lunch as much had been seen and learned and an appetite had developed and in good time everyone found a seat in the house or on the porch and opened their lunch and continued to visit.

It didn't rain at any time and that was one of the reasons some of the central Arkansas people didn't come: heavy rains in the forecast. Some of the people who had traveled some distance began to break up the field trip, a few lingered for a few wildflowers to review and some stayed until about 4 PM. Two groups that headed north – one for Malvern and one for Hot Springs Village called before dark to say they had a

safe return trip but both had to drive through heavy pouring rain some distance until they got home. No rain fell on the field trip so it was a cloudy pleasant day, not too hot, not too cold, nor too dry or too wet—just a day to always remember.



Some notes on *Cunila origanoides* or Dittany

By Carl Amason

Dittany of the mint family is one of the most pleasing plants in Arkansas. It is a plant that grows almost all over the state. It is absent from the Mississippi Delta, the Grand Prairie, and is found sparingly on the western Coastal Plain. Where it is found it is very common. It is a woodlander' and it grows most often in open woods and along the edges, forming a plant which is almost evergreen or with only a few wintering leaves on the woody or semi-woody stems which seldom grow above eighteen or twenty inches tall. It grows with a minimum of care and in cultivation it is easily planted but seems to dislike deep sandy and prefers a heavy clay soil.

The plants are wonderful garden material because it isn't demanding. In nature and in gardens it leafs out mostly on

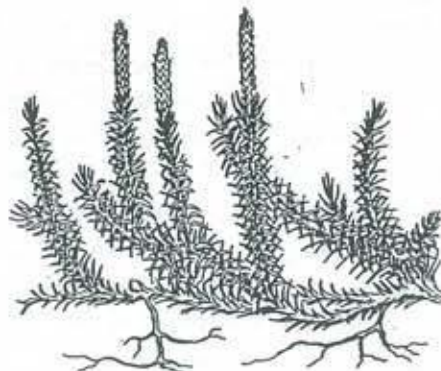
the upper twigs on almost leafless bare stems. The leaves are opposite, have minutely toothed edges and develop from one to two inches long. All summer these leaves will develop into grown ones, which will readily reveal that it is a mint, a member of the Labiatae by most authorities. In summer cymes of flower clusters develop in the axils of the square stems. Each twig will develop from two to maybe ten of these axillary cymes in the fall. The tiny but showy clusters of flowers are purple with a corolla of five petals but only two fertile stamens. Sometimes they last after the first hard freeze, about Thanksgiving or even latter.

Cunila is an American or New World genus while the name dittany is an Old World one that is applied to other

related plants in Europe. *Cumila origanoides* is the only common species native to the eastern and southern United States.

Early settlers made use of the plant where common as a tea for coughs and perhaps as a substitute for China tea, but the native doesn't have any caffeine. Opinion is that had it been an Old World native it would have been a classical herb to grow in an herbal bed or garden, but only local use was employed by the old timers.

Now it is a plant to enjoy in woods, woodland gardens, old waste areas and in gardens and yards. It seems that using it as an herbal tea was about the only use employed. It is easily propagated by seeds, cuttings, and transplants. This is truly a wonderful plant to enjoy.



Some Notes on *Fagus grandifolia*

By Carl Amason

One of the outstanding beautiful trees in much of the woods of Arkansas is the beech tree, *Fagus grandifolia*. It is found in about half of the state, being absent from the Mississippi Delta, the Grand Prairie, much of the eastern Ozarks and some of the Arkansas River Valley. On Crowley's Ridge, central Ozarks, and the southern Ouachita Mountains and on the western Coastal Plains, it is a common grand or large tree in the more moist slopes and along the terraces of bottomlands.

For wildlife, it is a valuable tree. For woodlands, it gives diversity and for the horticultural minded, it gives beauty, but for the growers of trees for timber, it isn't desirable due to two reasons: (1) it is extremely slow growing and (2) the log condition can't be assumed to be solid until it is cut and many times it isn't worth taking to the sawmill.

So much for its faults, it still has many redeeming features. For most people, it is a tree of great beauty in all seasons and well into its old age. It grows to large sizes in rich bottomlands and it furnishes a lot of

mast for wildlife. The hollow trees are homes to all wildlife that can get into a cavity such as squirrels, opossums, raccoons, and of course owls. Frequently only the shell of the tree is alive, hollow completely from the ground up and it is still able to bear beechnuts and leaves. But its greatest beauty is its size and the fall color of yellow, turning bronze or toasted cheese color and all winter the leaves will remain on the tree, being a pleasing brown color. In the spring, new leaves will appear, pushing off the old leaves, and these new leaves are a bright translucent green, much like stained glass in a cathedral or church, giving a greenish color to the sunshine that penetrates through the leaves. Such is the high spring season in the woods when so many little wildflowers, shrubs and other trees are in bloom. The flowers of the beech trees are fairly inconspicuous, both male and female flowers are lost among the emerging leaves to the sight of anyone except for those knowledgeable about such flowers. The male flowers are small round ball shaped greenish clusters and the females are small

globe masses with soft spines. The male flowers are not showy and they soon fall but the female flowers will develop into a soft spiny husk that contains two triangular nuts with sharp points. The nuts are sweet and edible even to humans but they are eagerly sought after by birds and beasts. The wood is hard in a tree of commercial value and it is used for tool handles, flooring, boards and such uses that oak wood would be used but it isn't long lasting in contact with the soil.

