



Iris

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The Alberta Native Plant Council Newsletter

Wetlands Workshop a Great Success

by Laurie Hamilton

ANPC's 26th Annual Workshop was held at Olds College on April 13, 2013. The workshop was entitled "The Role of Vegetation in Alberta's Wetlands," and it was sold out before the early bird deadline.

To start the workshop, Laurie Hamilton presented a wetlands primer, followed by Linda Kershaw describing common vascular wetland plants, Rene Belland describing common bryophytes of boreal wetlands, and Marsha Hayward presenting some of the aquatic, submerged and emergent plants of the boreal.

The next session focused on wetland rares, and Mari Decker and Pat Marlowe presented on rare plants of grassland and boreal wetlands, respectively. This was followed by Marge Meijer who presented on selected wetland rare ecological communities. The last

session of the day focused on wetland plants used for restoration. Jane Reksten presented on wetland plants used in Olds College's demonstration constructed wetland, followed by Bernie Amell, who presented on wetland plants used in constructing wetlands with different morphologies.

Despite the snow that descended upon Olds that day, we had a great turn out. The workshop was

followed by the AGM and the banquet, where Sheldon Helbert presented a case study on the hydrology of a wetland on the outskirts of Edmonton.

During the day, the outgoing president, Kelly Ostermann, and the incoming president, Laurie Hamilton, presented the coveted Emerald Award to Linda Kershaw, for all of her work and dedication to ANPC and to educating the public and conserving native plants in Alberta. ANPC won the Emerald



Linda Kershaw (centre) receives ANPC's 2010 Emerald Award from Laurie Hamilton (left) and Kelly Ostermann (right).

Photo Peter Kershaw

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Nisku Prairie Blog — June 2013

by Patsy Cotterill

On June 7th I made my fourth visit of the season to Nisku Prairie. As a member of the Alberta Native Plant Council, which is co-steward with Leduc County of this municipal reserve, I like to keep an eye on the place. I do odd bits of weeding and transplanting of natives (grown from seed collected in Nisku) into the disturbed area near the gate. For the last couple of years I've managed to galvanize Leduc County into spraying herbicide on rogue smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) patches late in the year.

On this visit I spent much of my time pulling off dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) heads and then applying a liberal dose of glyphosate to the remaining rosettes. I also grubbed up many hundreds of seedlings of stinkweed (*Thlaspi arvense*) and hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis tetrahit*) without seeming to make a dent in their fecundity. Dandelions are controversial; some people believe in bowing to the inevitable and accepting their presence in the flora, that they are not a worthy excuse for putting more toxic herbicide into the environment. However, I have zero tolerance for them in a native prairie. They cannot readily gain a foothold in the dense prairie sod of a natural ecosystem, but they enter sneakily by way of disturbance which creates open soil and in Nisku are flourishing in the disturbed area and are spreading along the trail. Since the Prairie is partly surrounded by acreages and a roadside verge and is subject to human ingress, control may always be an issue.

After the “gardening,” I take my reward: a leisurely stroll through the south field and then, hanging a right turn, into the middle field that runs parallel to



Thistle, butterflies and bee

Photo C. Dana Bush

Blackmud Creek, below to the west. Two things are strikingly different from my last visit—a group field trip on May 13th to see prairie crocus (*Anemone patens*) in bloom. One is the absence of mosquitoes: a hatch of “field” mosquitoes had plagued our crocus seekers. The second was the general greening of the site. Previously, the thatch had been so thick in the prairie that I had panicked and begun to dream of controlled burns—or at least of making a serious pitch to Leduc County to consider the same. (My say-so on this wouldn't be sufficient; this would require proper scientific backing, not to mention a budget.) Thus it was a relief to see that the new growth “with the fire of life impassioned” had risen above it.

