Gaillardia

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

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☞Contributions from members are welcome!

CALENDAR

Note: the events dated below are identified either by a page number for a fuller description of the event or the name of a person to contact.

22 March	Arbor Day Ceremony at Honor Heights Park, Muskogee. (918)684-6302
31 March	Central Chapter meeting. See page 9
5 April	Statewide field trip to Boehler Seeps: p. 7
26 April	Central Chapter outing to Tina Julich's. p. 9
9-10 May	Wildflower Workshop, Duncan. Page 6.
31 May	Annual Meeting, The Nature Conservancy, at Pontotoc Ridge Preserve. ONPS will provide field trip leaders.
6 June	6th Annual Urban and Community Forestry Conference at Idabel. Theme is "Community Landscapes". Contact: Forestry Services in Okla. City at (405)521-3864, ext. 296.
7 June	Statewide field trip to White Oak Prairie: Register with Nora Jones or Jeff Burkhart.
14 June	Central Chapter field trip to the OKC Zoo. See page 9
9-11 October	Annual meeting, tentatively planned for Roman Nose State Park. Details in Summer issue. Mark your calendar now.

Note: all members are invited to all chapter field trips or meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests.

ONPS THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Long Fund

M.E. Thompson, Jr., Ronald R. Clapp, Mary Korthase, Richard M. Pope, Kathleen E. Duncan, Ruth Boyd

Harriet Barclay Fund

M. E. Thompson, Nancy Wilson, Frank D. Bowers, Peggy Brennan, Ronald R. Clapp, Mary Korthase, Davida Phillips, Ruth Boyd

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

by Frank Carl

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society's ***Tenth Annual Indoor Outing*** at Phillips University in Enid on February 1, 1997, was a total success. The meeting was well-attended with outstanding speakers. Our thanks to Dr. Jeff Burkhart and his staff, as well as to Phillips University administrative officials. The workshops were educational, entertaining, and just plain fun.

This organization has taken a couple of large steps to begin 1997. The first is board approval to begin publication of an annual journal. The second is a slide program covering native plant food sources for wildlife. This program, with others to follow, will be made available for loan to schools and other organizations in need of information on Oklahoma's native plants. Details on these two important projects and other activities approved by the board are covered later in this issue. Patricia Folley is to be commended for her work on these projects, and I feel the need to stress their importance. The potential positive impact of these projects for this organization is great.

The next major event is the Wildflower Workshop to be held May 9th and 10th in Duncan, Oklahoma at the Simmons Center. This will be the 20th anniversary of the workshop, and I hope to see you there.

Editorial

by Patricia Folley

As Frank told you, we have started a new "education and outreach" program, which will provide ready-to-use slide shows to groups around the state. The first is already in use, having been carried home by the Tulsa-area chapter. Each program contains 80 slides, an index to contents which includes the scientific and one common name for each plant, a short written script suggesting comments which might be made by the presenter, and a taped audio accompaniment for use without a narrator.

The second slide program is ready for reproduction now. It's title is *The Shy, The Rare, and The Wonderful"* and it displays some of the seldom-seen wildflowers of all parts of the state. Jim Norman contributed most of the beautiful orchid pictures for this set. Arrangements are being made for both slide programs to be offered through the Wildlife Diversity Program at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Each program package costs $100 to produce. That does not include any of the costs for original materials, which are donated by our members. The largest share of this cost is for reproduction of the slides. We remain open to ideas about high-quality, low cost reproduction.

The second initiative is still in the research mode. That is the production of a Journal dedicated to publication of information about the native plants of Oklahoma. Sheila Strawn and Pat Folley are currently studying styles, costs, and the intricacies of distribution. We hope to have a detailed proposal for the Annual Meeting in October. At the moment, there is no Oklahoma-oriented publication available for bringing serious studies, research projects, and area floras to the interested public.

These will include the longer reports that often have had to be refused for the Gaillardia because our 12-page format does not accommodate them, and will have the added advantage of being subjected to review by at least one of our Botany professors for accuracy of content. Many of the other Native Plant Societies in the U.S. do publish such journals, and those of us privileged to receive them have been a bit jealous of that opportunity.

For members who aren't even a bit tempted to write for such a journal, there remains an unique opportunity: we need a name!. Every such journal is named using the botanical name of a plant, and as our state wildflower's genus is also the name of this newsletter, it isn't available. Missouri's journal is called *Missouriensis*, a species name. Somehow, *"Oklahomensis"*, while a very good name, just doesn't sing. My personal favorite of another state's is that of Illinois Native Plant Society, whose newsletter is **The Harbinger**, and whose journal is named *Erigenia*. (*Erigenia bulbosa* is the shy little wildflower, also found in NE Oklahoma, called "harbinger of spring". Got the idea? Now, put on your thinking caps! Let's offer a prize: a copy of the first edition, autographed by the authors, for the winning entry.

INTERNET EVENT

bulletin from Adrien Corbiere of the Alberta Native Plant Council.

On April 16th, 7pm-8pm MST the Alberta Native Plant Council will be hosting a discussion on native plant gardening on the internet. Everyone is welcome to attend, ask questions, help other native plant gardeners with their questions, or just meet other native plant gardeners from around North America. To join this event you should register with the service that is providing us with this opportunity a week in advance. There is no charge for registering. Go to the address http://webchat6.wbs.net/ Point and click on new users to register. Also from this screen you can get to where the event will occur. Point and click on the category "home and living" and then from here go under the menu for "home and garden" and choose "gardening." It is best to try the system a few times to get used to it. Anyone having problems can contact Adrien at wrighl@hg.uleth.ca.

