

Native Plant News

Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.

Vol. 12, No. 2

Summer 2007

Lady Slipper Rescue 2007

Wayne Pepper, Conservation Director Nature Regina

We have all heard that admonishment from plant ecologists and gardening experts: “**do not dig up and transplant native wild flowers!!!**”. There is a reason for this advice. Most wild plants don’t transplant well. They often have deep taproots that break off when the plant is transplanted. Losing half of your root is a big loss to a plant! In addition, most perennial wild plants are dependent upon unique soil microorganisms found in the soil where they live. The plants and soil microorganisms have built up a symbiotic relationship over many years that is damaged when a plant is removed from its wild habitat to a garden or some other new place. However, sometimes circumstances do occur wherein drastic action must be taken to “save the patient”. Just such a situation arose for a number of Broadview and Regina naturalists in mid-July, 2007. They learned that thousands of native wildflowers, many of which were yellow lady slippers, *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens*, (a species that is becoming increasingly rare), were going to be bulldozed near Broadview in Eastern Saskatchewan. The construction was part of a road improvement project that stretched for a full three miles.

Dorothy Rienks and her family who live on a farm near Broadview, had rescued yellow lady slippers and other wild plants from in front of bulldozers before but never on such a large scale. In desperation, Dorothy started phoning around in an attempt to find someone that could provide a new home for at least some of the plants-in-jeopardy. In her search, she contacted Nature Regina’s president Dale Hjertaas. Dale contacted members of the society who might be interested in helping, particularly the committee responsible for upkeep and interpretation of the Native Plant Garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. These volunteers are used to dealing with native plants and they thought they might be able to help.

Volunteers were contacted and plans were made. In



Photo credit G.A. Cooper @USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Contents

Lady Slipper Rescue 2007	1
Board Member Profile.....	4
Invasive Alien Species in the Community	4
Traditional Uses of Plants in the Native Prairie Area at the First Nations University of Canada	4
Are You Growing Native Plants in Your Front Yard ..	6
Prairie Region Native Plant Materials Listing Service	7
Saskatchewan Invasive Alien Plant Council	7
Upcoming Events	8

Major Sponsors:



Saskatchewan's
GREEN STRATEGY
www.saskatchewan.ca/green



**Saskatchewan
Environment**



**Highways and
Transportation**



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



SaskPower



NPSS Board of Directors

President:

Michael Champion 569-0424

Past-President

vacant

Vice-President:

Tara Sample 780-9417

Treasurer:

Cheri Sykes 347-0447 ext. 228

Secretary:

Candace Elchuk 975-4101

Directors:

Malin Hansen 787-8707

Don Fontaine 933-5682

John Hauer 878-8812

Leonard Howes 375-2631

Robert Wright 787-2914

Executive Director:

Garth Wruck 668-3940

Newsletter Editor:

Katherine Gerein 242-7011

NPSS Address:

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

P.O. Box 21099, Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9

Phone: (306) 668-3940 Fax: (306) 258-2244

E-mail: info@npss.sk.ca Website: www.npss.sk.ca

Native Plant News is a quarterly publication of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) and is one of the benefits of membership. Members are invited to submit articles, news, views, photographs and comment. Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the NPSS.

Submission Deadlines:

Winter Issue: November 15

Spring Issue: March 1

Summer Issue: June 1

Fall Issue: September 1

Membership Dues (Year End November 30th)

Individual \$30

Family \$45

Student/Low Income \$15

Corporate \$200

Life \$500

Please contact the NPSS office for information about the lifetime membership installment payment option.

addition to Nature Regina, the Friends of Wascana Marsh, Wascana Centre Authority, the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, Nature Saskatchewan as well as the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority all agreed to help with the lady slipper rescue. By July 12th it was agreed that Dorothy and her family at Broadview would dig the plants on Monday July 17th and bring them to Regina for planting in Wascana Park. But where would be the best place to plant them? In the short time frame to prepare, it was a challenge to find places that had just the right conditions for hundreds of plants of several species. But with every challenge there is always an opportunity.

