MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

March 1982

The Platanthera (Orchidaceae) of Mississippi

Of the 36 species of orchids native to Mississippi, nine belong to the genus Platanthera (Habenaria according to some treatments). These are perennial, often tuberous plants that have a few or many flowers borne on a raceme or single unbranched flowering stalk. Many of the Platanthera can be characterized as wetland species, although only a few absolutely require wetland habitat for survival. None of these species could be considered as common throughout Mississippi, so to search for and discover them in native habitat is a special experience. In fact, five of these species have been placed as either "Threatened" or "Rare" on Mississippi's Special Plant List by a committee of botanists. The Platanthera are more varied in flower color than any of the other orchid genera in Mississippi with white, greenish-white, green yellow, yellowish-orange, and orange corollas. Flower color considered alone is usually insufficient to distinguish or identify a plant, but with the addition of a few other easy to observe characters, a modified key which emphasizes color can be used to identify the Platanthera of Mississippi.

Margins of lip (largest petal) fringed or deeply lacerate (appearing torn).

Lip divided into 3 main segments.

Flowers greenish-white . . . . . 1. P. lacera
green-fringed orchid

Flowers rose-purple . . . . . 2. P. peramoena
purple-fringeless orchid

Lip with one primary segment.

Flowers pure white . . . . . 3. P. blephariglottis var. conspicua
large white-fringed orchid

Flowers orange or yellowish-orange.

Spur longer than the pedicel . . . . . 4. P. ciliaris
yellow-fringed orchid

Spur equal to or shorter than pedicel . . . . . 5. P. cristata
crested-fringed orchid

Margins of lip entire or at most finely toothed, not fringed, not lacerate.

Flowers white . . . . . 6. P. nivea
snowy orchid

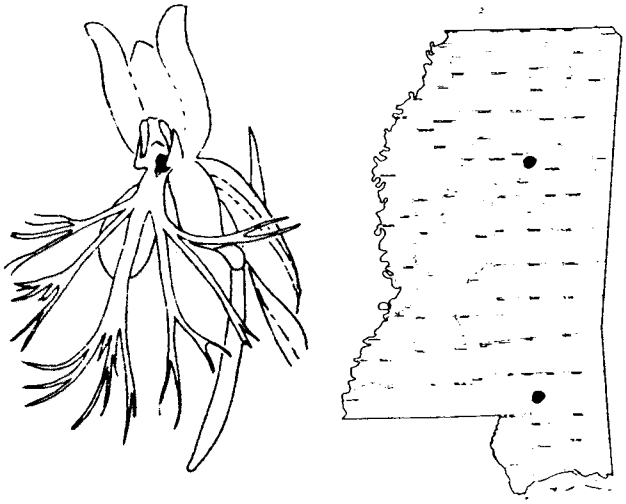
Flowers pale green, yellowish-green.

Lip apex shallowly three-lobed . . . . . 7. P. clavellata
small green wood orchid

Lip apex entire, not lobed . . . . . 8. P. flava
southern tubercled orchid

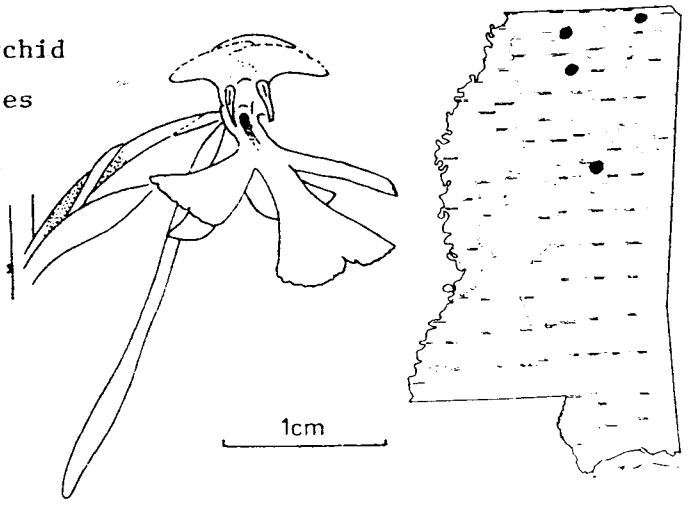
Flowers orange to yellowish-orange . . . . . 9. P. integra
yellow-fringeless orchid