GARDENING ON THE WILD SIDE

WHITE GAURA

by Ann Randle, owner of COLORSCAPE Garden Design and Consultation, Duncan, OK

In the past two or three years I have noticed several references to using Gaura as an accent in perennial beds, and every time wondered about the taste of the author. We all have our biases (perhaps gardeners especially do). I am not a romantic and don't find pale, ephemeral, delicate plants particularly attractive -- certainly not ornamental in the "drive by at 70 miles an hour" landscape sense. I kept wondering what designers could possibly see in a plant so delicate that a person had to sneak up on it in the wild and slam it in an OKC phone book before picking just to get a pressed sample. Never-the-less, last year about this time, when I noticed a one-gallon *Gaura lindheimeri* in a nursery in Kansas I purchased it with the preposterous thought that I could be wrong. (Besides, Baby's Breath is so short-lived and such a cliche I had been looking for a replacement for it in my garden).

Transplanting was easily accomplished -- the plant was showing new growth in February in the pot when I purchased it, and never stuttered a moment despite a tap root when put out in the garden immediately. Its growth was phenomenal and bloom began by the end of May. By July the plant was 4 feet tall and 4 feet wide, very dense, blooming profusely and outgrowing its allotted space. I cut it back to 30 inches tall and it was back in bloom by mid-August, again engulfing the roses. I cut it back again in mid-September but it didn't recover fast enough to bloom with the roses at the end of October. I believe you could manage Gaura's bloom period any way you want to or just allow it enough space (at least a 4 or 5 foot circle if you have a sprinkler system) that you need never prune it. One source I have (it is rarely mentioned in conventional gardening books) suggested cutting it to 8 inches mid-season.

I suspect that Gaura's basal growth is evergreen and so, like mullien (*Verbascum thapsus)*, it could be located in waste places and transplanted from the wild whenever convenient during the winter. One source I have suggested starting it from cuttings -- the type was unspecified. The only source I could locate for any form of the plant was Thompson and Morgan Seed Co. As I have not tried growing Gaura from seed, I can't comment on the ease of this. I would remind you, however, that the scale of the plant suggests that the average garden could support only a few specimens. Unless you have an acreage I would consider seed-growing too time consuming.

Contrary to its appearance in the wild, this plant is large and sturdy enough to be planted with shrubs and sub-shrubs. I would love to try it behind a long, curved row of the new landscape-type roses. In a wild garden, or one with no extra watering and poor soil, I think it would be fine to grow as a filler between or among any of the more flamboyant natives like Purple Cone Flower or Standing Cypress.

I have never seen it in the wild in less than full sun and soils with good drainage. I also know that it will tolerate rocky, alkaline soils, but those of you with experience beyond these limits will have to let me know.

(Ed. note: Gaura lindheimeri, a native of southern Texas and northern Mexico, does not grow wild in Oklahoma. The name appears under the photograph of our native Gaura longiflora in the McCoy books, but it is an error. Gaura longiflora is an annual, easily grown from seed, and is usually taller at about 6-8 feet maximum. The large, showy flowers bloom each morning snow-white and by evening have become a beautiful rose-pink.)

The following article is one written by Pat Folley under her alias "Grandma Nature" for a local rural newspaper. We thought it might be of interest to our readers too.

YOUR FIELD OF DREAMS

Perhaps you've read a magazine article, or noticed the beautiful "wild" flowers planted along the state highways, and wondered how to have a wild meadow of your own. Here are some thoughts on getting started on that goal. Because all our local land has been farmed, whether for crops or grazing or woodlots, there is not an existing base in the soil for wild flowers just to spring up unaided. But, because we are basically rural, many of us have the room to indulge in a native meadow.

First, understand that the prettiest wildflower displays are in prairie settings. A clearing in a Crosstimbers woodland will support many of the prairie flowers, but not all. **Your wild meadow must contain grasses to be self-sustaining.** The native grama and blue-stem grasses are great for meadows, because they don't make a dense turf that seals out the flowers. Choose a place that gets full sun at least half the day. A half-acre is a nice size for starters, and a hill or slope is good too. Then, as the spring comes on, mow a border around the outside of the plot, leaving the major portion unmown. If it comes up solid Johnson grass or Bermuda, you have a problem, but chances are, you'll get a nice mess of "weeds" that will give you some idea what is already there. At this point, say, late June, you have two options: you may need to kill out the pest grasses I mentioned, and you can use Roundup without endangering the future of the earth by simply following the directions. You can also cover the weeds with heavy black plastic (weigh it down with bricks or stones), and let the summer