Aside from being of value in the woods for a source of food for wildlife, it is a great desirable tree for ornamentals in spite of not having showy flowers. And its sweet nuts are not a nuisance, either on the tree or on the ground. So what are its desirable virtues? It is a large tree that has architectural beauty in all seasons. Its green leaves of spring and summer are simple, about 2-4 inches and half as wide. The autumn color bright yellow is very striking. The trunk of the tree is smooth and light gray in color. One of its characteristics is that it is carved into by people with a knife and the carvings are evident as long as the tree lives. For some people this is a major fault. The tree is relatively free from any diseases and insect damages and its pollen is not considered to cause hay fever. But its slow growth usually implies that it is sometimes planted for the children or grandchildren in the family.

Essentially the tree is a very stabile species as there is no difference in the shape or color of the leaves among American trees (there are many variations in leaf shape and color in the European species.) so it all comes down to the situation that if a tree is on your property for a house site, try to save it, as young trees are very slow to mature. So always admire a grown tree in the wild and hope that it gives food and shelter for years and gives beauty and admiration for people for a long time.



Keep Arkansas Beautiful News

December 10, 1999

You may have seen that we broke ground last week [first week of December] for the first of many wildflower plantings around Little Rock. It is hoped that this will spread all over the state.

Look for materials regarding our first Annual Conference for KArB. This is to be held at Lake DeGray State Park on Thursday, February 24, 1999. Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Linda Westergard pinnacle@arkansas.net



Editor's End Notes

So far, in this part of the state, we are still waiting for real winter to arrive. The spring beauty and henbit are blooming more like it was March and the daffodils have popped up and are budding. I usually can expect a few early blooms from those daffodils about the end of the first week in February -- not the middle of January. We finally did get some much-needed rain. My pond that was about four feet down is now filled to overflowing and the spring peepers have joined in chorus singing their courtship songs. The babbling brook in the valley is still fairly mute because of the drought but at least there is some flow.

The mild temperatures over the holidays kept calling me outside and for once I have our garden and flowerbeds cleaned up and mulched well before it is time to plant again.

Again I want to thank all of you who have submitted articles for this, **your** newsletter.



Please keep them coming. E-mailing those articles to me saves me a lot of time but for those of you not on the electronic super-highway yet I don't mind snail mail at all.

With all the activities scheduled if you don't have anything to do on your weekends this spring it is your own fault. I am sure the Ozark Chapter has some activities scheduled too. I just haven't gotten details from them yet.

There is a lot of exciting activities planned and in progress. Don't think you have to be an expert to take part. Some of our most vital members are self-taught individuals who have a love of nature and of our native plants in particular.

Go on one or more of the scheduled field trips. Attend the meetings. Offer to host a field trip in your neck of the woods. Join the logo design contest. Enjoy your society!

If you are not yet a member join now and reap the benefits of membership. If your mailing label doesn't have a 00 or LF on it is time to renew. Happy 2000!!!!

Arkansas Native Plant Society Membership Application

Please check below.

Membership Categories:

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- ☐ \$15..... Regular
- ☐ \$20..... Supporting
- ☐ \$25..... Family Membership
- ☐ \$30Contributing
- ☐ \$150.... Lifetime Membership
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**Eric Sundell, Membership ANPS
Division of Mathematics and Science
University of Arkansas
Monticello, AR 71655**



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Life members will have an LF

Please fill in the information form on the opposite side of this page and send it with your renewals, applications for membership, changes of name, address, e-mail address or telephone numbers to the address given on the form: **[Not to the editor.]**

1999-2000 ANPS OFFICERS

President: John Simpson.....(501)321-9292
 johnbensimpson@prodigy.net
 Past President: Steve Marak ... (501)268-6683
 Pres. Elect: Robert Wright.....(501)771-0717
 Vice-pres.: Lana Ewing.....(501)394-4666
 Editor: Ron Doran.....(501)268-2503
 doran@harding.edu
 Historian: Carl Amason.....(870)748-2362
 Secretary: Sue Clark.....(501)666-5149
 Membership: Eric Sundell.....(870)367-2652
 Treasurer: Jason Anders.....(870)836-0452
 Ark. Coalition: Carl Hunter.....(501)455-1538
 Awards/Scholarship: Annette Holder
 Communications/Publicity: Gary Tucker
 (501)968-7061

The purpose of the Arkansas Native Plant Society

is to promote the preservation, conservation, and study of the wild plants and vegetation of Arkansas, the education of the public to the value of the native flora and its habitat, and the publication of related information.

Claytonia

Ron Doran, Editor
 900 E. Center
 Harding University Box 10846
 Searcy, AR 72149-0001



ROBBINS, Penny
 43 Valencia Way
 Hot Springs Village, AR 71909

LF