1. P. lacera green-fringed orchid
Although this is a very common orchid in the northeastern U.S., it has only been seen from two sites in Mississippi and is considered to be a threatened species. It may grow to a foot in height, but is usually inconspicuous with its greenish flowers. The habitat can range from moist open ditches, fields, and woods.
Flowering: June

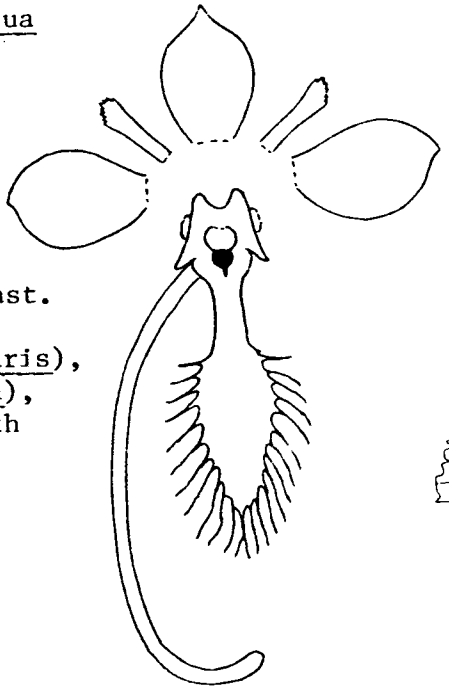


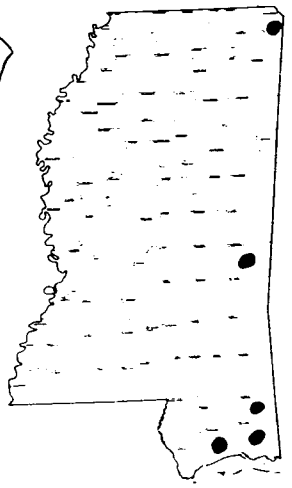
2. P. peramoena purple-fringless orchid

This attractive purple-flowered species is listed as Rare in Mississippi, known from only localities. It occurs primarily in wet deciduous wooded bottomlands and swamps in north Mississippi. This is a hardy species, growing up to 3 feet in height, and should be easily recognized in the field.
Flowering: late June-July



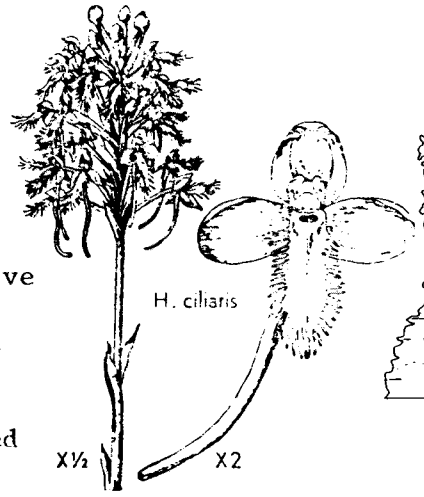
3. P. blephariglottis var. conspicua
large white-flowered orchid

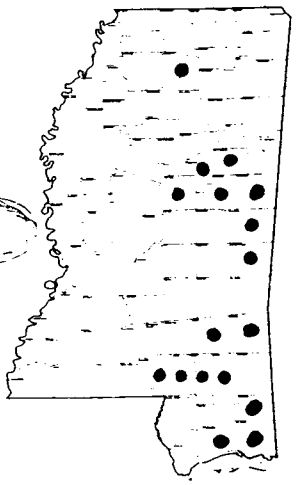




Another species classified as Rare in Mississippi, this is a tall (3') beautiful orchid with brilliant white flowers. This is a very conspicuous plant where mostly found in pitcher plant bogs, wet meadows, and savannahs near the coast. Its habitat coincides with that of the yellow-fringed orchid (P. ciliaris), crested-fringed orchid (P. cristata), and snowy-orchid (P. nivea) in south Mississippi
Flowering: mid-August to mid-Sept.

