

Claytonia



NEWSLETTER OF THE ARKANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
SPRING 1991

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK: SUE CLARK

ANPS is beginning its second decade! I would like to thank Bruce Ewing and everyone who helped make 1990 a successful year, and those who are helping to make 1991 just as fruitful and enjoyable as the past ten years.

Dr. Richard Speairs is working hard on our general meetings, our field trips, and programs for this year. The spring meeting is in a beautiful place. The headquarters overlook a vista from a cliff and the facilities should be very satisfactory. The Executive Board discussed setting our general meetings as far ahead as two years so that our members will be able to make their plans. Included in those plans is a possible meeting at DeGray Lodge, which has to be reserved up to two years ahead of time.

Chad Gray and Eric Sundell have put together the membership list for 1991. They have waited as long as they could to mail the address labels to Ron Doran for the Claytonia and the 1991 Directory. Unfortunately, those members who fail to send their membership in by the middle of February are not on the mailing list for the spring field trips or the 1991 directory. Chad and Eric do try very hard to get the latepayers on the mailing list for the fall Claytonia. Ron does a marvelous job putting these publications together. He needs information for the spring Claytonia and Directory by the last week in February and for the fall Claytonia by September 1.

This is the last year that our membership will be $5.00 for the regular members. The general membership voted at our fall meeting to raise the regular membership to $10.00, $15.00 for a supporting membership, and $25.00 for a contributing membership. The fee of $5.00 was barely enough to cover the mailings of the Claytonia and the Directory each year because of the rising costs of paper and postage over the last ten years.

The funds for the Delzie Demaree Award and the Dwight Moore Award are not growing as much as we would like even though we are growing in the number of members. All regular membership monies according to our by-laws are put into the general fund. In the future, $15.00 of the Supporting Membership will go into the Dwight Moore Fund and $20.00 of the Contributing Membership will go into the Delzie Demaree Fund which provides for research grants to students of Arkansas Botany. In order to keep these funds growing, please consider joining either as a Supporting or Contributing Member.

Our thanks to Dr. Robert Wright, who volunteered to be the ANPS delegate to the Arkansas Conservation Coalition and who will report on their activities.

I hope to see you all at the Hobbs Estate in May.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are on Saturday unless specified otherwise. Please call ahead of time to confirm your participation and to find out if there are any last minute changes.

April 6: Led by Bruce & Lana Ewing into the land recently acquired by the Ouachita National Forest on the Little Missouri River. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the junction of Hwy. 84 & Hwy. 369 in Langley, Arkansas. Bring a sack lunch and be prepared to hike into an area that is currently being managed as a wild and Scenic River & Wilderness Area. Call 394-4666.

April 13: Spring flowers and vegetation of selected Faulkner County beauty. Meet in Conway at the front, S.E. corner of the Lewis Science Building (next to the Farris Center Gym) on the UCA campus at 10:00 a.m. Bring a sack lunch. Led by Robert Wright & Don Culwell. Call Don at 329-8504.

April 27: Ouachita National Forest -- Seeps & Glades. Meet at Charleston Campgrounds, west of Crystal Springs on Highway U.S. 270 at 9:00 a.m. Led by Susan Hooks of the U.S.F.S. Phone Susan at 321-5323 (O) or 623-9845 (H).

May 4: White County Wanderings. Meet at the Harding University Science Building parking lot. Corner of Market and Cross, in Searcy at 9:00 a.m. Led by Ron Doran. Contact Ron at 279-4705 (O) or 268-2503 (H).

June 8 Carl Amason's famous Calion trek. Meet at Carl's house at 9:30 a.m. Turn left off of Highway 167 at Staples Store, go to County Rd. 44 (about .5 mile), turn right and go south 1.25 miles to Carl's house. Contact Carl at 748-2362.

SPRING GENERAL MEETING

When: May 17-19, 1991

Where: Beaver Lake area -- just east of Rogers, AR

Accommodations:

Prairie Creek Motel will be the place to stay. Call 925-2313 for reservations. It is very close to the restaurant where we will have registration and our evening meetings. Please reserve your room ASAP as this is a major tourist area and there is a bass tournament the same weekend. If you prefer, there are accommodations of various caliber in Rogers, and assorted campgrounds nearby. Rocky Branch Resort is located on 303N not too far from our meeting site. Call 925-1688.