Heart-leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus cardiophyllus*) was in flower and mocking my inadequate photo skills. It blooms later than prairie buttercup (*R. rhomboides*), which I'd guess is

somewhat more common in Nisku. It is prettier than the latter because its petals are larger and overlapping, so as to form a full “cup.” Three-flowered avens (*Geum triflorum*) was in the deep pink of early bloom. It has the same seed dispersal strategy of prairie crocus. Both produce heads of single-seeded fruits to which are attached long plumes (awns) for wind dispersal, although the species are not related. (Avens is in the rose family and prairie crocus in the buttercup family.) The pinkish awns of the avens will be visible for much of the summer. En masse they cover the prairie in a pinkish haze, hence the plant's alternative common name of prairie smoke. The prairie crocus is already in fruit, its silvery awns held aloft on tall stalks, with several to one plant. The leaves, not evident at flowering time, are now up, doing their work. They have the typical divided structure of anemone leaves, although

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**A sold-out audience
at ANPC's 26th
Annual Workshop,
Olds, AB**
Photo Peter Kershaw



award in 2010, and given that so many people contributed to the great body of work that ANPC has done, it was decided that each year the award would be given to an outstanding ANPC volunteer. To date, Lorna Allen and Mryka Hall-Beyer have housed this award. Each year, the current keeper of the award decides who will be the next recipient of the award. ♦

Nisku Prairie, from page 2

their segments are narrower than some of our local species.

No fewer than four sedges were in full flower in the Prairie: woolly sedge (formerly *Carex lanuginosa*, hence the common name, but now determined to be *C. pellita*), meadow sedge (*Carex praticola*), graceful sedge (*Carex praegracilis*) and Sartwell's sedge (*C. sartwellii*). Woolly sedge is a major graminoid component of the Nisku Prairie sod, although you'd probably never guess it unless you visited at the right time. (How many times have I learnt that you can never judge the floristics of a site by a single visit!) The sedges have male and female flowers in spikes on the same plant (or in some species on different plants). The males shed pollen from their anthers in a puff of yellow dust when they are ripe; the females advertise their availability with a

display of bright white stigmas. Woolly sedge is readily recognized because its lone female spike nestles lower down in a crook in the stem, while the male spikes wave breezily above. "Woolly" refers to the fruits (perigynia) which are covered in hairs (check with a hand lens).

Among the shrubs that occur in the Prairie, prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*) was just putting out its first flowers at the edge of the aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) groves. A gooseberry bush, *Ribes hirtellum*, was in flower. I call this the field gooseberry, because all of our other half-dozen gooseberry and currant species like moist woods or lakeshores, but this species likes moist grassland (it is common, for example, in the parkland along the shore of Tawayik

See Nisku Prairie, page 11

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The Mysteries of ACIMS Ranking and Tracking

by Lorna Allen, ACIMS Coordinator, Alberta Parks

The question has come up often: how do ranks get assigned to species, who decides and what do the ranks mean. First, the ranks we are talking about are those used by ACIMS (Alberta Conservation Information Management System). All species and ecological communities that have been documented in Alberta are (or will be) ranked by ACIMS, including vertebrates, invertebrates, vascular and non-vascular plants, lichens and even “other”—sites that are significant for conservation such as nesting bird colonies. This is why we talk about elements, rather than species, because so much more than species are included. All types of elements are ranked in a similar way, but there can be some subtle differences, so let's focus on plant elements for this write-up.

ACIMS is part of the NatureServe Network and the ranking system is used throughout the network. Table 1 provides the main subnational ranks that are used. There are a few others, but they are used infrequently. The full list can be viewed at the ACIMS website in the overview section (URL below).

<http://www.albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/management-land-use/alberta-conservation-information-management-system/%28acims%29/overview.aspx>

Table 1.

