MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

DECEMBER 1982

Seed of Wild Plants

Most people have trouble growing native plants from seed. The first wild seed I planted, I worked up the bed to about 10" deep in first class condition and planted the seed. Only about 20% of the species survived. A good number of the species germinated but the bed dried out before they could get established.

Most wild species have a dormancy that has been bred out of domestic varieties. You could consider dormancy like a combination lock. Each species has its own combinations of requirements. Some of the combinations are seed maturity, light, air, temperature, and moist. Holly needs about 2 years to germinate, with a period of COLD-WARM-COLD. Solomon's Seal needs a similar sequence. Dormancy can last from a very few days to 3 years or longer.

When, where and how to plant are questions quite often asked. When, is whenver wild plants plant their own seed. Fall is usually better for most species. Very few wild plants sow all their seeds at one time. One of the best ways to plant Queen Ann's lace is to cut the seed head with about a foot long stem and stick enough of the stem into the ground to hold it up and forget it. I have planted Queen Ann's lace in prpeared beds in fall and spring, and never had much luck.

Where to plant would be where the plants normally grow. You would not plant water lily on bare, dry soil. Nor would you plant butterfly milkweed in a low, wet area, but you would plant aquatic milkweed in a low wet area.

How to plant is a different question. I suggest a well settled area (not packed). The more settled the better but one year seems to work fine. Most plants like humus and seed seem to like leaf litter. The smaller the seed the finer the leaf litter. The purpose of the litter is to hide the seed from birds and to keep the soil moist so the seed will sprout and the roots penetrate the soil. Plant the seed on top of the litter and shake the litter slightly to get the seed out of sight before the birds see them. This works for me most of the time.

Species have survived thousands of years by planting seed in all type of areas and at all times of the year and being patient. It is said that coconuts float around in the ocean for about seven years before they will germinate. If you are impatient, go ahead and order your plants already blooming size, but it sure is gratifying to grow your own flowers from seed.

- Travis Salley

-from the editor-

This issue concludes my editorship of the MNPS Newsletter. I wish to thank Faye Swan, Robert Stewart, Sidney McDaniel, Evelyn von K. Benham, John Izral, Gwen Perkins, Travis Salley, Jim Wiseman, Richard Johnson and especially Will McDearman for making written contributions to the newsletter this year. Also thanks are due to those who contributed ideas for improvement as well as "gossip" for the "This and That" column. As for those of you who just liked the newsletter and said so; your compliments meant a lot.

As I sit here getting this last issue ready for Faye to type and deliver to the printer, I cannot help but think what a great organization we have. The MNPS has enriched my life both educationally and socially, as I'm sure it has enriched many other lives. But if we have had a great organization for the first three years of our existence, why can't we put our resources to better use and make it even greater? The following are my ideas for doing so:

(1) Become politically involved. The MNPS is primarily an educational service for its membership, and I would like to see it stay that way, but if the people who love nature don't stand up for environmental issues, then who will? And if each of us as an individual carries some political clout, how much more clout could we carry as a group? When we learn that an already rare plant is endangered by a proposed highway, or by a marsh being drained, would it not be appropriate for a spokesperson from the MNPS to call a press conference to make the matter known to the public? Surely we would care enough to at the very least promote a letter writing campaign and perhaps even a television spot to be shown on "free time" would not be beyond our capability. Of course, we don't have to wait for an environmental emergency to become politically active (although all environmental issues are emergencies to some extent). The proposed wilderness at Noxubee would be a good place to start.

(2) Advertise for new members. Face it, relatively few people know we exist. If we had a larger membership, maybe we would have more luck in organizing the regional field trips that Sidney McDaniel suggested. Instead of three or four trips a year, we could have a dozen. We could even get together on "unofficial" trips with other MNPS members who live near our homes. Another advantage of more members would be greater political clout.

Okay, so how do we go about advertising? First, we could distribute memberships forms to state parks, visitor centers on the interstates, and on the Natchez Trace, and various wildife museums. Second, we could each, at our own expense, place membership ads in our local papers giving our home phone number. When people called, we could answer their questions, and, if they seemed interested, send them a membership application.