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CONSERVATION CORNER

CONSERVATION: FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

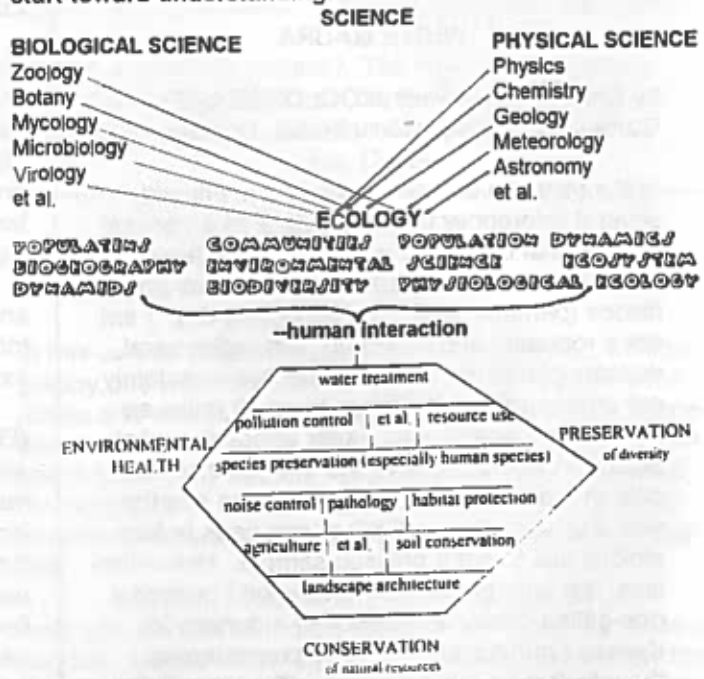
by Sheila Strawn, PhD, Grassland Ecology

The term "conservation" is not as widely understood as it should be. It is sometimes used interchangeably with "ecology" or "environmental science". As the new Conservation Chairperson I hope to increase understanding of conservation within the realm of science. I also hope to increase our understanding of the roles of citizens and scientists in conservation.

"Ecology" is the study of relationships between the physical environment and living organisms. That pretty much covers all interactions which occur on our planet. When we start building space stations we'll have to qualify the term, specifying: "Lunar Ecology", "Mars Ecology", "Interstellar Ecology". These ecologies already exist. We are studying the rocks and other physical evidence we have gathered from space and meteors, looking for signs of life. If no other life already exists out there now, it will when we "inoculate" or "contaminate" it, depending on how you look at it.

"Environmental Science" is commonly used to refer to that part of Ecology which includes humans and anything produced / used / affected by humans. It is categorized by the problems resulting from human emergence as a technological superorganism. Curiously, that also includes most everything on our planet. Nevertheless, ecologists continue to try to find unsullied places to study, trying to keep the field "pure". Doing research is simpler that way. If you think Ecology is complex (and it is) just add human impact and try to conduct a respectable experiment!

Within the realm of Environmental Science not only do you find Conservation of Natural Resources ("Conservation" for short), and Preservation (of habitat, species, and genetic diversity), but also Environmental Health (i.e., waste disposal, pollution, noise, medical and mental health, and landscape architecture). It is easy to see how Agriculture and Industry are facets of Environmental Science which are studied from all three of these perspectives (see diagram below), however, there really are no clear distinctions between them. The study of one requires a thorough knowledge of the others, and there are other facets and perspectives as well. To model the relationships of these three perspectives here in two dimensions, though complex, is still very incomplete. To try to model all the relationships, even in computerized 3-D, would have been mind-boggling, but if you've had questions about what Environmental Science is, this may give you a start toward understanding.



Current topics within Environmental Science are so interrelated that the model looks more like a web than a list or a tree with branches. These interconnections are why there are so many human "hot buttons". One human's ceiling is very often another human's floor, but it could also be the home for millions of termites and the subject of someone else's research. We would like for hunters, fishers, and farmers to know all about Conservation. That cannot be, however, because even if we could have modeled it, it is so complex that no one person could ever understand it. Thousands of local, state, federal and private groups have been formed to study Conservation. Each group has its own set of goals and priorities and each argues with the others about where and when and whose priorities are most important.

Indeed, Environmental Science is a polyhedron with thousands of facets. Each facet provides a vision into the complex sphere of interdependent resources we call Earth. Conservation windows are facets through which both scientists and citizens try to see clearly, but each sees through only a few of the windows. Citizens must look deeply into their conservation windows and attempt, whenever possible, to see through those of scientists. Likewise, scientists must also look through the conservation windows of citizens to do respectable research.

Thus, since conservation problems are compounded by perspective, we must also have a dialogue between citizens and conservationists; we depend upon each other. If in the future you have questions like: "Why did 'they' (whoever 'they' might be) do something sooo stupid?", please do a little research to find out why and then let us know. If you only know part of the story, write about what you know and we'll try to find others who know "the rest of the story". Or, if you come across some conservation information everyone should know about, please send it. This column is a place .....CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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to reconcile citizens' and scientists' conservation questions. We need to look through all the windows of conservation. Perhaps we can invoke a dialogue of understanding, realizing that there are no simple answers, but together, perhaps we can find some good answers. Send your articles to Pat Folley, Editor of GAILLARDIA, or to me at 9624 N.E. 4th Street, Midwest City, OK 73130, or e-mail me: strawns@aol.com.

References

Jones, Gareth, Alan Robertson, Jean Forbes, & Graham Hollier (eds.) The Harper Collins Dictionary of Environmental Science. Harper Collins, New York 1992.

Murray, Norman L. (ed.) Oklahoma's Biodiversity Plan: A Shared Vision for Conserving Our Natural Heritage. Oklahoma Department of Wildlife conservation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 1996.