Standard Subnational Conservation Status Ranks

Rank	Definition
S1	Known from five or fewer occurrences or especially vulnerable to extirpation because of other factor(s).
S2	Known from twenty or fewer occurrences or vulnerable to extirpation because of other factors.
S3	Known from 100 or fewer occurrences, or somewhat vulnerable due to other factors, such as restricted range, relatively small population sizes, or other factors.
S4	Apparently secure. Taxon is uncommon but not rare. Potentially some cause for long term concern due to declines or other factors.
S5	Secure – taxon is common, widespread, and abundant.

Variant Subnational Conservation Status Ranks

Rank	Definition
S#S#	A numeric range rank is used to indicate any range of uncertainty about the status of the taxon. Example – S2S3 or S1S3. Ranges cannot skip more than two ranks. Example – SU is used rather than S1S4.
SU	Taxon is currently unrankable due to lack of information or substantially conflicting information. Example – native versus non-native status not resolved.
SNR	Not ranked. Conservation status not yet assessed.
SNA	Not applicable. A conservation status rank is not applicable because the species or ecosystem is not a suitable target for conservation activities. Example – introduced species.

Alberta Conservation Information Management System

www.AlbertaParks.ca/Datarequests



See *Ranking & Tracking*, page 5

The system scales up: a species will have a subnational rank (SRank), a national rank (NRank) and a global rank (GRank). The definitions are the same, so an element is ranked S1 because it is known from five or fewer occurrences or especially vulnerable to extirpation because of other factor(s) in the province (or state); it would be ranked N1 if it is known from five or fewer occurrences or especially vulnerable to extirpation because of other factor(s) in the country and G1 if this applies on the global scale. Alberta does have a few G1 plants, e.g., Catillaria lichen (*Catillaria subnegans*). Macoun's cinquefoil (*Potentilla macounii*) is ranked S1 and N1 but has a G1G2 rank (indicating a range of uncertainty with respect to the species' global rank).

Anyone can go to NatureServe (<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>), type in a species of interest and see the ranks that the species has been assigned in the jurisdictions that it is found. For example, here is the global to national ranks for small soapweed yucca (*Yucca glauca* Nutt.)

- Global Status: G5
- Nation: United States National Status: N5?
- Nation: Canada National Status: N1

Notice that an element can be very common in one jurisdiction and very rare in another. Yucca for example is ranked N5? in the United States; ranked N1 in Canada and listed under the Canadian *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) as Threatened. Alberta is the only jurisdiction in Canada where yucca grows naturally, and so it is also S1 in Alberta, as the Alberta Subnational rank.

You will also note that the ranks seem to rely heavily on the number of occurrences of the element (element

occurrences or EOs). Sometimes this is quite simply the only information that is available, so it may be the main factor that the rank is based on. When the first vascular plant ranking was done in Alberta, ranks were based primarily on the number of dots on the maps in the back of *Flora of Alberta* (Moss 1983), as the best overall source of confirmed records for the species. But since the dots were based on herbarium records, and there are some species that are not regularly collected, some species are more common than the dots suggest. So, this initial ranking was supplemented by “expert knowledge.” There were ranking meetings, experts brought in their notes and records, and ranks were argued about and agreed on.

For the common species, this probably works. Northern bedstraw (*Galium boreale*), for example, has a lot of dots in *Flora of Alberta*, was ranked as one of the very common species (S5) and there is no reason to think that rank needs to be changed. It really is a very common species. And it is also a very widespread species in Alberta and Canada, found within a broad range of habitats.

This brings us to the other considerations that now come into play. Since those initial ranking meetings in the late 1990s, a lot more is known about many Alberta species, the province has been more thoroughly “botanized” and there are some sophisticated computer analyses that are available. To allow additional factors to be considered in a consistent manner across the network, NatureServe has developed a “Rank Calculator” (Faber-Langendoen et al. 2009). Ten primary factors are used to assess conservation status, grouped into three categories—rarity, trends, and threats—with two to six conservation status factors in each category, as in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Factors used to Assess Conservation Status	
Category	Conservation Status Factor
Rarity	Population Size
	Range Extent
	Area of Occupancy
	Number of Occurrences
	Number of Occurrences or Percent Area with Good Viability
	Environmental Specificity
Trends	Long-term Trend
	Short-term Trend
Threats	Threats Impact
	Intrinsic Vulnerability

The rank calculator provides rationale for each factor and a scale to rate each element against each factor. Details are provided in the methodology paper (Faber-Langendoen et al. 2009). The ratings are plugged into the calculator and a conservation status rank is generated. If there are not enough factors known, the rank will be SU—unrankable due to lack of information.