4. P. ciliaris yellow-fringed orchid

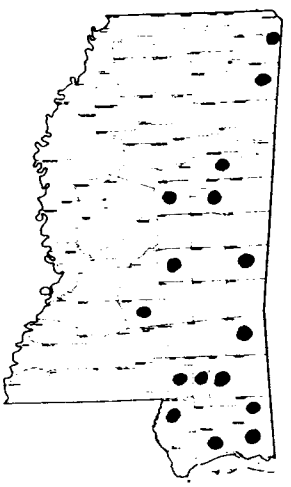




This is the most abundant and widely distributed Platanthera of Mississippi, but it is by no means a "common" plant. You should still expect a considerable search before finding a population. It is more concentrated in the distinctive pitcher plant bogs and wet meadows-savannahs near the coast. Elsewhere, it may be found in moist ditches or along seeps beneath a mixed pine-hardwood or hardwood forest type. The yellow-fringed and large white-fringed orchid are the largest Platanthera's of Miss.
Flowering: mid-July through August

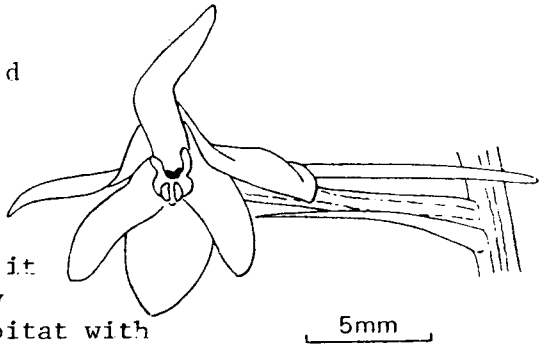
5. P. cristata crested-fringed orchid

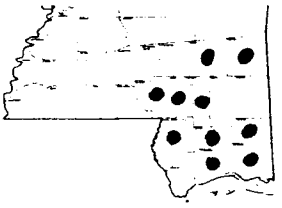




The status of the sporadically occurring crested-fringed orchid is Rare in Mississippi. It will most likely be confused with the yellow-fringed orchid, but can be distinguished by its smaller flowers and short flower spur. It is most common in damp woods, but can be expected from swamps and moist open fields as well.
Flowering: July to mid-August

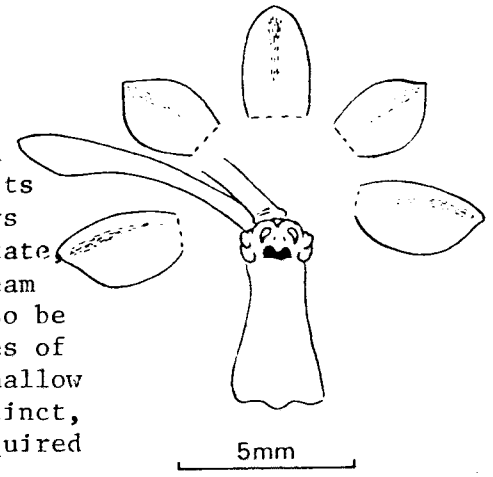
6. P. nivea snowy-orchid

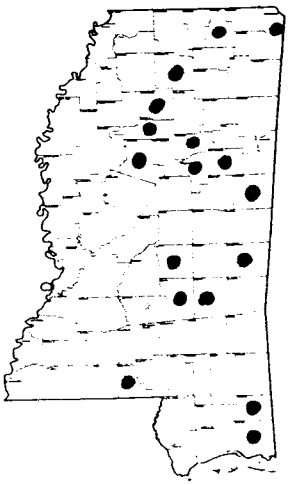




This species is strictly limited to pitcher plant bogs, and wet pine savannahs of south Miss. Although small (ca. 6"), it is often prolific and may visually dominate its habitat with white flowering racemes.
Flowering: June to early-August