Schedule:

Fri., May 17

1 to 3 p.m. **UARK Herbarium Open House.** The Herbarium will be open and members and guests of the ANPS are welcome to stop by for a visit. The Herbarium houses about 84,000 specimens in 74 herbarium cases, including many collections by Dwight Moore, D. Demaree, E. B. Smith, and many others. It is located in the Science/ Engineering Building, room 501. Both rare and common, old and new, and mounted and unmounted specimens may be seen. Plants of all kinds (above the Bryophytes), such as woody, weeds, ferns, orchids, etc. can be observed. The Herbarium began in about 1872, and continues to accumulate information about our wild plant species. Hosted by Dr. E. B. Smith, Director of the UARK Herbarium.

4 to 6 p.m. **Registration** at Prairie Creek Hickory House Restaurant, 1857 Hwy. 12 east of Rogers. Phone: 925-3158.

6:00 p.m. Buffet Supper -- $9.00

7:00 p.m. Speaker -- Mark Clippinger, director of Hobbs Estate Management Area

Sat., May 18: Field trip to Hobbs Estate*

Sun., May 19: Optional field trip

*We have been asked to help develop a plant inventory of the Hobbs Estate. Please bring any identification aids that you might have, such as Flora of Missouri, Flora of the Great Plains, and other Floras that might include plants of northwest Arkansas. Binocular dissecting scopes and hand lenses would also be beneficial.

A NOTE OF THANKS TO THE ANPS

I want to thank the members and the selection committee of the Arkansas Native Plant Society for the awards: the doubly great honor of giving me the Carl R. Amason Conservation Award at its fall meeting.

It had been a gloriously full day when so many plants were found in the course of field trips. It pleased me as so many of them are not found here on the Coastal Plains. There were clear streams to view, many rocks to ponder, views to behold, old friends to greet and new friends to meet. The weather was superb. The walk about Fairfield Bay and the Old Railroad Nature Trail out of Shirley were exhibiting to the fullest. Even in late autumn, amid all the foliage colorings and seed stalks, there are many things in flower and showy fruits. The rock ferns, natural rock gardens, gentle slopes, and small ravines were all wonderful elements for enjoying nature in its fullest.

I want to thank Mrs. Beer of Sheffield Bay for all her part in making the meeting such a wonderful success. She has the academic ability to pursue botanical goals and the physical and

mental resources "to get the job done." To Mrs. Beer: Thank you so much for your constant work behind and on the scene.

I had a full day, stimulated by the world about me, with added adrenalin to push me further over and around the hills, enjoying visual feasts of autumnal glories of the foothills of the Ozarks. Even so, in my recent illness and its lingering malaise, I am easily exhausted and mentally fatigued. But that is something of the battle I fight everyday. It was thoughtful of Dr. Eric Sundell to bring Dr. Dale Thomas of the Northeast Louisiana University of Monroe, Louisiana, to the meeting. To succinctly state the case, we had a field day.

We were delighted amid the radiant happiness of the assembled membership after a delightful meal and relating events of the past, the present, and the future of unusual discoveries and kindred soul experiences. When the presentation was given to me, frankly, I must admit something of a mild shock. I thought of Jane Stern, I thought of everyone, and it was with a feeling of deep friendship. We have so much work to do and we must learn so much, all of which can be fun. But a speech from me at such a time was superfluous and I don't even remember saying the minimum of good manners, "Thank you." I was just plain speechless. So at this time I want to express my thanks for the award with great pride, happiness, humility, gratitude and sincerity. What else needs to be said? Only "Thank You" again. -- Carl R. Amason

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIELD TRIP NEAR CALION ON 10 NOVEMBER 1990

The morning broke fair and cool, about 40°, and it was wet underfoot as recent rains had put some much needed moisture back into the soil. So far there had not been any killing frost, but it had approached frosting temperatures one or two mornings earlier. As a result, some elements of autumnal leaf colors lingered on some of the deciduous trees, mostly dogwoods, some oaks, second-growth small sweetgum, and winged elms -- all common parts of the Union County woodland scene. It also happened to have been the first day of the deer season, but fortunately we did not let that stop our woodland strolls in the course of the field trip later. But, I'm getting ahead of my story.