To track or not to track – that is the question.

Literally, that is the question that was raised and that precipitated this write-up. This is not a difficult question if the element is ranked S1 or S2. It is clearly rare, according to all we know about it, and so we track it. Or if it is ranked S4 or S5, it is clearly common to very common and there is no need to track it. The problematic ones are those ranked S3 and those ranked SU. But, there are some “rules of thumb.”

For an element ranked SU, the decision on whether or not to track it is based

See *Ranking & Tracking*, page 6

on WHY the rank is SU. From Table 1 above:

SU	Taxon is currently unrankable due to lack of information or substantially conflicting information. Example – native versus non-native status not resolved.
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Generally, if the problem is taxonomy, we do not track the element. This comes from bitter experience of time wasted tracking a species that is then determined not to be a valid taxon. If, however, the issue is lack of information, it makes sense to track the element to gather enough information on range, etc., to eventually allow us to set a rank.

For those elements ranked S3, if there seems to be some threat that might indicate the element could be declining, it will be tracked. If the habitat seems to be stable, it will not be tracked. The

decision on whether or not to track an S3 element is made by the tracking list committee, based on all the information available at the tracking list meetings.

So, for example, woollen-breeches (*Hydrophyllum capitatum*) is ranked S3 because, although there are a large number of EOs in the database, 40% are historic, and it is a species of relatively restricted distribution. Most extant populations, however, are in protected areas and so presumed to be not under threat. So, woollen-breeches is S3 but not tracked.

Golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium ionense*), on the other hand, is still tracked even though there are 121 occurrences for it in the database. People regularly ask us why it is tracked, given the number of occurrences, but let's take a look at the information in NatureServe. The global ranking is G3? (the question mark is because there remains some uncertainty in the ranking). The ranking reasons provided are:

“Primarily a Canadian species. Known from the northern-most part of the Northwest Territories to British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Apparently rare in Saskatchewan, but widely distributed throughout the boreal and mountains/foothills of Alberta. The abundance and distribution in the rest of Canada is not known. About 25 disjunct populations occur in the U.S. (in Iowa and Minnesota); these are believed to be relics of Pleistocene vegetation.”

It is ranked N2 in the United States and N3 in Canada. So although it seems to be relatively common here, Alberta is the centre of the range and may hold the largest populations. The number of occurrences alone suggests it may be too “common” to be tracked. BUT it is rare to very rare in all jurisdictions it has been ranked in (with the exception of AB), and it is restricted largely to Canada, with the best populations being in Alberta. So, it is tracked, and a recent review of the rank using the rank calculator confirms it as an S3.

Other jurisdictions track S3 species as a matter of course. As ranks are reviewed using the rank calculator, ACIMS may also begin tracking all S3 species, since those that are not in decline or under threat will likely get bumped to S4.

I hope this clears up some of the mysteries surrounding ranking and tracking. If there are other ACIMS questions that you would like to see addressed in *Iris*, send them to acims.data@gov.ab.ca.

References cited

- Faber-Langendoen, D., L. Master, J. Nichols, K. Snow, A. Tomaino, R. Bittman, G. Hammerson, B. Heidel, L. Ramsay, and B. Young. 2009. NatureServe Conservation Status Assessments: Methodology for Assigning Ranks. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.
- Moss, E.H. 1983. Flora of Alberta. Second Edition, revised by J.G. Packer. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON, 687 pp. ♦

Wanted: Writers

Do you enjoy writing?
The *Iris* newsletter needs writers
and we have ideas to
get you started!