7. P. clavellata
small green wood orchid

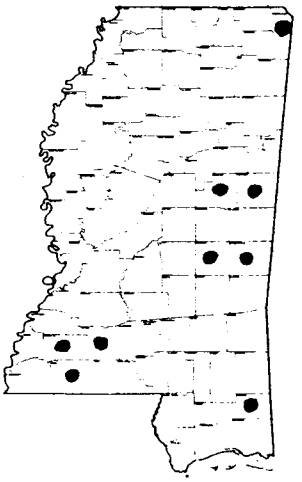




In heavy vegetation, this is a well camouflaged orchid with its small green flowers. It occurs infrequently throughout the state and inhabits seeps, shady stream banks, and swamps. It may also be found on rich, sheltered slopes of deciduous woods. The three shallow lobes of the lip can be indistinct, and a 10X hand lens may be required for a positive identification.
Flowering: mid-July to mid-August

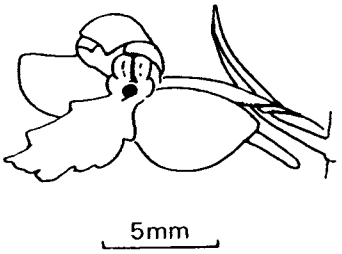
8. P. flava southern tubercled orchid





This is another small, inconspicuously green-flowered Platanthera. Unless a large colony is formed, it may be difficult to immediately spot in the field. Its habitat is essentially the same as the small green wood orchid (P. clavellata). Platanthera flava and P. clavellata closely resemble each other, but can be distinguished otherwise by examining the tip of the flower lip.
Flowering: late June - July

9. P. integra yellow-fringeless orchid





No other Platanthera has a range more restricted than the yellow-fringeless orchid in Mississippi. It is confined wholly to pitcher plant bogs, wet savannahs, and moist slash pine flats from the longleaf pine belt or coastal pine meadows in extreme south Mississippi. Classified as Rare, this small (6" and often less) plant , even with its orange flowers, can easily be overlooked.
Flowering: July-August

If you know of any occurrences for these Threatened or Rare species, please contact an officer of the MMNPS. All of these species should be protected. Many orchids obtain essential nutrients by a soil-root inhabiting fungus (mycorhizal associate). Transplanting disturbs this relationship so the plant usually dies. Transplant only if the habitat is going to be destroyed. The illustrations were taken from the following books that may be of interest:

The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada. Carlyle A. Luer. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. 1975

Missouri Orchids. Bill Summers. Missour Department of Conservation Natural History Series No. 1. 1981.

New Britton & Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. H.A. Gleason. Hafner Publishers. 1975. Also from Dover Publishers in paperback.

The species list and distribution maps were prepared after curators of the following herbaria granted me access to their collections: University of Mississippi, Institute for Botanical Exploration, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi, Delta State University, and the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

Will McDearman
Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.

Endangered Wildflower Calendar

Endangered plants now may be given lower priority than endangered amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds and mammals by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fewer than half a dozen additional plants are expected to be officially listed as threatened or endangered during the coming year, even though as many as 3,000 are believed to need protection. The listing process is so slow partly because funding for the Federal Endangered Species Program was cut by a third as of October 1, 1981. The coming year will be an important one for endangered plants because the Endangered Species Act may be severely weakened by revisions expected to start in Congress this January.