The opportunity lay with a bit of recent history. With the deepening of Wascana Lake a couple of years ago, some of the spoil from the "Big Dig" had been placed and shaped into rolling hills and valleys in a remote part of Wascana Park near the natural habitat area east of the Wascana Hill. The area had been graded and planted to a grass mixture but contained no wildflowers. The area has considerable potential for nature interpretation but currently lacks natural features. The Regina naturalists felt the wild plant rescue would be an opportunity to introduce some charismatic native wild flowers that would interest people and increase their appreciation and conservation. Because the area had been seeded less than two years previously, it was thought that the rescued wild flowers would have a good chance of survival where competition from established grass and other vegetation would be reduced. It was settled. We would put them into the rolling hill area of the park on Tuesday the 18th.

By the weekend, southern Saskatchewan was under the siege of an extended heat wave. Temperatures well into the 30s for Monday and Tuesday were forecasted but with some temporary moderation for Wednesday. We didn't want to kill all the plants and some of the planters right off the bat so we decided to change our planting date to Wednesday when it was supposed to be cooler. On Wednesday morning bright and early, fifteen people showed up, spades, buckets and sun hats in hand and eager to start planting.

In the meantime, the Rienks family in Broadview, stout-hearted warriors that they are, had dashed out on Tuesday evening, after it cooled down slightly, and started digging up plants. On Wednesday morning, with approximately 250 plants nestled in the back of their pickup, Dorothy struck off for Wascana Park in Regina. Meanwhile, attempting to duplicate roadside ditch micro-habitat, the fifteen planters at the park strained to dig planting beds along the edges of the depressions between the hills.

The NPSS is proud to be a partner of the:

See the PCAP website at:
www.pcap-sk.org



The ground was as dry as a bone and rock hard. Would anything grow in this stuff? It was getting hotter. Had the lady slippers become lost? Time for a drink of water or juice and assessment of the situation.

But not to worry; just as the workers had pretty well run out of steam, Dorothy arrived with the plants. There were close to 200 yellow lady slippers, about a dozen western red lilies, a couple each of snakeroot and sunflower plants and some purple prairie clover. We noted that Dorothy had been careful to include the soil around the root ball for each plant. With renewed enthusiasm and energy the naturalists got down to planting. Each plant was carefully transferred, dirt and all, to its new home and tenderly planted.

Realizing that the plants would need all the help they could get, we prevailed upon Wascana Centre Authority to supply some well-rotted compost and a wagonload of water. The compost was incorporated with the indigenous dirt for planting, and then all new arrivals were watered thoroughly. We ended up with seven separate beds of lady slippers in Wascana Park. An additional dozen or so additional plants were transported to the First Nations University across Wascana Creek and planted, where they will be a valuable contribution to the native plant display garden.

So how have the lady slippers made out? It did appear that the odds were stacked against their survival because the weather continued extremely hot for the next week. Hot dry conditions are a serious enemy of new transplants. But someone must have been looking out for the sweet little lady slippers. On Saturday, a series of thunderstorms soaked the Wascana Park area with several centimeters of rain. In addition, Wascana Centre Authority staff watered the plants at least once in the first week after planting. Upon inspection on July 24th, the lady slippers were looking green and perky. Not one plant was curled up dead in the dust. In fact most of them looked quite happy to have found a safe new home.

Our greatest fear that the lady slippers would suffer irreparable transplant shock was not realized. The fact that they had finished blooming at least a month earlier and were possibly beginning to enter fall dormancy may have helped early survival. The snakeroot also seemed all right, but unfortunately the sunflowers and purple prairie clover that were still flowering at the time of transplanting were badly wilted and were close to death.