(3) Look for ways to assist our officers. Except for our nomination committee, we have no committees, so it is all too easy to sit back and let a very few do all the work. Ask yourself, "What have I done to make the MNPS even greater than it is?" And don't give yourself any baloney about being too busy. Just this weekend, I heard about one of our members who is a regular contributor to the newsletter - seems he has children, a wife attending school in a neighboring state, and the school where he is a department head is facing accreditation. Are you busier than he? This person's contributions to the MNPS have been invaluable. If I didn't know him to be so modest, I would like nothing better than to mention his name.

(4) Be even nicer to one another, especially newcomers who are shy. They are like little violets that we step on, on our way to the Mayapple blossoms. You will, I hope excuse me for getting preachy here, but I know from experience that these people are the involuntary loners who soon drop out of an organization without ever really having a chance to contribute. When this happens, we all lose.

- Lowell Newby

The Harrison Foray

The joint Mississippi Native Plant Society/ New Orleans Mycological Society trip to the Harrison Experimental Forest near the Gulf Coast on December 4 and 5, though not a hugh success in terms of the total number of participants (only about thirty were there), was certainly successful in regard to the diversity of mushrooms collected and the expertise of those who attended (definitely not including yours truly). One of the many professional mycologists who was there was Nancy Smith Weber, a research associate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The co-author of three books about mushrooms, she is presently writing A Field Guide for Southern Mushrooms which should be available within the next one and a half to two years. Since Mississippi is still somewhat on the frontier of mushroom study, this is something that we mushroom lovers will be looking forward to.

Partly because of the rainy weather, much of Saturday was spent indoors studying the mushrooms collected by those early birds who had arrived on Friday. Also on Saturday, we were privileged to see a slide presentation of the mushrooms which grow on Mt. Babia Gora in Poland. These slides were shown by Anna Bujakiewicz, a Polish citizen and mycologist who came to this country in April to do post doctoral work at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. By early afternoon, the rain had slowed temporarily to a drizzle, so one foray to a nearby creek was led by Bill Cibula while at the same time another foray to Lake Airy was being conducted by John Izral. On Saturday night we dispersed; some to campgrounds or motels, others to the dorm at the Gulf Coast Research Station, and still others, who lived nearby, to their homes.

Sunday dawned clear and warm so upon meeting back at Harrison at 9:30, a foray to the Pascagoula bottomlands was soon organized under the leadership of Charlie Brenke, an amateur mycologist extraordinaire, who was tremendously helpful in assisting us novices in the identification of the various mushrooms. Most of our success on this foray was on property owned by Pat Vickery, a gracious host and also an amateur naturalist. This trip took several hours during which time two shorter forays were led in the vicinity of the Harrison headquarters by Bill Cibula and Ken Rogers. By the time we were all together again, it was late afternoon so many members had to leave, but those of us who stayed had the treat of seeing an interesting slide presentation of local mushrooms by Bill Cibula.

- Lowell Newby

MISTLETOE, MIS'L toh

Mistletoe is a plant which grows as a parasite on the trunks and branches of various trees. It grows most often on apple trees, and occasionally on oak.

Mistletoe is an evergreen with thickly clustered leaves. It has tiny yellow flowers which bloom in February and March. Birds eat the white, shiny fruits called berries. The seeds of the berries cling to the bills of birds and are scattered when the birds sharpen their bills against the bark of trees. The berries are poisonous to man.

Mistletoe is associated with many traditions and holidays, especially Christmas. Historians say the Druids, or ancient priests of the Celts, cut the mistletoe which grew on the sacred oak, and gave it to the people for charms. In Northern mythology, an arrow made of mistletoe killed Balder, son of the goddess Frigg. Early Eruopean peoples used mistletoe as a ceremonial plant. The custom of using mistletoe at Christmastime probably comes from this practice. In many countries, a person caught standing beneath mistletoe must forfeit a kiss.

Scientific Classification: Mistletoe belongs to he mistletoe family, Loranthaceae. American mistletoe is genus Phoradendron, species P. serotinum. European mistletoe is Viscum album.

