



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Native Plant News

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Summer 2012



Queen of the Prairie

See story on
Pages 4 & 5

PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

A monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillar munches on Green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora* var. *viridiflora*).

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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 comments. Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the NPSS.

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Family \$45

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Corporate \$200

Life \$500

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

Spreading the word

Greetings from southeast Saskatchewan!

What a wonderful province we live in and what wonderful opportunities we have to see such a wide variety of natural landscapes within its borders!

You may have noticed our efforts to spread the word through both digital and traditional billboards, advertising in *Prairies North* magazine and brochures at outdoor stores in Regina and Saskatoon.

Just like being on a hike, keep your eyes open, you never know what you'll see!

I am very privileged to be given the opportunity to be involved in our Society as your President. As I move into

my 4th year on the NPSS board I realize that I have some very big shoes to fill! My heartfelt thanks go to Tara Sample, for both your commitment to the NPSS and for your leadership as our Past

President.

I would be remiss if I didn't say good bye and thank you to Michael Champion for the many years he has dedicated to our Society in his many roles.

Finally, I send a hearty welcome to both new and returning board members Nadia Mori and Sarah Vinge.

It is through such commitment to our Society and to our natural areas around the province that we have grown and become such a strong group, often looked to by other native plant groups as a model and source of information.

I know this growth has come through some difficult times in our past, but I think we're on a roll now!

I encourage you to actively become involved in our Society as we must work together to keep our momentum going! As they say, "Many hands make light work."

Please feel free to contact myself or Chet if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

I hope each of you has had a great summer! *

Follow us on Twitter

We're on Twitter!

Hopefully you know that the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan is on Facebook – we've been on for two years.



In an effort to reach more people, we have started a Twitter account and are already picking up followers. If you have either a Facebook or Twitter account, please "friend" or "follow" us!

You'll get access to interesting and informative content not found anywhere else. C'mon, we plant people have to stick together. *

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Getting to know Nadia



Nadia Mori is new to the NPSS Board of Directors.

"I will be back" is what I promised myself after my very first trip to Canada which, of all things, was a 10 day dog-sledding adventure.

Having grown up on a small mixed farm in Kallnach, Switzerland, I was always drawn to the agricultural sector. My parent's operation includes 16 head dairy herd and 16 hectares (40 acres) of farm land where they grow sugar beets, corn for silage, winter wheat, barley, tame forage for pasture and hay. The growing season is over two times longer than Saskatchewan and annual precipitation is generally over 1,000 mm.

Despite many differences, Canadian and Swiss farmers face many of the same challenges. Some nice to know facts include: in order for my brother to take over the family farm, he had to first complete a two year farming apprenticeship; Switzerland fits into Saskatchewan about 15 times; and, Swiss German, French and Italian are the three official languages of Switzerland.

In 2002 I ended up buying a one way ticket from Zurich to Saskatoon to complete my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, with a major in rangeland management and a minor in soils science at the University of Saskatchewan. The opportunity presented itself to pursue a graduate degree in rangeland ecology under the supervision of Drs. Jim Romo and Ken Walburger. My thesis was titled "Composition and structure of fescue prairie respond to

burning and environmental conditions more than to grazing or burning plus grazing in the short term."

During my studies I was fortunate enough to be a recipient of the Nature Saskatchewan.

My first post-university employment took me to Tisdale where I worked as a Land Agrologist as part of Lands Branch with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. This was an opportunity to add knowledge on tame grass production and management to my mostly native range focused knowledge base.

In early 2011, I transferred within the Ministry to the Regional Services Office in Watrous to take on the position as Regional Forage Specialist. Working in the Watrous area offers the opportunity to work with a wide range of producers often managing native, tame and annual forages as part of their operation.

I appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the NPSS and to contribute on the Board of Directors. Spreading awareness of the importance of native prairie is near to my heart. With increasing pressure on environmental resources and ever shrinking of remnant native prairie, I feel it is an important time to be an active member of the organization. Although there are days when I miss my family on the other side of the ocean, I could no longer imagine a life without the wide open spaces, the countless natural wonders and the friendly people Saskatchewan has to offer.*

Upcoming Events

September 2012

7th Annual Sustainable Gourmet

September 22,
Saskatoon Club, 417 21st St. E.
Saskatoon, Sask.

Sustainable Gourmet is an annual fundraising dinner hosted by Saskatchewan Environmental Society that is a showcase of local food and local talent – bringing together people who share a belief in a healthy environment. All of the primary ingredients used in the dinner are acquired from local producers, and then prepared by local chefs to create a unique gourmet meal. Tickets are \$80.

**Contact the SES at 306-665-1915.
www.environmentalsociety.ca**

Nature Saskatchewan Fall Meet

September 28 to 30
Preeceville, Sask.

The Kelsey Ecological Society will be hosting Nature Saskatchewan's Fall Meet. Preeceville, the headwaters of the Assiniboine River, lies approximately one hour north of Yorkton, three hours east of Saskatoon and less than three hours north of Regina, in the transition between the Aspen Parkland and the Boreal Forest. There are several lakes and wetlands in the immediate vicinity, which support a large variety of migrating ducks and geese.

**Contact Michael Pitt at 306-547-2008
mpitt755@gmail.com
<http://www.naturesask.ca>**

December 2012

Foraging into the Future 7: Times are Good . . . Let's Make it Count!

December 12 and 13

Sky Centre, Living Sky Casino
Swift Current, Sask.

Join us for information on a variety of livestock and forage topics including: Maximizing Soil and Forage Health; Economics and Cost of Production; Consumer Confidence and Optimism in Agriculture; Invasive Species; Holistic Approaches to Grazing; Herd Health; Wintering Site Management and much more!

Contact the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture at 306-778-8294.

To submit your native plant related event to our events list, send your information (including date, contact, phone number and location) to info@npss.sk.ca.

Nature's *royal* air force



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora* var. *viridiflora*) is one of six species in Saskatchewan.

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

If you've spent any amount of time outdoors this summer, you've probably noticed quite a few monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*).

Apparently this is a major migration year for our largest butterfly, and some have speculated that it is one of the biggest migrations in decades. In Saskatchewan, I started seeing them in early June and by the end of June I had seen more monarchs in one month than I had in my entire life. One day I saw over 100.

What's most amazing to me is how far these little creatures travel.

The ones we see in Saskatchewan mostly likely came from the mid-western

United States, possibly travelling over 1,000 km to get here! I don't know about you, but I'd be mighty hungry after a trip like that. By having native habitat with diverse wildflower species or a backyard full of native wildflowers, you are directly helping monarchs by giving them a buffet of nectar to feed on.

Adult monarchs will feed on a variety of nectar sources, so by having native plants with different blooming times you'll ensure that they have a constant food supply during their stay in the area.

If you have milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), even better! Milkweeds are what monarchs lay their eggs on, as it is the only plant that the caterpillars eat.

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Sask.'s native milkweeds are:

Dwarf milkweed (*Asclepias ovalifolia*)

Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)

Silky milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)

Whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*)

Green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora* var. *viridiflora*)

Narrow-leaved green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora* var. *linearis*)

Top native nectar plants for adult monarchs include:

Spotted joe-pye (*Eupatorium maculatum*)

Giant hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)

Black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Gaillardia (*Gaillardia aristata*)

Meadow blazing star (*Liatris ligulistylis*)

Echinacea (*Echinacea angustifolium*)

Goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*)