The planting sites are all flagged and the watering regime will continue at least until mid August or until the plants

The W.P. Fraser Herbarium

Room 3C75, Agriculture Building
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A8
www.usask.ca/agriculture/plantsci/herbarium/

Native plant identification information
Botany library
Saskatchewan rare plants information
Volunteers welcome

Open 9:00 to 5:00 weekdays
(please call or email ahead of time)

Dr. Hugo Cota-Sanchez
966-4950 or 966-4405

are dormant. Hopefully next spring they will be able to make a fresh new start with the benefit of spring runoff.

As our prairies and parklands continue to be chewed up by so-called human progress, finding ways to salvage at least a small piece of nature becomes more and more relevant to nature lovers and indeed to much of the general public. With any luck and the efforts of our valiant volunteer naturalists, our lady slipper rescue will contribute to improving biodiversity in Wascana Park. Hopefully our effort has provided a wee taste of nature that would otherwise not be available to most people.

NPSS 2007 Rare Plant Workshops

*We apologize for the delay this year.
Workshops are still going ahead!*

Workshop 1 - Regina (complete)
Workshop 2 - North Battleford (Sept. 6 & 7)
Workshop 3 - Saskatoon (Sept. 14 & 15)

*Please email info@npss.sk.ca
or phone 668-3940 to register
or get more information.*

Board Member Profile



Malin Hansen is a plant ecologist interested in the use of native plant species in urban and rural restoration. She obtained her Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Regina in 2006. Her dissertation focused on management of crested wheatgrass, a non-native grass from Asia, invading native prairie at Grasslands National Park. She is currently working for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority as the landowner relations coordinator, a position she job-shares with Jennifer Lohmeyer. Malin is also working on a project exploring the use of native plant species in landscaping. The project looks at establishment and survival of a number of plant species common in southern Saskatchewan under varying watering regimes and soil amendments. She hopes to find species that are drought tolerant, esthetically pleasing and easy to grow in urban areas such as city parks and front yards. Malin is also involved in several community groups in Regina that focus on community development and public education on environmental issues.

Invasive Alien Species in the Community – An NPSS Funded Program

Invasive Alien Species in the Community, briefly called the Saskatchewan Invasive Alien Plant Program Stewardship Component, was launched June 1, 2007 with a call for proposals. With a deadline of June 30th the NPSS received thirteen proposals from a variety of groups including: individual farmers and ranchers, conservation organizations, weed management coalitions and First Nations. Approved projects included a wide variety of activities from management initiatives (mapping, data entry, sheep grazing, mowing and chemical control) to educational initiatives (identification guides, community workshops, audio visual media development). All proposals submitted were funded. A total of \$94,000 was approved for project cost reimbursement. These projects will continue through 2007. This program provides financial and educational support to its recipients. All approved recipients are required to participate in an NPSS invasive alien plant workshop (IAP), which focuses on identification, inventory and management of IAPs. In January a second call for proposals will be released for the 2008 round of funding. The NPSS is able to deliver this program through the generous support of the Provincial Green Strategy.

Traditional Uses of Plants in the Native Prairie Area at the First Nations University of Canada

Fidji Gendron

Assistant Professor of Biology

First Nations University of Canada

“We use the sap of the Manitoba maple as sugar and preservatives. Male and female flowers are found on separate trees and I use the seeds of female trees for building bones as they contain a high level of calcium. This is especially useful for young girls on their moontime. The seeds have to be boiled until they turn brown.”

This is the traditional knowledge that a female Elder from the Anishnabe Nation shared with me last July. This traditional knowledge is now displayed along with pictures of the species and their Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, and Nakota names on interpretive signs in the Native Prairie Area at the First Nations University of Canada, Regina campus. The project was initiated in 2003 under the guidance of Mary Vetter, professor of Biology at Luther College, when various people interested in traditional uses of plants and

Advertising In Native Plant News

Rates: \$50 for 1 issue, \$175 for 4 issues

Contact the NPSS for more details.

Ph: (306) 668-3940 E-mail: info@npss.sk.ca

NOW CUSTOM-GROWING
native grasses and forbes
FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION.