Contact Dana at 403-282-3975 or
bush.eco@telus.net



Photo C. Dana Bush

Large-flowered lousewort (*Pedicularis capitata*)
SRank = S3

Native Plant Portrait: Dwarf Birch (*Betula glandulosa*)

by Ken Wright

Reprinted with permission from Calgary Gardening, the newsletter of the Calgary Horticultural Society.

Dwarf birch (*Betula glandulosa*) is one of our best kept secrets. This native shrub has attractive, green shiny leaves, smoky grey winter bark, orange fall colours, great form and a well-behaved nature.

Dwarf birch have small, round, blunt leaves with a shiny surface. The leaves are very delicate and lend a fine texture to the plant. The leaves turn a variety of colours in the fall, ranging from orange to light red. This is different from our other birches that turn bright yellow in the fall.

The winter effect is smoky grey outer bark with the older interior wood a deep dark red. The wood is often used in floral arrangements for winter and Christmas decorating. The heavily lenticled wood gives an interesting texture and feel to it. The lenticels are taxonomic for birch in general, a feature consistent within the species.

Dwarf birch is one of the few species that has the flexibility to perform well in full sun or partial shade. Because of this feature, the plant looks equally good in a wide variety of sites. The form is upright, roughly 2 m high and 1.5 m wide, with a dense, neat appearance. This form gives the plant great flexibility for landscape use. It will perform well as a hedge plant replacing some of the more common introduced species. It will also serve well as a specimen plant, having enough appeal to enhance any urban landscape.

Interestingly, the plant is not on the mainstream nursery market. With



***Betula glandulosa* – dwarf birch**

Photo Ken Wright

its drought tolerance and disease resistance, it would make sense; dwarf birch should be more common than it is.

The shrub is not resistant to birch leaf miner, but is very tolerant of any damage caused by this insect. A fine example of a native insect and a native plant co-existing in harmony.

The spring flower is a very subtle green catkin which gives rise to non-persistent, small, dark brown catkins in the fall. The seeds shed gradually through the winter, providing habitat for small nutlet-eating birds.

The more common name for this plant—bog birch—is somewhat misleading, as the plant performs well in dry as well as wet sites. In areas of extra or standing moisture, it performs well, but this is not a requirement for success. The plant moves out of its native habitat and seems quite content in a wide variety of exposures. The deer and rabbits do not seem to care for the taste.

Ken and Pamela Wright own Bow Point Nursery, west of Calgary. Bow Point Nursery specializes in growing native woody plants of Southern Alberta.

www.bowpointnursery.com ♦

Baby's Breath Down 30 Thousand – Tiny Crypantha Has Room to Grow

by Sean Allen

Margaret Mead said: Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Sean Allen, a student at Medicine Hat College, organized a ten-day weed pull that eliminated thirty thousand baby's breath plants from one of the largest populations of tiny cryptantha in Alberta. Let's give a cheer for people who make a difference!
C.D. Bush

In May of 2013 a collaborative effort between The City of Medicine Hat, Calfrac Well Services, Medicine Hat College, and Grassland Naturalists took place to preserve the habitat of tiny cryptantha, a plant on the endangered species list. The 32.4 ha (80 acre) property is being overrun by an invasive weed called baby's breath.

Tiny cryptantha is a delicate plant that is susceptible to change. It is a plant from the borage family that grows up to 20 cm with miniscule white flowers. Tiny cryptantha is found in slightly disturbed sandy-loam soils of the dry mixed prairie, close to the South Saskatchewan, Old Man and lower Bow Rivers.

The property, owned by the city of Medicine Hat and commonly referred to as Ranchlands, contains a large population of tiny cryptantha. This property was infested by baby's breath, a weed designated as "Noxious" in the

Alberta Weed Control Act (2010). Baby's breath is a very competitive weed that produces ten thousand seeds in a year. The tap root can grow 4 m deep, accessing the water table at depths much lower than what is available to many native plants. Baby's breath pushes out the native plants by outcompeting them for resources.