BOTANY BAY

STALKING THE BEAUTIFUL, EDIBLE, DYEABLE, MEDICINAL WILDFLOWER

This is actually an anouncement of an Elderhostel course to be offered on May 4-10, 1997, by ONPS member and OSU Professor of Botany, Ron Tyrl, and Barrie Kavasch, Ethnobotanist and Author of *Enduring Harvests* and *Native Harvests*. Both instructors have led numerous field trips and elderhostels, are enthusiastic field botanists, and have the ability to get all participants thoroughly involved.

The course will be held at the University of Oklahoma's Biological Station, located on the north shore of Lake Texhoma. Elderhostelers will be housed in two-room suites with private baths. Meals will be served in the Station's dining hall. The isolated, tranquil beauty of the Station encourages communication and fellowship.

Most of us know Dr. Tyrl, who is also the chief editor of the ongoing *Flora of Oklahoma* project. The "press release" included with this announcement adds the following information about Barrie Kavasch.

"Free-lance author/artist, ethnobotanist and research associate, food historian and consultant; E. Barrie Kavasch holds many titles as a distinguished authority on Native American plants, cuisines and cultures. She is of partial Native American descent (Creek, Cherokee and Powhatan), whose fascinating ancestry can be traced directly back fourteen generations from Chief Powhatan through his noted daughter, Pocahontas.

A trustee and Research Associate of the Institute for American Indian Studies in Washington, CT, Ms. Kavasch is frequently invited as a lecturer and food consultant at symposiums and special events throughout North America as well as internationally. Notably, she has worked with the American Indian College Fund and the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome (Jan. '94) to develop American Indian menus and cuisines for their restaurants during a landmark exhibit on *Art of the American West*. Other highlights include the New York Botanical Garden's lecture series on healing plants (April '94) and the 1992 Native American Film and Media Celebration at Lincoln Center. She continues to do research on Native American healing and ethnobotany, working with Native Americans in Biological Sciences (NABS) at Oklahoma State University.

"Barrie's articles on native plants and herbs have appeared in such magazines as *Bon Appetit* and *Fine Cooking*, and she is the author of several books, including the previous *Native Harvests* (Random House) which Craig Clairborne in a *New York Times* review described as "The most intelligent and brilliantly researched book on the food of the American Indian."

"In *Enduring Harvests* (Globe Pequot, November '95) as in all her work, and in her life, E. Barrie Kavasch embraces with joyful reverence the people with whom she shares a common heritage."

Registration information is in the Spring Issue of the Elderhostel Catalog. Additional information can be obtained from Dr. Ron Tyrl at (405)744-9558.

Native Trivia Quiz

1. What Oklahoma tree is first to bloom in each new year, and also a major cause of hayfever?

2. *Echinacea* species are usually called "purple coneflower". Can you name the Oklahoma *Echinacea* with yellow flowers?

3. At least three tall-to-mid sized grasses are found in every county in Oklahoma. They also share a common "last name". What are they?

4. Which of the following native plants can be eaten raw? a. Redbud pods. b. Elm seeds c. Greenbrier shoots (Smilax). d. Poppy mallow e. Sheep sour (Oxalis) leaves.

Answers are on page 8.

WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

by Joanne Orr, Oklahoma Department of Transportation/Highway Beautification Office

Wildflower enthusiasts will explore the rolling prairie country of the famed Chisholm Trail during the 20th Annual Wildflower Workshop to be held at the Simmons Center in Duncan, Friday and Saturday, May 9th and 10th. The Workshop session on Friday will include Roy Smith, Maintenance Engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation, telling how they spread Bluebonnets and other wildflowers throughout Texas. Philip Mulder, state entomologist for Oklahoma State Extension Service, will discuss the role of insects in wildflower propagation.

The Friday evening dinner will include a special celebration of the 20th anniversary of the workshop, which rotates to different communities around the state each year. Jerri Henley, noted speaker and owner of Henley's Herb Farm and Greenhouse, will talk about "Wild-flowers and PMS". Also on the workshop program is Dr. Larry Magrath, speaking on native orchids of Oklahoma and Susan Chambers will show water gardens using native plants. Speakers also will describe wildflowers of the area and review books available. A report on the current digging and destruction of the Purple Coneflower plants throughout the country will be of high interest.

Gerald Wampler of the Southwestern Beekeepers Association will provide a demonstration hive of bees and honey from wildflowers as part of the extensive workshop displays. Other displays include live plants, books, seed producers and the Oklahoma Native Plant Society's wildflower photo contest winners.

The Workshop is sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the State Garden Clubs, Oklahoma Native Plant Society, and the Duncan Garden Clubs. For information contact the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Beautification Office, 200 N.E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105 / (405)521-4037.
(Ed. note: ONPS members will receive application forms and details about meals, housing, etc., on their membership labels, directly from the ODOT.)

TEXAS PROTECTING RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS FOUND ON HIGHWAY RIGHTS OF WAY

(by Jackie M. Poole, reprinted from Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine, September 1996)

In 1990, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff began a project funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify rare and endangered plants occurring on highway rights-of-way, develop management agreements with the Texas Department of Transportation to protect these species and establish monitoring plans to assess the effectiveness of the management. So far, more than 50 sites for rare and endangered plants have been inspected, and 26 management and monitoring areas have been established throughout the state.