- Evelyn von K. Benham

notes from the treasurer

About 15 members have not paid their dues since 1980. This will be the last newsletter they will receive unless they pay their dues pronto. All dues are payable January 1, 1983 for the calendar year 1983. New members that joined after October 1, 1982 are considered paid for 1983.

The Smoky Mountains Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage attracts hundreds of visitors each year. It will be held April 28, 29, 30, 1983 (Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The National Park Service indicates the 1983 Pilgrimage will be similar to the 1982 program. Registration begins at 7:30 A.M. on April 28, 1983 ($5.00 regular and $2.00 for college and high school students). Most trips are limited to 5 to 10 cars. Transportation is not furnished. The 1982 program lists 70 different trips and workshops. For additional information, contact: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (ATTN: Information) Phone 615-436-5615. At this time they do not have plans completed for the 1983 Pilgrimage. If you wish a Gatlinburg Accommodations Directory, dial (toll free - except in TN) 1-800-251-9868 or write, Dept. W.P. Box 527, Gatlinnburg, TN 37738. I have been to the Smoky Mountains several times and enjoyed each trip very much. I have never been there in April but I am planning to go on this Pilgrimage.

- T. Salley

THIS & THAT

Whatever, if any, the character flaws of our membership; gossiping is evidently not one of them because I have recieved no news for the "This and That" column. I have received some personal news from those members who are good enough to correspond with me (I love to have penpals), but since I have been directly chastised by at least one person who says, "You print everything I write," I have become wary of using personal letters as gossip column sources.

I suppose I could let my imagination run wild and invert some really juicy things to write about some of you, but that would probably get me in more trouble than I'm already in with my penpals. Another option would be to write about some of the antics of my wife who is also a MNPS member. You just wouldn't believe some of the things she does - and I wouldn't have to tax my imagination to write about her, but that would most certainly get me in worse trouble still. So for now, this is your bored gossip columnist saying; No news is no news!

- L.N.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight of my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend, a lover near,
I know very well I could not.

- Walt Whitman

LOUISIANA'S BRIARWOOD
THE CAROLINE DORMON NATURE PRESERVE

At the time of her death, in 1971, Caroline Dormon was already a legend. This spry lady was the South's most noted naturalist and her interests extended into forestry, archeology, art, education, and ecology. With her pen and wit as a sword and shield, she spent over sixty-five years of her life fighting ignorance of environmental reality.

Of her victories, Caroline Dormon felt that her greatest accomplishment was the establishment of Louisiana's Kisatchie National Forest. This she achieved at great personal expense.

As an authoress of five books and many magazine articles, Caroline Dormon, the environmental evangelist, practiced what she preached. On her inherited ancestoral . estate, Briarwood, she nurtured a wounded land back to health, with cover crops of Crotalaria spectabilis and Lespedeza cuneata, and then covered it with pines of several species. Where the original forest still stands, she introduced many native shrubs and herbaceous plants from the South, skillfully blending them into natural settings, and so about 1920, she decided to develop Briarwood into a nature preserve.

A pond was built on a small stream and was landscaped with Pinckneya bracteata, given to her by W. W. Ashe, Cliftonia monophylla, Cyrilla racemiflora, Pinus glabra, Kalmia latifolia, Rhododendron austrinum, Orontium aquaticum, Pontederia cordata, and native irises. Every species of azalea native to the south was then planted along the trail that wanders up the hill to the log house. Magnolia macrophylla and Kalmia latifolia accent the curves. In the spring, Erythronium americanum and Trillium sessile dot the forest floor along the trails, and are accented by the foliage of asarum, galax, and Christmas fern. On the slope west of the log house grow Aesculus parvifolia, Hydrangea quercifolia, Calycanthus floridana, Magnolia fraseri, Ribes curvatum, and the rare Torreya taxifolia.

The Bay Garden is a garden of bog plants and an extensive collection of Louisiana Irises. Nestled in with these are three species of Sarracenia. This also provides a perfect place for the Chelone glabra, Acorus calamus, Gentiana saponaria, Ilex cassine, Iris cristata, and several native orchids. On higher ground, Zenobia pulverulenta, Kalmia latifolia, Clethra alnifolia, and Leucothoe catesbaei make a beautiful frame for these.