Environmental reclamation student Sean Allen, of Medicine Hat College, attended a workshop on invasive weeds, where he learned of the issues going on at Ranchlands. Having a background in the oil and gas industry, he used his connections to build a project to eradicate baby's breath from the property.

This spring break-up, Calfrac Well Services agreed to help eradicate baby's breath from Ranchlands by hand digging 30 cm below the crown of each plant and severing the root, at which point the excavated root would be buried at the local landfill. It was estimated at the start of the project that there were about five to eight thousand baby's breath plants on the property. Calfrac Well Services spent ten days on the property and removed thirty thousand plants. The largest plant had a 40 cm circumference.



Calfrac Well Services employee Chris Willette holding baby's breath root.

Photo Sean Allen

Many local people from the Grassland Naturalists, Medicine Hat College faculty and Medicine Hat Parks Department were involved with planning the project and identifying and marking baby's breath to be removed.

This project's success was due to the amazing collaboration of diverse groups that all seek to protect the world we live in and call home. ♦

Common Baby's-breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*)

Description

Abundantly branched perennial grows to 1 m in height. Seedling plants emerge in early spring and develop only one shoot the first year. Established plants have a deep (up to 4 m), thick, penetrating root system. Stems are smooth but covered in a waxy coating, linear leaves are opposite, hairless, with a prominent midvein and grow 2–10 cm long. Stems are swollen at the nodes. Plants do not flower until the third year when flower buds develop. Inflorescence of numerous flowers in a large, diffusely branched, leafy-bracted, panicle-like cluster. Each flower has 5 white petals with rounded to somewhat notched edges. Inflorescence is hairless and calyx teeth are 1.5–2.0 mm long. Disperses seed as a “tumble” weed.

Key Identifiers

- Stems swollen at nodes and covered in waxy coating.
- Numerous branches in mature plant.
- Prominent midvein on opposite leaves.
- Numerous tiny white flowers.

Location in Canada

Alberta, BC, Manitoba, NB, NWT, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan all have reports of escaped plants. Many infestations have been found downwind from cemeteries, escapes from floral arrangements.

Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-BabysBreath.pdf>

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Gypsophila%20paniculata>

Similar species

Other *Gypsophila* species

G. scorzonifolia Inflorescence glandular-hairy and calyx teeth 3–4 mm long.

Pink to purple flowers.

G. elegans Annual plant with white or pink petals, 8–10 mm long.



Join Our Volunteers

**Are you looking to get
more involved with
the ANPC?
There are many positions
available that suit a
variety of interests.**

Please send an email to
info@anpc.ab.ca
for further information.



News and Events

Mark your calendar!

ANPC 2014 Workshop & AGM

April 26, 2014 in Drumheller.

Botany Alberta 2014

June 13–15, 2014 in Athabasca.
Volunteers are needed to make this happen, so contact Sandy Davis at sandradavis@shaw.ca if you can help.

Central Alberta Rare Plant Study Group

Location: University of Alberta Herbarium, B-613 (botany wing), Biological Sciences Building (east end), Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton. Date: Last Monday of the month; October to April inclusive. Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Facilitator: Varina Crisfield (vcrisfield@gmail.com).

Southern Alberta Rare Plant Study Group

Location: University of Calgary Herbarium, Biological Sciences Basement. Date: First Saturday of the month; November to April inclusive. Time: noon to 4:00 p.m. Facilitator: Heide Blakely (enzian44@shaw.ca).

Medicine Hat Rare Plant Study Group

Location: Medicine Hat College Herbarium (L155). Date: Third Saturday of the month from noon to 3:00 p.m. Facilitator: Cathy Linowski (clinowski@memlane.com).