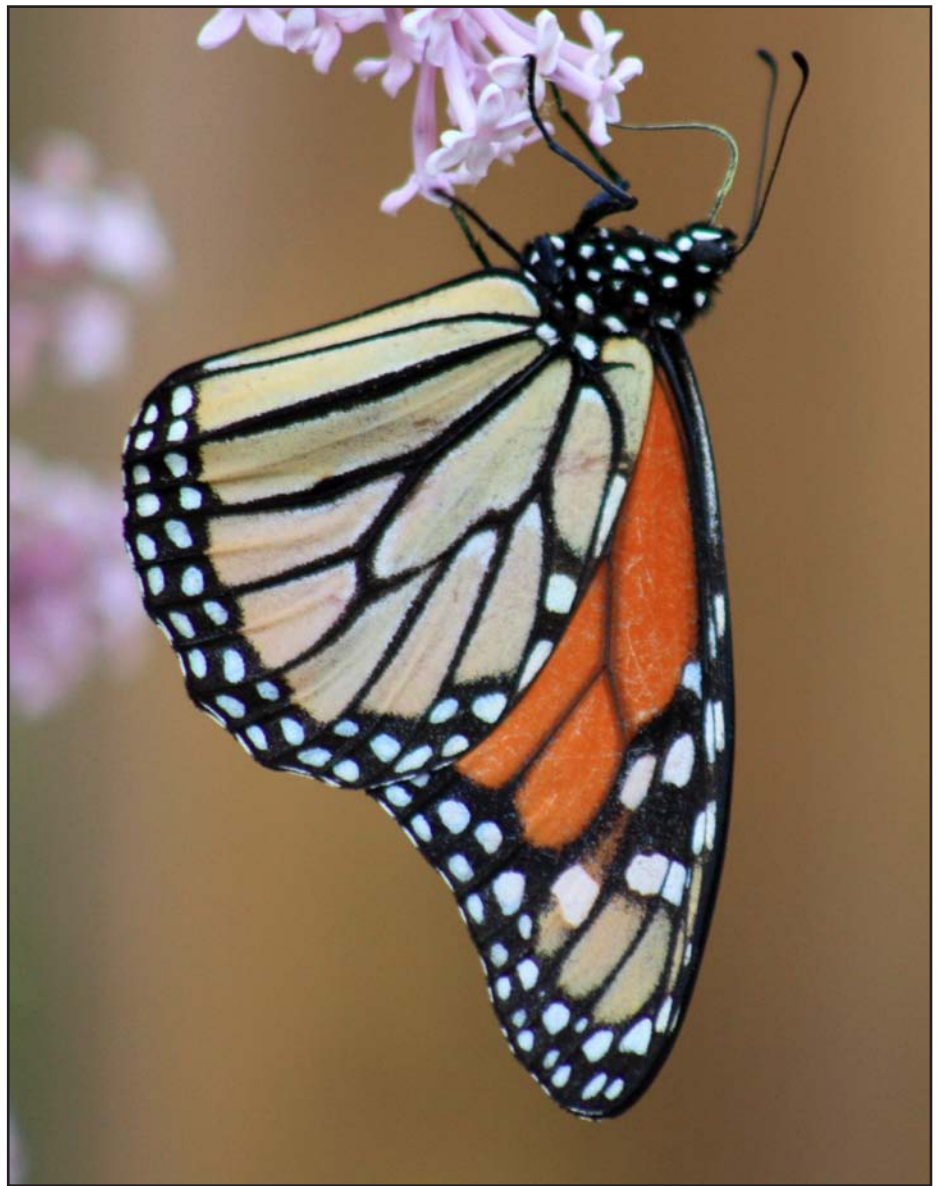
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Ever wonder why the monarch caterpillars and butterflies are so colourful? It's a warning to predators that they are not good to eat. The reason why they taste bad is that when the caterpillars eat milkweed, they ingest a toxin contained within the milkweed.

Saskatchewan has six species of milkweed and all but two are quite common so there's a lot for the caterpillars to eat.

Keep in mind that the nectar plants listed above will attract all sorts of butterflies and bees, not just the monarchs.