 **SaskPower**
Shand Greenhouse

To apply, call (306) 634-9771
www.saskpower.com

prairie restoration met to discuss the creation of the Native Prairie Area. The goal was to develop an area planted with native prairie plants that will eventually serve as an educational tool to promote an understanding of the First Nations people knowledge of plants and their traditional uses. The site is located on the northwest side of the campus



Dalea purpurea var. *purpurea*.
Credit Fidji Gendron

and was seeded by Clint Sanborn from Prairie Habitats during the fall of 2003 and 2004 with more than 60 species of native grasses and wildflowers.

The Native Prairie Area was mowed during the subsequent years to keep the annual invasive species from setting seeds. There is now a good establishment of native species and the area was left uncut

during the summer of 2007. It was amazing to see the different species of flowers in bloom and some faculty and staff commented on the joy of seeing the plants flowing in the winds. Common flowers found on the site include prairie sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), gaillardia (*Gaillardia aristata*), prairie coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), and wild blue flax (*Linum lewisii*). There are even a few brown cone-flowers (*Ratibida columnifera* var. *pulcherrima*)!



Ratibida columnifera var. *pulcherrima*.
Credit Fidji Gendron

During the spring of 2007, I met with Elders and we discussed what they would like to see in the Native Prairie Area. Along with a windbreaker of choke cherry, they decided to have a bed with native shrubs and trees that are significant to the First Nation culture. The shrubs and trees have been planted in July

and August by Clint Sanborn, who continues to be a major part of this project. It was a privilege for me to talk with Elders about the traditional uses of these plants. Elders shared their traditional knowledge on Manitoba maple and eleven other species of shrubs and trees. They were very generous and one Elder showed me his garden and his sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*) and purple coneflower (*Echinacea angustifolia*) picking spots. Next year, the Elders decided that a Medicine Wheel and a row of seven trees will be planted. I will be working with an Elder and youth next spring to grow the wildflowers that will be planted in the Medicine Wheel. A bed of conifer and another one with cacti will be established in 2009.

I hope that the Native Prairie Area will be a space where the Elders spend time explaining the traditional, cultural