Northern Plant and Ecology Study Group (NPESG)

This is a field-based study group, active through the growing season and into early autumn. Contact Marsha Hayward for more information (wildloonart@telus.net).

Next Issue of *Iris*

- Waterton Wild Flower Festival
- Native Plant Society of BC
- May Species Count

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

19th AGM and Conference:

Creating Linkages

Landscape ecology and how we as a society fit into it. February 14-15, 2014. \$50 for members; \$60 for non-members; \$40 for students. Conexus Arts Centre, Regina, SK.

Field Guide to the Plants of the Wildhorse Wildland Park and Cadomin Area

Volunteers are needed to take photographs this summer independently, to lead/join a field trip to the area, or to donate photos you have already taken in the area. If interested, contact adinwoodie@shaw.ca or bluestems@hotmail.com.

University of Lethbridge Herbarium Digitization Project is complete

The collection currently includes over 20,000 specimens of vascular plants and remains an important research tool for botanists, students and the general public.

<http://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/cdm/landingpage/collection/herbarium>

Call for *Iris* submissions

ANPC publishes the *Iris* newsletter three times per year to provide information on all issues botanical in Alberta and further afield. We are always looking for guest contributors to submit announcements, articles, features, photos, etc. to *Iris*. ANPC welcomes your submission to the *Iris* editor (bush.eco@telus.net) for consideration. Deadlines are October 1, November 15, and February 1.

Montana Native Plant Society

Plant Conservation Conference
February 19-20, 2014 at Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.
www.mtnativeplants.org

Manual of Montana Vascular Plants

by Peter Lesica. 2012. Available from Botanical Research Institute of Texas. <http://www.brit.org/brit-press/books/montana>

Plant Happenings

Plant Happenings is an email listing of native plant related events, publications, and the like that Lorna Allen sends out whenever she has enough information gathered to make it worthwhile. If you wish to have your name added to her email list, or you have appropriate information that you would like posted, email her with the details (lorna.allen@gov.ab.ca).

Call for Volunteers

- President-in-Waiting (term begins Spring 2015)
 - Treasurer (Spring 2014)
 - Workshop 2014 helpers
-

Contact info@anpc.ab.ca for more information.

Call for Feature Plant photos

Do you have any great plant species photos you'd like to share? ANPC needs a bank of plant species photos that we can switch out seasonally for the *Feature Plant* series on the ANPC website. The photo needs to look good at a width of 200 pixels and be accompanied by a little write-up about what makes the photo interesting. Please send your photos and text to s.mcandrews@shaw.ca.

Lake in Elk Island Park). The narrow-leaved meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*), which has almost become the most abundant shrub in the Prairie, outdoing buckbrush (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) and common wild rose (*Rosa woodsii*), was in leaf but nowhere near flowering. Its spires of small white flowers, like miniature versions of cherry blossom, will come later.

I noted only one clump of plains rough fescue (*Festuca hallii*) that had heads developing and approaching flowering. Since there are several extensive patches of this grass in Nisku, betokening its true status as remnant (i.e., never ploughed) prairie, this is disappointing. This species does not flower every year, and it didn't flower in 2012. If I'm optimistic, I may be just a bit too early.

There was some buffalo-bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*) in flower, the plant that indicated to the native peoples when the bison were plumped up enough on spring feed to be worth hunting, but I've seen it better, so perhaps it is not having a good year either. What does seem to be having a banner year is veiny meadow-rue (*Thalictrum venulosum*). Both male and female plants were just beginning to flower, and looking healthy, (last year we could scarcely find some good representatives anywhere in the province for a student collection!) Veiny meadow-rue is proving to be a good colonizer of the bare thatch patches left by herbiciding the smooth brome in Nisku.