Three thousand kinds of American wild flowers - one out of every ten native to the U.S. - are threatened with extincti by man's activities. More than fifty have already disappeared. Information about the causes of this problem, and strategies for conservation, are provided in the Endangered Wild Flower Calendar described below. The calendar includes an invitation for people to support and cooperate with botanical gardens and societies in their recovery efforts.

The calendar was produced by members of the New York Botanical Garden, New England Wild Flwoer Society, North Carolina Botanical Garden, Tennessee Native Plant Society, Hobby Greenhouse Association, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum,California Native Plant Society, and Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, with assistance from botanists of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Federal Endangered Species Program. Funds raised from sales will benefit both regional and national conservation programs.

The calendar is 10¼" x 17" when opened and includes;

- fourteen attractive, full-color photographs of endangered plants in their native habitats, with species from each section of the country.
- information about the habitat, unique features, reasons for endangerment and recovery plans for each of the flowers shown.
- a map of the U.S. showing the number of endangered plant species in each state.
- a list of selected reading material.
- full page calendars with space for notes each day of the month.

Calendars can be obtained by Sending $5 to Rare and Endangered Native Plant Exchange, c/o New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, N.Y. 10458. Please add 50¢ per calendar to cover mailing costs.

From the President

This is your society! I and everyone else would welcome your suggestions as to how to make it better. Personally, I have been pleased and even surprised at the rapid development of the Mississippi Native Plant Society. We now have after only a few years a very respectable number of active members. I am confident we will continue to grow both in total numbers and in activity and become one of the best state organizations of our type in the country.

Now I should share with you some of my thoughts as to our future objectives. Again I want to emphasize that each and every member is to be encouraged to make his or her opinions known. First, I am sure that most members would agree that field trips will always play an important role in the society. We will continue to have a number of trips each year in which all members will hopefully have an opportunity to take part. These should be geographically balanced so that all sections of the state are represented. However, I believe that a number of smaller more local trips would be useful so that members in an area are given an opportunity to know better their own local plants. I hope we can plan a number of these this year and your suggestions are welcome.

Second, I feel the society should take an active part in conservation of our plant heritage. This should primarily be through habitat preservation. Mississippi is fortunate in still having most of its original diversity. Unfortunately, this may not continue indefinitely. However, the State of Mississippi is one of the leaders in our area in locating and preserving unique areas. Other private organizations such as the Crosby Arboretum are also active. What I would hope members to do if they know of unusual habitats in their area is to share this information. I would be glad to pass this information on the the appropriate agency or person. Most landowners are quite willing to cooperate in one of the many ways that preservation can occur.

Third, education, in my opinion, should play an important part in the society. Members can help by giving talks or conducting field trips for local groups such as high school classes or civic organizations. Appreciation of our plant heritage must start on the local level. Mississippians have long had a love of the out-of-doors. We need only to encourage this to have a better understanding of the role of plants. Also I hope that over the next few years a number of illustrated handbooks or manuals to various groups or geographic areas will become available. This I believe will be a help both for members and the general public. In the coming years, increased knowledge and appreciation of plants will hopefully develop through the efforts of all including the Mississippi Native Plant Society.

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of every member to the socity. You may disagree with what I have written or have additional ideas. All are encouraged to share these ideas with me and other members. As I stated earlier, this is your society.

Sidney McDaniel

New Officers 1982

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Travis Salley
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Editor

Lowell Newby
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Uncle Lowell's Kitchen

Being in the woods for over two hours makes one hungry, yet most purchased snack foods are either too bulky, too perishable, too mashable, too expensive, or in one way or another, gustatorily unsatisfying. Hence "Uncle Lowell's Kitchen", the answer to your middle of the day/middle of the woods dietary rut. Each recipe that you find in "Uncle Lowell's Kitchen" can be tried with complete confidence because it is one that Uncle Lowell himself has made and eaten many, many times. My first recipe is for some easy to make trail bread which is good enough to eat all by itself and which will keep for several weeks even at room temperature. bhis recipe came to me by way of an Episcopal priest who said that it is used as communion bread in many churches.