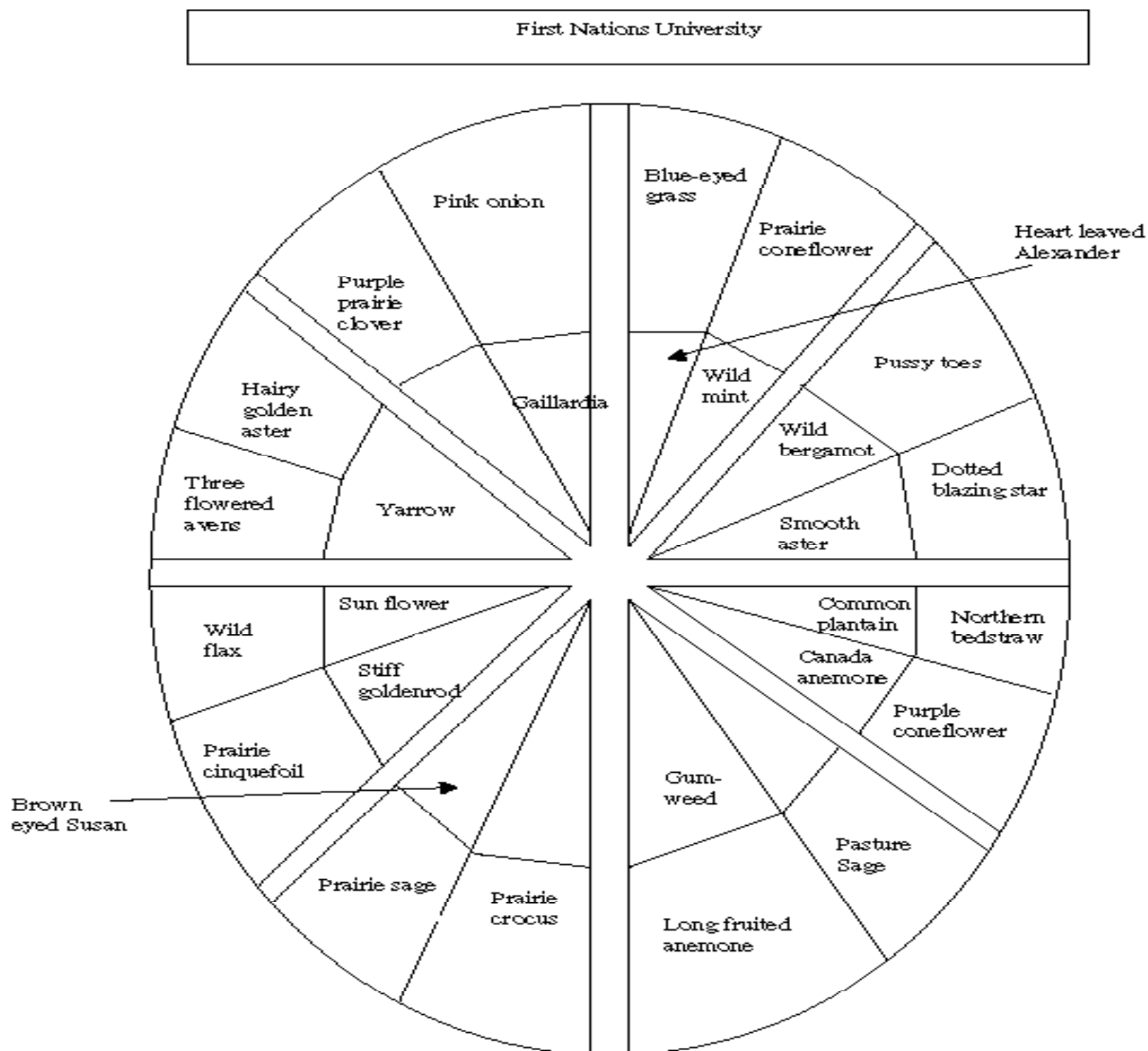
FNU Native Prairie Area. Credit Malin Hansen

and ceremonial uses of the plants and where people learn about the native grasses and wildflowers. To make this project possible, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the long-term financial support of SaskPower in 2007-2009 and the Shell Environmental Fund and the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan for their support in 2007. Many people were involved in this project. Among them, I would like to thank Arok Wolvengrey, Eagleclaw Thom, Malin Hansen, Mary Vetter, Doug Pee-Ace, Thomas Roussin, and most of all, the Elders who believe in this project. The unveiling ceremony with our major sponsor SaskPower will be held on Tuesday, September 18 at 10:00 am. Everyone is invited!

Are You Growing Native Plants in Your Front Yard?

Conventional landscaping in Canada uses few native plant species. Meanwhile, native vegetation is often removed and destroyed to give way for urban expansion. Non-native plant species are often planted in parks and yards since they are readily available, affordable, predictable, easy to establish and familiar to park managers and the general public. The introduction of non-native plant species may, however, cause problems such as invasion into native vegetation and the non-native species may out-compete native plant populations. Non-native plant species also frequently require large inputs of water and chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides) since they are not adapted to local conditions. These inputs are costly and can have detrimental impacts on soil and water quality.

Native plants provide an alternative to non-native plants in landscaping. By planting native plants suitable for urban landscaping homeowners and park managers can reduce management costs and time. Watering and pesticide application can be reduced since native plants are adapted to Saskatchewan's climate, soil, and insects. Fewer inputs of water, fertilizers, and pesticides would also lead to improved water quality as fewer pollutants would appear in urban runoff. In addition, people would learn about their local natural heritage and will learn to appreciate native species when they see them. Few people, however, have experience using native plants in landscaping.





Ratibida columnifera in the garden.
Credit Malin Hansen

A native plant garden was planted at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina in the summer of 2007 to demonstrate plant species that are native to southern Saskatchewan. The demonstration garden contains over 30 plant species that are adapted to the dry hot summers of the northern Great Plains.