So why not give our flying friends a hand and plant some of these native plants in your yard. You'll be rewarded with colourful visitors all summer long. *



An adult monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*).

PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

National Invasive Species Council takes root

The efforts of Canada's provincial and territorial invasive species councils have received a national boost.

At the Invasive Species Conference held in Ottawa in February 2012, participants agreed to form a national council on invasive species.

Representatives from government, industry and NGOs were part of the input session in Ottawa that resulted in the agreement. The perspective-focused council will include members from a variety of different sectors who represent not individual organizations or government bodies, but the perspective of their industry sector in general.

Once active, Canada's national invasive species council may serve a

variety of purposes, including building awareness nationally of invasive species problems. The national council may also help coordinate local and provincial efforts by providing focus and objectives based on national invasive species priorities.

Chet Neufeld, Executive Director of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan and founder and current chair of the Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council has been involved with invasive species at a national level for a number of years, including participation in a national early detection, rapid response working group and the Invasive Alien Species National Working Group, the precursor to the National Invasive Spe-

cies Council.

Neufeld was one of the organizers of the Invasive Species Conference in Ottawa and is helping draft the bylaws of the new council.

"Saskatchewan will benefit from participating in the national council, as there are many invasive species issues that can be more effectively addressed through national collaboration," Neufeld said.

"Collaboration is a two-way street, so we can also contribute our knowledge and efforts to other regions of the country in order to increase the effectiveness of their programs," he added. "This collaboration is already happening, but with a formalized national council, the network will be strengthened." *

Send us your plant sightings

By *DEANNA TROWSDALE MUTAFOV*
PlantWatch Saskatchewan Coordinator

If you have been able to do some PlantWatching this spring and summer, and have recorded any blooming dates for the PlantWatch program, please remember to submit your data to Deanna by mail at: PlantWatch, Nature Saskatchewan, 206-1860 Lorne St., Regina, Sask., S4P 2L7, or by fax at 306-780-9263. You can also enter your data on-line at www.plantwatch.ca.

Please let me know if you have submitted any observations on the PlantWatch website, so I can keep track of your data, and enter your name in the prize draw.

Thanks for your participation in the PlantWatch program! All observations submitted in the PlantWatch program are important in furthering our understanding of how plants are responding to the changing climate.

Be sure to check out the Nature Saskatchewan website at www.naturesask.ca under Education and Monitoring for information about the Saskatchewan PlantWatch program. *

Spot the crocus winner



PHOTO BY RACHEL TURNQUIST

Prairie Crocus (*Anemone patens* var. *patens*)

This year's winner of our annual Spot the Crocus contest was Rachel Turnquist.

She spotted the first crocus on April 22 at the Redberry Lake Regional Park golf course. With this sighting she has singlehandedly toppled the two-year reign of our previous winners Neal and Margaret Holt.

Rachel's sighting has been reported to PlantWatch, a program that monitors climate change through observing plant phenology by a network of citizen scientists.

Good job Rachel! *

Wanted:



PHOTO BY LUIS MIGUEL BUGALLO SÁNCHEZ

The lily leaf beetle (*Lilioceris lili*) is invading Canada.

. . . Dead or Alive

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director

Have you see this beetle?

We hope not, because this is the lily leaf beetle (*Lilioceris lili*). It was accidentally imported to North America on lily bulbs and has since escaped into the wild.

It feeds on the leaves of lily plants and can cause severe damage that leads to a decline in lily numbers. It has spread throughout Eastern Canada and can now be found in Manitoba, so it's sadly just a matter of time before it shows up in Saskatchewan.

So, please keep your eyes peeled for this guy, whether you're in your backyard or deep in the great outdoors. If you think you've found one, either take a photo and record the location or better yet, collect the beetle in a small plastic bag and call 306-586-3697 or 306-569-0804. *

Re-ranking rare plants

By AMIE ENNS

Botanist, Saskatchewan
Ministry of Environment

The Botanical Assessment Working Group (BAWG) was formed in the fall of 2011 and had its first meeting in November to start the process of re-ranking plant species in Saskatchewan, with the priority on rare plants.