Ingredients

4½ cups whole wheat flour
pinch of salt
1 egg yolk
½ cup oil
½ cup honey
1¼ cups lukewarm water

Put the flour in a large bowl. Add and mix the other ingredients in the order listed. Wary the amount of water used so that the dough is neither dry nor soggy. Divide the dough inot manageable hunks. Take one of the hunks and roll it out on a well-floured board until the dough is ¼" thick. Cut the rolled out dough into the desired sizes and shapes (I use an upturned water glass for my cutter). Repeat with the other hunks. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets at 325° for 11-12 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to harden. Timing is essential with this bread. If you cook it until it "looks done", it will have a burned taste.

Variations

1. Use another type of flour or mix different flour together.
2. Vary the amount of honey
3. I like my bread super chewy so on one occasion I deleted thee-g yolk and substituted water for the oil. I came out with a bread so though that no one would eat it except me and the dog, and the dog complained of a cracked tooth.

NEXT ISSUE: BEEF JERKY

Next MNPS Field Trip

The first 1982 MNPS field trip is scheduled for the April 16-18 weekend at Tishomingo State Park in northeastern Mississippi. This will be a joint outing with the Jackson Audubon Society; botanizing and birding have been scheduled at separate times for those who would like to participate in both. A popular state park, Tishomingo is known for its beautiful and unusual scenery. The steep topography, boulder outcrops, and walls of Paleozoic limestone and shale impart a distinctive Appalachian effect to the area. The flora in the park, especially the wildflowers, is rich and diverse. Some of these plants range through the Appalachians, and are known in Mississippi from only a few northeastern area as Tishomingo where rich habitat has been left undisturbed. Dr. Sidney McDaniel and Dr. Tom Pullen will lead our groups, and Fred Searcy, author of "Ferns and Wildflowers of Tishomingo State Park" will also lead if he becomes free of a prior commitment. This will be a beautiful field trip, so please come. The MNPS welcomes guests and non-members. We have accomodations for our group and meals - see insert.

THE FIRST DANDELION

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's
close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business,
politics, had ever been,
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd
grass - innocent, golden, calm as
the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its
trustful face.

Walt Whitman

NOTICE !

Had any babies lately? Received any awards - diplomas, citations, honorariums, early parole for good behavior? Why not share the news through your newsletter. We are interested.

BOOK REVIEW

An Illustrated Guide to Tidal Marsh Plants of Mississippi and Adjacent States. Lionel N. Eleuterius. Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Ocean Springs MS 39564. 1980. 130pgs.

To identify a plant or find a list of a local flora in Mississippi is always discouraging to the student and layperson when their only reference is a large regional flora which may include thousands of species and is clearly intended for the advanced student and professional. With this special concern, Dr. Eleuterius brings part of his knowledge on salt marsh plant ecology to the interested public with the first illustrated guide ever published on the entire flora of an ecosystem or distinctive region occuring in Mississippi. The guide specifically covers 200 plant species that inhabit Mississippi tidal marshes. In the table of contents, the species with common names are listed according to family. The main text follows and includes a description of each plant, a note on its distribution, and a pen and ink illustration. Although many of the illustrations are superb, some are simplistic in form and lack adequate detail for easy field recognition. Overall, there is a favorable balance, and the illustrations will accurately portray to the more traditional terrestrial plant enthusiast a new and interesting aquatic flora. Other sections in the guide include a description of the tidal marsh plant community, a historical perspective of the region, and a comment on conservation of our estuaries. I highly recommend this guide for MNPS members - it is printed on high quality paper, and they are free upon your request. Contact the Botany Section, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS.

Will McDearman

Vascular Flora of Washington County, Mississippi, and Environs. Charles R. Gunn et al. Science and Education Administration, USDA, New Orleans, 1980. Available from the Bioenvironmental Insect Control Laboratory, P.O. Box 225, Stoneville, Mississippi 38766.