Caroline Dormon left this living legacy to all future generations, so that they might enjoy a little of what so called "progress" has destroyed so much of.

Briarwood is administered by The Foundation for the Preservation of The Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve. It is cared for by volunteers that act as curator-hosts and guides. It is shown only by guided tours and the time and length depends upon the visitor. Accent can be on any species of plant, medicinal uses, commercial uses, history, or any other interest. There is a picnic area. Briarwood is open the week-ends of April, May, August, and November. Hours are Saturday's 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and Sunday's 12:00 noon to 5:00 P.M. Appointments can be made for most anytime. There is a fee of $4.00 each and group rates are $2.00 each. Questions can be answered by contacting the curator, Richard L. Johnson, Rt. 1, Box 195, Saline, LA.
PH (318) 576-3379.

(Editor's note - Biarwood is located at Readhimer, LA, which is near Saline).

- Richard L. Johnson

Editor's note: The following report from The Wilderness Society, Southeast Regional Office, 3110 Maple Drive, Suite 412, Atlanta, Georgia 30305, was sent in by Robert Stewart who writes, "Thought this might be of value for the newsletter. One of the June field trips went through Noxubee."

---WILDERNESS ALERT---

Proposed Wilderness in Noxubee NWR

The 1964 Wilderness Act requires that the Secretary of the Interior review areas within the National Wildlife Refuge System for possible designation as wilderness.

This type of proposal was made for the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, which is located near you. A report was prepared, as mandated by the Act, and published in 1974. In the report portions of the refuge were recommended for wilderness designation.

These areas remain in the proposal stage. Only an act of Congress can place the recommended areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System. With your assistance these lands can be protected for the enjoyment of generations to come.

The Noxubee Refuge consists of hardwood bottomlands, pine lands, agricultural land, and lakes and streams. The refuge is described as an area that was once depleted and eroded but has been "converted into a healthy, productive and aesthetically pleasing wildlife habitat".

The wildlife in the refuge change with the seasons. In the winter, waterfowl congregate here, in early spring they leave and are replaced by other types of birds. Year-round residents include many kinds of mammal and bird species.

Approximately 90 percent of the Noxubee refuge is commercial timber. Areas proposed for wilderness have been excluded from timbering. They consist of those areas south of Noxubee River designated as compartment 18 (excluding Bluff Lake and Green Timber Reservoir 18).

It is important to note that the wilderness Act is "within and supplemental" to the purpose of the refuge. The primary purpose of the refuge is the conservation and preservation of the local fish and wildlife. Designating portions of the refuge will enhance the quality of the refuge.

If you would like to have wilderness in the refuge there is something you can do about it.

First, send a letter to your Representative expressing your desire to have portions of the refuge designated as wilderness. In your letter suggest that legislation be introduced that will lead to the eventual incorporation of the areas into the National Wildlife Preservation System. You might also send a copy of that letter to your Senators (or perhaps write a separate letter)

Honorable (your Representative)
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

or

Honorable John C. Stennis/Thad Cochran
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

A second suggestion is to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to promote greater public awareness of the problem. Following this up with a meeting with the editorial writers to urge them to support wilderness.

Your support is needed. With your help and letters, portions of the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge will be "permanently preserved in a primative state" for future enjoyment and will be an enduring benefit to the wildlife that inhabit the area.

your 1983 officers

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about membership

Membership Application and Dues Notice - 1983

_____Renewal _____New

Please indicate the class of membership desired and enclose the appropriate dues.

____Regular $5.00 ____Student $2.50
____Family $7.50 ____Sustaining $10.00
____Associate (Out of State) $5.00
____Contributing $25.00 ____Life $75.00

All classes of membership receive the Newsletter. Please make checks payable to Mississippi Native Plant Society. Return this form with payment to the Secretary-Treasurer at the following address: Mr. Travis Salley, 202 North Andrews Avenue, Cleveland, MS 38732.

Be sure to include the following information with your payment:

Name(s)_____
Mailing Address_____
_____
_____
Telephone (not essential)_____

The Mississippi Native Plant Society--a society for anyone interested in the native and naturalized plants occurring in the State of Mississippi.

MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
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