It seems that I could always do a little more housecleaning, or year-sweeping, or do something to make the field trip a little more pleasant, but in my genuine excitement, I "just let it happen." Sure enough, at the appointed hour -- yea, the appointed minute -- a car bearing Lois Wilson of Joiner and also of the Lichterman Nature Center of Memphis, Thera Lou Adams, and Jason Anders of Camden arrived at the precise stroke of 9:30 a.m. It soon became evident that we four were the field trippers and as all had on some red-orange colored clothing, we elected not to leave the place. We had the entire world to ourselves and set forth to survey the place. There are many patches of partridge berry (Mitchella repens) all over the place. We found many out- of-season blossoms among the green leaves and ripe red fruits of the trailing plant. There were a number of out-of-season flowers on naturalized wild violets (probably Viola sororia), on the redbud trees (Cercis canadense), and even on some of the cultivated evergreen azaleas -- on a scattering, not a real show. In full bloom were the Virginia witch hazels (Hamamelis virginiana) and one flowering plant of soapwort gentian (Gentiana saponoria) which was on the edge of a perennially wet spot. One of the poets wrote something to the effect that "one swallow does not a spring make," but one gentian in bloom does make for a thrill to see, especially when it is fairly uncommon and such a pretty color of blue to bloom so late in

the year. It only makes one wish for hundreds of them to be in bloom. As there are a number of hollies (Ilex opaca), many yaupons (Ilex vomitoria) with heavy crops of translucent red berries, and a big bush with the uncommon yellow berries and they are a beautiful sight to see (and feast for late winter birds); also some red-berried deciduous holly bushes (Ilex decidua) which still had the berries somewhat hidden by unseasonably green leaves, and many dogwoods (Cornus florida) in fruit, so the berried plants were prominent features on a stroll on the place. All the narrow-leafed sunflower (Helianthus angustifolia) plants had finished flowering except for one bloom here and another there on the hundreds all over the place and the thousands over the countryside. In somewhat somber or subdued fall coloring were the umbrella magnolias (Magnolia tripetala) and the big-leafed magnolias (Magnolia macrophylla). Most of the native wild ferns were tattered and gone -- they always are -- except for the Christmas fern (Polysticum acrostichoides) and the escaping Japanese climbing fern (Lygodium japonicus) and the branches of the many pecan trees were all in a showy mantle of the resurrection fern (Polypodium polypodioides). Just enough moisture had allowed the fronds of some of the common grape ferns (Botrychium biternatum) to push through the fallen leaves. I had searched, in vain, some days for the minute Ophioglossum crotalophoroides, but it has been entirely too dry to bring them out of the soil.

Some time along the way, I declared that we would go further away from the house, pass an old white oak (Querquis alba) which is one of my joys to behold on the place, over a rise, just over the next 40A, to my "big" pond (actually in this dry season only something, I fear, that approaches a glorified mudhole) to show my faithful followers a surprise. On the upper edges of my pond is a perennially wet spot, but no flowing spring, that used to be in the middle of the cotton patch. In recent years, I had a pond dug, perhaps 1/4 acre, and some of the damp soil remains on the upperside. When I would frequently find sphagnum moss in the wild, I would take some clumps and just strew the clumps about in the edge of the weeds and to my delight, the sphagnum persists and survived. Meanwhile, the Kroger Store in El Dorado had a flower market and one of the featured plants for sale was the Venus fly-trap (Dionaea muscipula). Several times, when I had the extra money (they cost $5.00 each) I would buy one of the little clear plastic holders with black bottoms, roughly about two-inch square bases and three inches tall, that directed one to use only distilled water, only indirect sun, and above freezing temperatures. I am aware that this plant has a very limited natural range in the damp ditches about Wilmington, North Carolina. I threw all caution and directions as well as plastic containers aside and planted two in early December 1989, one later in January 1990, and another in the heat of the summer's drought. All were planted directly into a sphagnum moss clump in seasonally wet area. The two first ones survived zero or near zero Christmas freeze of 1989 but a deer stepped directly on one, pushed it four or five inches into the ground and that was the end of that one. But the other one, less than 10 inches away, bloomed in spring of 1990. The other January planting was planted in somewhat drier soil, and the summer planting in the wettest place, and it suffered some sunscorch immediately. However, at the present, it is the nicest size -- if size can be nice -- meaning larger, but I am happy to report that three plants are growing and prospering in spite of several severe freezes and one summer drought. On the field trip, they looked good and Jason had much to say about them. As I write this account in early January they look better and the bear-trap leaves are more numerous and dangerous looking than they were in late summer.