Preliminary results indicate that overall, species populations have increased under the management plans. For example, the Texas poppy-mallow population increased by shifting the mowing schedule to July after the plants had set fruit. Other sites benefited from increased awareness on the part of TXDOT staff as well as local communities. Many sites were saved from damage by concerned local citizens noting that road material piles were being placed dangerously close to rare plants, or fiber optic cables being buried in highway rights-of-way were cutting through endangered species habitat. Most past damage resulted from a lack of knowledge about where these plants occur. Now these plants can be managed more effectively through the information being shared among the various agencies and their staffs.
(Many thanks to Dr. Paul Nighswonger of Alva for sending on this interesting clipping!)

INDIVIDUALS ACT, TOO

Sometimes, it seems that the Chapters get all the press. That's because they have someone charged with the responsibility to write the news and forward it to the Gaillardia! So -- if you've done something yourself that gave you an opportunity to further one of our goals, and especially if you did it as a member of ONPS, please let us know.

Quote of note: this appeared in the Native Plant Society of Texas NEWS, by their president, Terry Tate:

As members, we relish the opportunity to learn all we can about native plants and sometimes fall into the habit of letting others, whom we assume are more knowledgeable, bring all our information to us. As we learn more, we should be maturing in our relationship with our plants. A part of that process should be our willingness to begin to share our knowledge with others, and that means increasing our activity. As these opportunities with other organizations begin to unfold, NPSOT must exercise caution to not offer what we are not able to or will not deliver. .....Don't let all this knowledge you've been absorbing over the years just ferment between your ears -- air it out!

FIELD TRIP RULES

>. Pre-registration is now required for all field trips.

> Announcements will include the name, address, and telephone number of the leader. If you have doubts about terrain, difficult, etc., ask.

> Field trips take place rain or shine. Proper dress and shoes, hat, etc., are essential. Long pants and sleeves are best, as some of the best flowers grow in thickets.

> Bring lunch or a hearty snack and water, unless advised that they will be provided. Sunscreen and insect repellent are always a good idea.

> Participation is at your own risk.

> All ONPS field trips are open to the public at no charge, unless per-member charges are indicated in the announcement. Visitors and friends are always welcome. Many of our field trips are suitable for children. If in doubt, ask.

> These rules apply to chapter-initiated field trips too.

FIELD TRIP PLANS

Boehler Seeps and Sandhills Preserve

First, register with Dr. Jeff Burkhart, 2502 E. Elm, Enid, OK 73701 / (405)233-7639 for a place on the tour which will start at 1 p.m. on Saturday, 5 April from the parking area adjacent to Crystal Road and just west of the community of Boehler. It is small: this is not your neon-lit tourist park. To get to Boehler, take SH 3 east from Atoka 16 miles or west from the Antlers exit on the Indian Nations Turnpike 16.3 miles. Turn south on Crystal Road (Highway 109A) and continue 8.7 miles to the preserve. The road is good, but winding. The scenery is beautiful; a terrace of the Muddy Boggy Creek. Inside the preserve, there are no trails, so you will want good hiking boots or stout athletic shoes. The soil is mostly damp, coarse sand -- no rock climbing. As we wind down the hill toward one of the several beaver ponds and small lakes on the preserve, you may see rare bluejack oaks and 12-foot farkleberry bushes sheltering slender blue Lobelia plants, a small shrubby buckwheat, sundews, gigantic rushes and sedges, live sphagnum moss, many birds and other natural wonders. Incredibly blue *Hydrolea* (sorry, no common name) flowers blend with shocking-pink meadow-beauty (*Rhexia maniana)* and *Xyris* flowers that look like small pine-cones on green wire stems with a 3-wing yellow butterfly perched on top. Mosses are everywhere. Mosquitoes are usually not a problem -- there are enough birds, frogs and toads to take care of that. Ferns are just incredible, including Royal ferns that may be shoulder-high. Bring a camera and extra film: you will want it!

White Oak Prairie

Then, on 7 June you will want to join us at White Oak Prairie, another Nature Conservancy Preserve, but this one is in far NE Oklahoma, near Vinita in Craig Co. With access strictly controlled, this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Considered a remnant of an exemplary Tallgrass Prairie, White Oak has in the past been a home of the Prairie Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera leucophaea*, which may be extinct in Oklahoma today. To register, contact Jeff Burkhart at (405)233-7639 or Nora Jones at (918)743-9612.

10TH ANNUAL INDOOR OUTING A SUCCESS

The weather, Phillips University, several generous and knowledgeable botany professors, and most of all, coordinator Dr. Jeff Burkhart and a host of volunteers made the tenth Indoor Outing a great day for all of the more than 60 members and friends who attended.

The Indoor Outings were born of a powerful urge to get out and interact with the world which seems to be especially strong in plant lovers. What better time than the beginning of February for such an indulgence? Traditionally, we meet in a college or university setting, with demonstrations and lectures taking the place of actual wild populations. (Last year, for the first time, a planned Outing in Tulsa had to be canceled for bad weather.)

It would take the rest of our page room in this newsletter to describe the fine programs we enjoyed, so I'll simply say that anyone who missed it missed a really good time and some great people to spend a winter day with. We also met a great group from the Enid Master Gardeners group--and they won most of the door prizes, too.

MEMORIAL TO A NATIVE PLANT LOVER

Several members of the Texas Native Plant Society sent obituaries for Benny Simpson, one of their founders. Dorothy Thetford included this column from the Dallas Morning News *of 9 January 1997.*

by Bryan Wooley, a staff writer for the DMN.