Speaking of non-native grasses, a large tufted grass with spikes like those of timothy (*Phleum pratense*), but longer and softer to the touch, has made great inroads into the Prairie in recent years. The same is true of most roadside ditches and moist grasslands in this part of the world. We used to call it meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) but last year Derek Johnson and Dorothy Fabijan did some detective work and decided it was *A. arundinaceus*, creeping meadow foxtail. While it may now be impossible to control in the bottomlands near Blackmud Creek, I think we should make aggressive attempts to remove it from the Prairie proper.

As the season unfolds, so will more of Nisku Prairie's varied display of wildflowers and grasses. Look in the coming days for ascending purple milk-vetch (*Astragalus dasyglottis*), heart-leaved Alexanders (*Zizia aptera*), more field mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*) and pale comandra (*Comandra umbellata*).

For volunteers, there is a lot more weeding and work to be done, but seeing the beauty of this native ecosystem provides ample motivation to try restoring its damaged portions. ♦

Western Spiderwort Recovery Strategy Published

On October 22, 2013, Environment Canada posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry the Recovery Strategy for Western Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) in Canada.

This recovery planning document can be found at:

http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default_e.cfm ♦



Photo Joyce Gould

Western spiderwort
(*Tradescantia occidentalis*)



Photo Joel Nicholson

Tongue-tied in Latin – B's & C's

by C. Dana Bush

Here are the pronunciation guides for B's and C's. Notice that C and CH are pronounced with a K sound – only Cy is pronounced with an S sound.

I have left off the short names like Crepis, Crocus, and Cornus, which are pronounced just the way we do.

ă = cat a = apart, canal
o = hot ô = note
i = in

B

Berberis ber-be-ris
Betula bet-ew-la (papyrifera – pă-pi-ri-fe-ra)

C

Callitriche ka-lee-tri-kee
Calochortus kă-lo-*kor*-tus
Camassia ka-mă-see-a (scilloides – skil-oi-deez)
Campanula kăm-pahn-ew-la (rotundifolia – ro-tund-i-fo-lee-a)
Cardamine kar-dab-mi-nee (pratensis – prah-tayn-sis)
Cassiope ka-see-o-pay
Ceonothus kee-a-nô-thus
Cerastium ke-ră-stee-um
Cheilanthes kay-lăn-theez
Chenopodium kay-nô-pô-dee-um
Cichorium ki-ko-ree-um
Clarkia klark-ee-a
Clematis klem-a-tis
Cleome klay-ô-mee
Collinsia ko-lin^z-ee-a
Coreopsis ko-ree-op-sis (tinctoria – tinc-to-ree-a)
Corydalis ko-ri-da-lis
Corylus ko-ril-us
Crataegus kra-tie-gus
Cryptanthus krip-tănth-us
Cynoglossum si-no-glos-um
Cyperus si-pe-rus
Cypripedium kip-ree-pee-dee-um
Cystopteris kis-top-ter-ris

Reference:

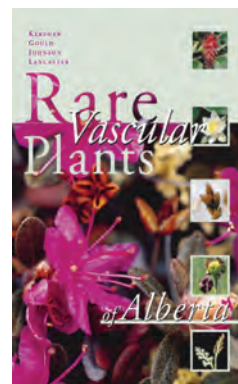
Coombes, Allen J. 1985. *Dictionary of Plant Names: Botanical Names and Their Common Name Equivalents*. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. ♦



Clematis occidentalis
Photo Terry Glase



Cassiope mertensiana
Photo Fran Cox



Addenda for the **Rare Vascular Plants of Alberta** are now available!

For information, drawings, and range maps of rare vascular plant species of Alberta not found in the *Rare Vascular Plants of Alberta* (Kershaw et al. 2001) please visit the Alberta Native Plant Council's website at www.anpc.ab.ca under Publications. This is an ongoing project with plant species added as the pages are completed.

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If you have an announcement, article or other item, you are invited to submit it to the editor for publication. Items concerning native plants will be given highest priority.

The editors reserve the right to edit submissions, but will review changes with the authors whenever possible. Disputes will be resolved in favour of the audience.

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