And so after a lunch and much talking, we shared some plants, all of which were common here on the place and I think we each had a field day to remember. In another season, the plants would vary as much as the participants' interest, but there will always be something, hopefully, to make a full day to remember here on my sandy to clay soil among my second-growth pine trees on the Western Gulf Coastal Plain. --Carl Amason

IN PRAISE OF VACCINIUM ELLOTTII, THE "HIGH BUSH HUCKLEBERRY" OF THE COASTAL PLAINS: by Carl Amason

In browsing through Dr. Ed Smith's ATLAS, one of my frequent preoccupations of the winter season, I always find things that are of great interest. For instance: he lists six species of Vaccinium (all properly blueberries) for the state. I venture to say that each and every one of them has as a common name in its native range "huckleberry" alone, or in combination of low-bush, high-bush, winter or some other rather descriptive term as part of its common name for good reason. Each has features that make each species desirable.

The object of my comments is directed to what the local people in the piney woods of Arkansas almost universally call "high bush huckleberry." In scientific circles it is Vaccinium ellottii, a common shrub all the way across the South from East Texas into North Carolina or maybe Virginia, and is named for, I presume, the same gentleman who is honored in several southern species and the genus Ellottia. I don't know the full southern range of Vaccinium ellottii in the United States, but Smith's ATLAS has records from 11 counties and reports from 2 more counties with Garland, Grant and Jefferson Counties being the northern-most counties.

It is a characteristic plant, and is very common on the western Gulf Coastal Plain as an understory element in the pine-hardwood forest. It is almost deciduous; only a few leaves linger through a bitter winter -- more in a mild winter. In February, the buds began to swell and oftentimes one or two or more blooms are found, but the bulk of its flowers come forth in early March. The flowers are numerous, white or pale pink, and are typical heather-type flowers: that is, small urn or vase-shaped blooms, perhaps 1/8 inch long, but 1/16 inch across. Honey bees and other bees eagerly pollinate the flowers, which are also visited by early butterflies. In fact, I always see my first zebra swallow-tail butterflies of the spring, or late winter, sipping on Vaccinium flowers. Meanwhile, as the green fruit is developing, so are the small ovate leaves of apple green, which eventually are full grown, about 1/2 or 5/8" long and about half that measurement wide. The mature fruit develops to about the size of BB or buckshot, all black. The amount of white waxy bloom on the fruit varies considerably, often enough to dilute the black color to a dark blue when mature. As all Vaccinium, they develop with a blossom end scar that reminded the author of the genus of a smallpox vaccination scar, hence the name, but the fruit are eagerly sought after by birds, beasts and human berrypickers. In fact, only a few wild fruit were sought by the local people -- Mayhaws, high-bush huckleberries (or now blueberry), and blackberries were the most commonly picked, and for a good reason -- items for delicious eating.

The fruit ripen here in early May. Among the birds that eagerly seek the fruit are mockingbirds, brown thrashers, robins, catbirds, wood thrushes, cardinals and perhaps, chickadees and tufted titmice. So, in addition to being a good landscaping shrub, it is wonderful as a bird attractant, source of fruit, and the flowering branches are used in spring bouquets, more or less as a filler. The cut foliage, in summer and into fall, is used for greenery

in arrangements and the fall coloring of those grown in sun turns a brilliant red. The shrubs grow to be in the range of 8 to 10 feet tall and as wide. They can be trimmed into rather Oriental appearances, but individual limbs are fairly short-lived, dying in 4 or 5 years to be replaced by other continuously growing limbs. The shrub itself is long lived. In good years of bearing, each bush will furnish almost a gallon, but some years the production is scant because of late freezes. Even children, especially little boys, eat the flowers, and green huckleberry pies are some peoples' favorite fruit pie.

This is one blueberry that grows in dry sandy soil and once established will stand long periods of drought. It can also grow in damp areas as long as it is a drained, but damp area. Why this bush has not been used to hybridize dry-planting blueberries I don't know, unless (1) it is not well-known, (2) not hardy in much of the United States, or (3) perhaps the small fruit size. Taste is outstanding and drought resistance is remarkable.