Group members include: Dr. Vern Harms, Anna Leighton, Bob Godwin, Joanne Marchand, Beryl Wait, Candace Neufeld, Chet Neufeld, Sarah Vinge-Mazer and myself.

The Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre, administered by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, manages the provincial database of biological information which includes plant ranks. Population information from our database is provided to members who, in return, provide feedback on threats and populations that are fed into a rank calculator created by NatureServe (a non-profit conservation organization that unites natural heritage programs to provide species and ecosystem information).

The rank calculator includes several factors, such as population size, threats to the populations, and trends. A rank is then generated from the calculator; members decide whether to accept the calculated rank and the new rank is updated in the database, which is available to the public.

So far, 14 tracked species and 21 species with SNR ranks (Not Ranked) have been reassessed. Harms' *Annotated Catalogue of Saskatchewan Vascular Plants* (2006) has been used to help assign ranks to SNR species. This will give botanists and consultants a better idea of their abundance and help with conservation planning in the future. We're hoping to update all plant species and with over 4,000 of them, so we've got our work cut out for us! *

Common Name	Scientific Name	Old Rank	New Rank
American Bugseed	<i>Corispermum americanum</i> var. <i>americanum</i>	S2	S1
Beaked Annual	<i>Shinnersoseris rostrata</i>	S2	S2
Skeleton-weed			
Bur Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia acanthicaarpa</i>	S2	S2S3
Clustered Oreocarya	<i>Cryptantha celosioides</i>	S1	S4
Long Beech-fern	<i>Phegopteris connectilis</i>	S2	S2
Low Milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus lotiflorus</i>	S3	S3
Narrow-leaved Cattail	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	S1?	SNA
Narrow-leaved Plantain	<i>Plantago elongata</i> ssp. <i>elongata</i>	S2S3	S4
Rough Pennyroyal	<i>Hedeoma hispida</i>	S3	S4
Schweinitz's Flatsedge	<i>Cyperus schweinitzii</i>	S2	S3
Tumble Grass	<i>Schedonnardus paniculatus</i>	S2S3	S3
Western Smooth Cliff-brake	<i>Pellaea glabella</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>	S2	S1S2
Spinulose Plantain	<i>Plantago patagonica</i> var. <i>spinulosa</i>	S2S4	S2
Pursh's Plantain	<i>Plantago patagonica</i> var. <i>patagonica</i>	S2S4	S4
Lapland Reed-grass	<i>Calamagrostis lapponica</i> var. <i>nearctica</i>	SNR	S3
Yellow Sedge	<i>Carex flava</i>	SNR	S2
Russet Sedge	<i>Carex saxatilis</i> var. <i>rhomalea</i>	SNR	S2
Rocky Mountain Sedge	<i>Carex saximontana</i>	SNR	S3
Bugseed	<i>Corispermum hyssopifolium</i>	SNR	S3
Awned Cyperus	<i>Cyperus squarrosus</i>	SNR	S2
California Wild Oat	<i>Danthonia californica</i> var. <i>americana</i>	SNR	S2
Grass			
Heller's Witchgrass	<i>Dichanthelium oligosanthes</i>	SNR	S2
Slender Dichanthelium	<i>Dichanthelium xanthophyllum</i>	SNR	S1
Flat-stemmed Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis compressa</i>	SNR	S2
Dwarf Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis parvula</i> var. <i>anachaeta</i>	SNR	S1
Slender Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis tenuis</i> var. <i>borealis</i>	SNR	S2
Bridger Mountain Alum-root	<i>Heuchera flabellifolia</i> var. <i>flabellifolia</i>	SNR	S1
Bristly Mouseltail	<i>Myosurus apetalus</i>	SNR	S2
Small-flower Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis parviflora</i> ssp. <i>parviflora</i>	SNR	S3
Kentucky Blue Grass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	SNR	SNA
Widgeon-grass	<i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i>	SNR	S3
Ditch-grass	<i>Ruppia maritima</i> var. <i>rostrata</i>	SNR	S2
Arctic Willow	<i>Salix arctica</i>	SNR	S2
Red Club-rush	<i>Scirpus rufus</i> var. <i>neogaeus</i>	SNR	S2
Columbia Water-meal	<i>Wolffia columbiana</i>	SNR	S1