"In my best memory of Benny Simpson, he's standing over a small, gray-leafed shrub with purple flowers on a rocky hillside in the Big Bend Desert, exclaiming. "Isn't that a beauty?", he's saying. "Boy! Isn't it a knockout?"

It's as if he's 10 years old and has found the longed-for bicycle under the Christmas tree. Since that day four years ago on the hillside, I think of Benny every time I see a cenizo bush, whose tiny blooms are one of the blessings that rare rain brings to the Trans-Pecos. "*Leucophyllum candidum!*" he exclaimed. "I tell you, I am admiring this! This is nice!"

Benny taught me to regard that humble shrub, which I had known all my life, in a new way. His joy made me see how beautiful it is.

Now Christmas trees will remind me of Benny, too. He had a heart operation and something went wrong. Two days after Christmas, at age 68, he died.

Dr. Tim Davis of the Texas A&M Research center in Dallas -- Benny's boss, if Benny ever really had a boss -- said of him: "Benny was one of those rare individuals who turned a passion into a career and stuck with it to the end."

Benny was a rare man. How many people these days work 42 years for the same outfit? Benny was fresh out of college in 1954 when he went to work at the Texas Research Foundation, as the center was called before A&M took it over. How many of us can make a career out of doing what we would be doing even if nobody paid us?

When A&M took over in 1972, some wise soul gave Benny free rein to pursue his passion. His official titles were "research scientist" and "ornamental horticulturist", but he called himself "plant hunter." Dressed like a desert rat, herding a pickup up the roughest roads and arroyos of the Davis Mountains, the Big Bend and the Guadalupes, Benny followed his bliss.

One thing Texas will never have enough of, he would tell anyone with sense enough to listen, is water; one thing Texas will always have plenty of is extreme weather. So, instead of importing plants from other climates to decorate our yards, parks and business cam-puses, and then watching them die of drought, heat and cold, why not landscape with plants that live in Texas and thrive on harsh conditions?

So for more than 20 years, Benny climbed mountains, trudged up canyons and roamed deserts, searching out wild trees and shrubs that are beautiful and also will thrive amidst the harrowing conditions that shrivel so many sissy plants that are brought here from gentler climes. He collected seeds and cuttings from plants hidden in crags and crevices that few humans ever visited. He planted them and studied them for years. He separated those that could be adapted to domestic landscapes from those that couldn't.

His successes may be seen at the Dallas Horticulture Center, where the Benny J. Simpson Native Plant Collection was dedicated in June. It has 345 plants in 84 species, the treasures that Benny brought back to Dallas from his wanderings. Through his collection, Benny will continue to teach Dallas how diverse the plant life of Texas is, and how right and beautiful it would look in our yards.

Over the years, A&M has released nine once-wild species of plants to the nursery trade as suitable for urban landscaping, all of them results of Benny's research. But Benny wasn't one to toot his own horn. His mother, brother and sisters didn't know about the Benny J. Simpson Native Plant Collection until after he was dead. He had never told them.

And Benny was a loner. How many people are willing to hike 10 or 12 miles into some remote canyon to bring back a few seeds? So there are no disciples ready to carry on the work he began.

It takes a passion. Benny's was a rare one."

Benny Jack Simpson

Benny Jack Simpson was born in Childress, Texas. He was a graduate of Texas Technological University in Lubbock. Memorial contributions to the Texas Native Plant Society were suggested as *appropriate* to honor his life.

Answers to Native Plant Trivia Quiz: 1. Ashe juniper. 2. Echinacea paradoxa. 3. Big, little, and silvertop bluestem. 4. <u>All of them!</u>

ECHINACEA ALERT

Michael Palmer writes from OSU that the *Wall Street Journal* has joined the journalistic bandwagon for promotion of irresponsible harvesting of wild *Echinacea* plants. The species most sought-after is *E. angustifolia*, although highway bandits and fast-buck wholesalers will dig - and sell- any of the species and unrelated plants with similar roots as well. Mike asks that ONPS members concerned about the fate and future of Oklahoma Echinaceas write the Wall Street Journal and protest that irresponsible approach.

NE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by Betty Kemm

We had a great potluck supper and meeting December 9. Ralph Lindgren, our member from Joplin, showed slides of Missouri wildflowers and wild orchids from Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota. Attendance totaled 35.

On Saturday, January 18, Paul Buck led a winter tree walk in Oxley Nature Center. 15 members showed up even though there was snow on the ground. Besides trees, we could see animal and bird tracks in the snow and lots of beaver damage. It was a great afternoon.

On Saturday, March 22, we will go on a field trip to the Baron Fork area. Our hosts will be Mary and Bruce Richie of Welling. Meet at the Tulsa Garden Center at 8:00 a.m. to carpool, or meet at Goldie's in Tahlequah at 9:30 with the Richies. Bring your own refreshments, extra wading shoes or boots for crossing a small creek.

We plan several other field trips but don't have dates yet:

April -- Cookson Hills
May -- Jimmie Norman -- prairie west of Muskogee
June -- Prairie State Park in Missouri

Next meeting dates: March 10 and May 5.

CENTRAL CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by former Chairlady, Ruth Boyd

By the time this newsletter is received, with any luck at all, we will have heard Pat Folley's program "OK Wildflowers: the Shy, the Rare, and the Wonderful" that was iced out in late Nov.