While the Vaccinium are not true huckleberries, but blueberries, I do find that many people are now calling them wild blueberries, just as so many people are now calling Rhododendron canescens wild azaleas and not wild honeysuckles. No one thought of transplanting a wild honeysuckle bush into their yards, but many people are now wanting to transplant wild azaleas onto their places. What a difference a name can mean. But, again, I rely on Smith's ATLAS. There is only one species of Gaylussacia, the true huckleberry, found in only one spot in Arkansas. In the blueberry, Vaccinium ellottii, we have a wonderful shrub, desirable, and common in its home range, which is a very fortunate occurrence.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY FROM THE NEWTON COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION (NCWA)

In June of this year an agreement was signed on the three-year-old appeal of the Ozark National Forest Plan. The agreement did not resolve all issues of the appeal; but one result of the resolution was the creation of a program to redefine the Special Interest Areas.

The Forest Service has agreed not to schedule timber sales for the remainder of this planning period (6 years) on approxi-mately 35,000 acres in the Indian Creek, White Rock, and Penhook Special Interest Areas. They will minimize activities on 21,000 acres in the Pedestal Rocks area. They also agreed to suspend activities on 15,000 to 20,000 acres in and/or adjoining Dismal Creek, Sugar Creek, Stack Rock, Hare Mtn., Dismal Hollow, Buzzard Roast Rocks, Spring Creek, Blue Hole, Lower Graves Creek, Eagle Gap, and Mt. Magazine.

According to Amendment 5, "These areas will be studied during the remainder of the plan period to determine if they have unique values to be protected and what the boundaries should be." The Forest Service has 5 years to "identify geological, biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic features, establish manageable boundaries and develop management objectives and direction for each area. The Forest Service has pledged to work with the Appellants, State Agencies, and interested publics.

NCWA has cheerfully volunteered to help the Forest Service solicit participation by concerned groups and individuals. After attending the first general meeting along with the Sierra Club, ANHC, Nature Conservancy, the wood products industry, and the Forest Service, we agreed to form study committees for each area, to be administered by district.

This is an opportunity for anyone concerned about the protection of unique features in the remaining roadless and otherwise remote areas of the Forest. So, if you would like to identify, and preserve any unique features, this is the time and place.

All district offices have sign-up sheets, or write to the Supervisor's office, attention Dr. Gary Tucker. NCWA has maps and sign-up sheets also. If you have any questions call NCWA at 446-2374.

SPECIAL THANKS

The ANPS has received donations from Vaughn Brown of Portland, Oregon in memory of Inez Hartzoe. And from Bill Shepard in memory of Harriet G. Barcley.

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

The Executive Board of the ANPS solicits your nominations for the 1991 Carl Amason Conservation Award. Please be thinking about who might be deserving of the award and bring your nomination to the Spring Meeting or send them to Sue Clark, P.O. Box 10506, Conway, AR 72032. This award has previously been given to Jane Stern and to Carl Amason.

HOW ABOUT HELPING GET ROADSIDE WILDFLOWERS TO BLOOM THIS YEAR??

Very few people will take the time to write to ask AGAIN that roadsides in the state be unmowed in order to let our beautiful wildflowers bloom AND THEN SET SEED FOR NEXT YEAR'S CROP. Some stretches of roadside have greater potential for bloom than others, but many miles of roadside will be mowed that could be very showy at times during the growing season. If you can, please write to:

Mr. Maurice Smith
Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Dept.
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203

Express your concern that more of the roadside is not left unmowed (even the center of the interstate) so that the wildflowers could naturally come in or even be sown. Texas has beautiful, natural roadsides for which it is famous . . . Arkansas, as the Natural State, should be just as beautiful naturally! To reduce the amount of mowing reduces the cost of maintenance as well as the need for spreading harmful herbicide into the environment. Express any concerns on the subject you may have; they will be heard. Our AHTD does have a program now for doing less mowing and spraying, but could still be further encouraged; they tend to do what the people want them to do in their districts, so let's tell them. THANKS, Don Culwell.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: RON DORAN

Please send any changes of address to: Dr. Eric Sundell, 114 Briarcliff, Monticello, AR 71655. If you would like to become a member, please send your dues to ANPS, P.O. Box 250250, Little Rock, AR 72225.