SNA = Species Not Assessed, a designation given to introduced plants.
SNR = Species Not Ranked (due to factors such as limited information, etc.)

Executive Director's note: The Botanical Assessment Working Group is just one of the eight external committees that the NPSS is involved with, and fits within the mandate of the society's Rare Plant Program.

Closing of Community Pastures to be done slowly

To ensure long-term prosperity for farmers and the entire agricultural value chain, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is refocusing on the changing priorities of the agriculture industry.

The Community Pasture Program is a land-management service provided on 85 pastures in the Prairie provinces. It was created in the 1930s to reclaim land that was badly eroded during the Prairie drought. Today, the program has achieved its goal, having returned more than 145,000 hectares of poor-quality cultivated lands to grass cover, significantly improving the ecological value of these lands and helping increase the productivity of the area.

"Pastures are now well-established in the Prairies," said Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "This change will create a great opportunity for provinces, stakeholders or those who use the land to take over pasture management."

Now that AAFC has informed all unions, management and staff, additional information is available:

- Pastures will be transitioned out of federal management gradually over six years, allowing time for provinces, municipalities, users and other stakeholders to help manage the transition;
- AAFC will divest 10 pastures in 2013, followed by additional pastures each year until full divestiture

is achieved in 2018;

- Grazing and breeding services on remaining pastures will be maintained throughout this period. AAFC has begun discussions with the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (who own 90 per cent of the pasture land) to ensure that the divestiture of the land and the phasing out of the pasture program is undertaken in a manner that optimizes future economic and employment opportunities for the rural communities affected.

AAFC will also work with the provinces, municipalities and the livestock industry to transition the pastures to those with the capacity and expertise to manage them efficiently.*

What's the NPSS been up to lately?

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

The NPSS is always extremely busy and this year is no exception. We have many projects on the go across the province, and many have the opportunity for members to become involved. Here are just a couple of them:



PHOTO BY DEBBIE NORDSTROM

Flowering Rush Removal

This was the fourth year in a row that we will have removed the invasive flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) from a wetland near Watrous, Sask. At present, the site is the only known location in the province, and so it is paramount to eradicate it to prevent its spread into the rest of Saskatchewan.

The NPSS is the only organization dealing with flowering rush eradication in Saskatchewan, and has become a trusted expert on the subject, having presented at international conferences in Vancouver, Ottawa and Portland, Oregon.

We have been making incredible progress on removing flowering rush in the last few years, we have the opportunity this year to put the final nail in the coffin and eradicate it completely.

We remove the flowering rush the old fashioned way – by hand pulling. Last year we removed approximately 2 tonnes by hand!

If you're interested in helping, please contact the NPSS at (306) 668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca and we'll put you on a volunteer list. We plan to have a number of days in September that you can attend. This project is funded by the Environmental Damages Fund (Environment Canada).

Salt Cedar Surveys

This is another ongoing project that the NPSS has been leading. In fact, we warned of the dangers of salt cedar (*Tamarix sp.*) in our weed workshops in 2007 before it was even prohibited by the Weed Control Act. Salt cedar is now a hot topic, as it was found near Swift Current and Findlater, Sask., in 2010. Another population was located near Cadillac, Sask., in 2011.

The NPSS immediately jumped on board and launched an early detection, rapid response campaign. Although it has since been eradicated at all three locations, they continued to be monitored to ensure that they don't come back.✿

Flowering rush

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