The plants presented in the garden are also selected to be esthetically pleasing and suitable for landscaping. The objective of the demonstration garden is to make people more familiar with native plant species, their traditional usage and maintenance. The demonstration garden is open to the public and interpretation signs will facilitate self-guided tours.

The demonstration garden was made possible with funding from Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation. For more information please contact Malin Hansen at: hansen2m@uregina.ca

Prairie Region Native Plant Materials Listing Service



The NPSS has developed a whole new listing service for native plant materials and services. This service has two main functions. One it will become the primary sourcing device for native plant

materials and services for western Canada. People, searching for that perfect seed mix, plugs of an uncommon wildflower or need 400 lbs of seed cleaned and need to find a reputable cleaner, will search this list first. Secondly it will provide a cheap marketing tool for producers of native plant materials and service providers. For just \$20 a year a producer or service provider can post as many products or services as they want and will have the ability to login with a user name and password 24/7 to add or remove postings or edit existing ones. Compared to newspaper classifieds, where a three line ad will cost you approximately \$130/mo this service costs just over \$1.60/mo that is a saving of over 98% with no limit on the number of products you post. We hope to have this system operative late this summer and have it populated with product and services by late fall. Next time you are looking for product, need to sell your product or want to advertise your service check-out this service on our website www.npss.sk.ca. Thanks to the Regional Technical Assistance Component of the Greencover Program, Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation and the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (Saskatchewan Environment) for their financial support for this much needed service.

Saskatchewan Invasive Alien Plant Council

Following the lead of the provinces of B.C., Alberta and Manitoba, Saskatchewan will be developing an invasive alien plant council. The NPSS is taking a leadership role in this initiative by spearheading the process and coordinating stakeholders. The NPSS has had funding support for this initiative approved from the Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program(IASPP). The goal is to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders from agriculture, natural resource industries, recreation and tourism, conservation, transportation, economic development sectors, research as well as associated government agencies to form a council. This council will work to provide leadership and coordination of invasive alien species initiatives in the province.

An essential element to coordinating initiatives is to have a plan. One of the main objectives of the council is to develop an action plan. Saskatchewan already has experience with successful action plans, one being the Prairie Conservation Action Plan. It can be conceived that this highly successful plan will be used as a model for the development of an action plan for invasive alien species. The NPSS will be charged with the task of bringing together the stakeholders and facilitating meetings that will lead to development of a council and securing partnerships to financial support the council. If you would like more information or think your organization needs to be involved in the development of the council please contact the NPSS office.

NPSS Upcoming Events

NPSS Rare Plant Workshops

See page 3 of this newsletter

NPSS Invasive Alien Plant Workshops

Commercial Landscapers & Horticultural Societies
Oct. 16 Saskatoon

Urban Landscape & Park Vegetation Managers
Oct 17 Saskatoon

Urban Landscape & Park Vegetation Managers
Oct 30 Regina or Moose Jaw

Environmental Stewardship Groups
Oct 31 Moose Jaw

Saskatchewan Greenhouse Growers Association
Nov 9 Saskatoon (SGGA confrence participants)

Environmental Stewardship Groups
Nov 20 Saskatoon

Memberships

With the launch of the new NPSS website members will be able to purchase and renew memberships online by credit card. This will be a secure system through PayPal. You will not need a personal PayPal account to purchase or renew your membership online. Click on "memberships" in the menu bar and follow the links.

NPSS AGM 2008

The annual general meeting is planned for March 7 & 8, 2008 in Regina. This year we will start Friday evening with a banquet and keynote speaker. Saturday Morning will be the AGM meeting followed by tours and talks given by various scientists highlighting their research programs at the U of R relating to native plants.

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.
P.O. Box 21099
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9

TO:

Corporate Members and Partners



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



Saskatchewan
Environment



Highways and
Transportation



Saskatchewan
Watershed
Authority



Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire



Canada Publication Mail Agreement #40035909