We didn't meet in January and encouraged our members to attend the Indoor Outing. That seemed to have worked and I was pleased with our representation.

On Monday, February 17, I called a special meeting of those who regularly attend chapter meetings to try to determine our future. We discussed the NE Chapter's proposed chapter by-laws and will propose some alternatives that fit our circumstances better. A nominating committee was appointed to determine a slate of officers to be voted on at the regular March meeting, March 31. Our program that evening will feature our members Bob and Emma Crane, showing a video of their Alaskan adventure last summer. This meeting will be at our regular indoor meeting place, Kirkpatrick Horticulture Center, at NW 4th and Portland in OKC.

Luncheon at Phillips University during Indoor Outing

On Saturday, April 26, the group will visit the property of member Tina Julich between Norman and Tecumseh in the Cross Timbers. We don't know for sure what we'll see but have no doubt it will be wonderful. This will also be our spring plant and seed exchange and picnic. Meet us about 10:00 a.m. for our walk-about. Bring lawn chairs and lunch. We'll furnish iced tea, lemonade and dessert. Chapter members will receive reminder cards with instructions for finding the place. Others interested may call me at 872-9652.

We have been invited to tour the Butterfly Garden at the OKC zoo on Saturday, June 14. We'll meet just inside the main entrance at 10:00 a.m. Just tell them you are with the ONPS and they will let you in. After touring the garden and hearing how it was developed, participants may stay as long as they like. Our hostess will be Pearl Pearson, Zoo Horticulturist.

Call me (Ruth Boyd at 872-9652) for more information about any of the above.

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?

by Patricia Folley

The pawpaw, *Asimina triloba,* an Oklahoma native tree, has been selected as the second-best tree for landscape planting by a national nurseryman's association. Wouldn't you know -- the same trade magazine that announced that choice contained as its lead article a ten-page whine by a nurseryman who refuses to try offering native plants -- and says that pawpaw is "undesirable" because the fruit is messy! (The first choice tree, a gulf coast magnolia, will not survive Oklahoma's harsh climate.) Other excuses include "not commonly used" (red buckeye), "difficult to propagate and cultivate" (Sassafras), "seed is hard to find" (American Beech), "nobody ever heard of it" (Bumelia lanuginosa). All of these trees are native to Oklahoma and some of them have been on my most-wanted list for years!

ONPS Photo Contest Displays

Our beautiful posters of Oklahoma Wildflowers from past entries in the annual photo contest are available for display anywhere in the state.

Call Ruth Boyd at (405)872-9652 or Sue Amstutz at (918)742-8374 to schedule a display . You will need a secure location, where they can be locked up at night, if the posters are to remain in a location for several days.

Leslie Cole-Jackson has had a successful run of her display of ONPS posters at the Edmond Public Library. In fact, the display was so popular that the library asked her to extend it another month! She combined the posters with membership brochures, books, and mounted specimens checked out of the Bebb Herbarium at OU.

.....continued from page 3 FIELD OF DREAMS

sun kill them. If you have a ragweed meadow instead, start about mid-June and mow the weeds as close to the ground as possible before they have a chance to bloom. Otherwise, just relax and try to enjoy what chance has brought you.

A wild meadow should never be tilled, but it can be raked, and the best time to do that is in the fall. While waiting for your first-year meadow to mature, start gathering seeds of pretty wildflowers along the country roads. You needn't know their names, but the Dr. Doyle McCoy's photo-guides are available at the library and most book-stores, and will help a lot. Store seeds in an envelope in the refrigerator (never in plastic) until time to plant.

Then, starting after a rain in September, sow seeds of sideoats grama, prairie dropseed, little bluestem, or other native bunch-grasses at about half the rate stated on the package. Over this, drop the seeds you have collected along the road, but in patches, not all-over like a crop of wheat. Then rake them into the top layer of soil (for a large plot, drag a rough tree-limb behind your mower).

Maintenance is simple: mow only after the flowers have set seed, usually about the second week in July, and again in early September to get the remaining ragweed. Keep up the border path, and maybe mow a wandering path through the middle to walk on. Neighbors are less likely to object to your "weed patch" if it is neatly bordered. No fence required unless you have cattle or horses--these plants can take grazing by rabbits and deer without much damage. Don't be too anxious about a particular effect at first: remember the motto of the ball park maker in the movie "Field of Dreams"-- "if you build it, they will come"!

Want more specific details? The National Wildflower Research Center has a neat book, called "Wildflower Handbook". Look for it at your library or bookstore.

Love, Grandma

BOOK REVIEW

NATURALIST, by Edward O. Wilson

In this un-self-conscious, perhaps even scientific, autobiography, the world's foremost expert on ants explores the forces and events that brought a lonely, sometimes homeless child to the lifetime commitment to natural history for which he is justly famous. In a field that seems to breed dull writing, E.O. Wilson has won two Pulitzer Prizes for excellence in writing, and this book is ample proof of that skill.

It is hard to select any one paragraph for an example, but you will relate to this one: "My truths, three in number, are the following: first, humanity is ultimately the product of biological evolution; second, the diversity of life is the cradle and greatest natural heritage of the human species, and third, philosophy and religion make little sense without taking into account these first two conceptions." Or, in another vein, this comment on the attentions of flies, gnats and mosquitoes in the tropics: "The body fluids paid these pests are the expected tariff for tropical field work. But I was where I most wanted to be in all the world; I had no complaint."

Having spent a career in the study of ants, and then propagating the insights made therefrom into the philosophy of science, where would Wilson look for research material if he had another lifetime to work? In the study of microorganisms! "Microwildernesses exist in a handful of soil or aqueous silt collected almost anywhere in the world. ...they are...an animate matrix that binds Earth's surface... A lifetime can be spent in a Magellanic voyage around the trunk of a single tree." *Naturalist* is published by Warner Books, in an illustrated paperback edition at about $12.

.....review by Patricia Folley

Johnston's

P.O. Box 1392 • Enid, OK 73702 • (405) 233-5800

Echinacea purpurea - Purple Coneflower

Lavender, Perennial

ONPS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Know any of these good folks? Let them know we're glad to have them with us!

Valerie Bloodgood, Stillwater
Jane Boren, Shawnee
Sherry Brown, Durant
Wanda Edwards, Enid
Mark & Kathy Howery, Norman
Barbara Klein, Warr Acres
Lora L. Marschall, Tulsa
Ellen Primm, Norman
Dr. Martin & Joleen Stone, Claremore
Chris Waits, Bartlesville
Nancy Wilson, MD, Sioux Falls SD
Jim LaDue & Daphne Zaras, Norman
Martha Barrett, Broken Arrow
Carolyn Clawson, Lawton
Beverly Rinehart, Fairland
Sandy Root, Broken Arrow
Betty Culpepper, Norman
Kathleen Duncan, Tulsa
Sonia Jaiswal, Stillwater
Janice Wyatt, Lawton
Steve Sprehe, Ponca City
Dorothy Thetford, Denton Texas
Martha Skeeters & J. R. Cruz, Norman
Deanna M. Patman, Stillwater
Kay Robertson, Keota

(Several of the above are former members who got "lost' and are back. We are happy to have them all. If you know any of these good folks, invite them to attend a meeting or field trip with you.

>>>>>We're also happy to announce a new family life-membership from Mike Palmer, Susan McAlister and new daughter Emily! What a neat start for a new life.

FORMING A NEW CHAPTER

Several members have mentioned that they are interested in forming local chapters. It's really very easy to do: first you ask our secretary, Clare Miller, to make you a printout from the membership data-base for your area. It is easier to do if you give her the zip codes or towns that you want included. Then, contact your prospects (Clare can make your list on mailing labels, if you ask). Schedule a meeting at a place with parking available, maybe bring some cookies and a pot of coffee, and stand back!

We've learned by working with the Central chapter that field trips are not very good for organizing -- all of us are more interested in the wildflowers than in electing officers -- and that you need a minimum of one Chairman, to schedule and preside at meetings, a Delegate to attend the statewide Board Meetings (can be a current officer who would be going anyway), and a Program Chairman. The state board will pay the chapter's reasonable expenses, and chapters are not expected to raise funds unless for local projects.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please renew my membership in the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, or add the name below to the membership list in the category checked.

NAME_____HOME PHONE ( )_____

AFFILIATION (School, Business or Avocation)_____

ADDRESS_____BUSINESS PHONE( )_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____ ☐ please don't list my phone

_____$15.00 Family _____$10.00 Individual_____$5.00 Student _____ ☐ Gift from_____

LIFE MEMBERSHIP _____$300.00 Family_____ or $200.00 Individual. ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

DONATION TO: ANNE LONG FUND _____HARRIET BARCLAY FUND_____

☞ ☐ *I am enclosing an additional $2.50 (to cover cost of printing and mailing) for a complete ONPS directory.*

Please make checks payable to *Oklahoma Native Plant Society* and mail to:
Oklahoma Native Plant Society / 2435 South Peoria / Tulsa, OK 74114

The Gaillardia

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Vice President	Ann Randle
Secretary	Clare Miller
Treasurer	Judy Jordan
Historian	Karen Haworth

Boardmembers-at-Large
1997: Mike Palmer and Richard Bradley
1998: Sheila Strawn and Betty Kemm
1999: Lynn Allen and Sue Amstutz

Edited by Patricia Folley
Copy to: 15100 Etowah Road, Noble OK 73068
Telephone (405)872-8361

Gaillardia articles may be reprinted at will. Please acknowledge the source and author!

RENEWAL TIME!

Please look at your expiration date on the label and if it's not '97 or later, send in your dues. We don't want to lose you,

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting (usually, in October), an award is made in the name of Anne Long, one of the organizers of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, who died before it became a reality. Anne loved the native plants of Oklahoma and the people who cared enough to preserve them.

Nominations for this award may be made by any ONPS member, and are for a person or organization who has been a shining example of the execution of our Purpose during the past year or years. Members of the current Board, though, are not eligible for the award (those listed in the box at the left). To refresh your memory, the Purpose is stated on page 1, under the logo.

RULES: Send the name of the person or group you wish to nominate, with your own name and address to:

Dr. Paul Buck, 1623 S. Delaware Pl., Tulsa, OK 74104-5915.

On a separate sheet, explain why you think the nominee deserves the award. All nominations are kept confidential, and the names of the nominator(s) are not revealed.

Oklahoma Native Plant Society
c/o Tulsa Garden Center
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