This flora lists 669 species of vascular plants as occurring in Washington County and five adjacent counties. A general description of vegetation types is given with lists of common species in each type. Keys to families and species are provided along with an annotated list of species, but there are no illustrations of species. The keys are inconsistent in usefulness, giving only one characteristic for comparison at each couplet in many keys. While this is not a source of confusion in some keys, it is inadequate in many. I have examined a limited number of voucher specimens deposited at the Southern Weed Science Laboratory in Stoneville and was surprised at the number of misidentifications. Quercus imbricaria (shingle oak) and Q. coccinea (scarlet oak) are listed in this flora but do not occur in the Mississippi Delta. This is an important publication since, as the authors noted, it is the first annotated catalog with keys of Delta plants. It is an important addition to the library of someone interested in the flora of the Delta, but should not be used by itself for species identifications.

Jim Wiseman

ABBREVIATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance on hand, Jan. 1, 1981	$273.79
Cash received (dues) in 1981	532.00
	$805.79
Expenses for 1981 (newsletter, postage)	$189.49
Balance on hand, Jan. 1, 1982	616.30
	$805.79

Travis Salley

From the Editor

Will McDearman has served as the editor of this newsletter since its beginning in 1980 up through the preceding issue. Well its my job now, and I'm afraid I bring darned little talent to the enterprise. My main qualifications are an interest in plants and the desire to be a good editor. Also, I might add, a hearty affection for my readership.

Of course, this newlsetter is not a one person proposition. I owe special credit to two guys who I will haughtily refer to as my "staff". They are Will McDearman and Robert Stewart. Will is in charge of having the newsletter typed and prined and Robert has agreed to take care of the folding, addressing and mailing. There are others among you who will be getting requests to write articles as the months progress, but why wait to be asked? You know what you have to offer better than I. If you have knowledge to share about a native or a naturalized plant, its identity, reproductive characteristics, use as a food, medicine, dye, etc, its place in the ecosystem, its place in art, poetry, history, its aesthetic qualities,its habitat, etc, etc, etc, then share your knowledge with us. And don't think that you have to be a scientist to make a contribution. We want to hear from you.

Lowell Newby

Wildflower Exhibit

The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science will be displaying the watercolors of Evelyn v. K. Benham during the months of March and April. Featured in this exhibit will be wildflowers native to Mississippi such as the Elderberry, Goldenrod, Buttonbush and Wild Azalea.

Mrs. Benham was born in Nicaragua and came to the United States at the age of six. At an early age she grew to appreciate the beauty of wildflowers..Mrs. Benham says that her parents loved wildflowers. "Secondly",says Mrs. Benham, "the flowers were free. They came bringing their gifts of loveliness for all of us. They were unafraid, enduring, real. These qualities I wanted to be part of my life."

After taking a correspondence art course and attending junior college, Mrs. Benham went to the University of Southern Mississippi. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Art Education and Fine Arts in May 1976 at the age of sixty.

Mrs. Benham's wish to all who visit the wildflower exhibit is that, "...you will love these flower pictures as much as I did in drawing and painting them and realize what a wonderful free heritage we all possess in the flowers of the wild."

The Museum hopes to make a traveling exhibit from this display so that even more people throughout the area will be able to join Mrs. Benham in her appreciation of wildflowers.

Membership

The following is a membership list as of January 1. 1982. Remember, it's time for renewing annual dues. For additions, corrections, etc., contact Travis Salley.

Faye A. Swan
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Lorene Everett
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Mary Boggs
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Mrs. Vary T. Greaves
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Gray & Judy Carlisle
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Only eight written responses to the proposed logos have been received by the secretary. Of these, six prefer number 4 (outline of state with plant). Numbers 1 and 2 each received a vote. These responses along with a few verbal comments suggest a preference for a logo similar to number 4. However, some favoring this style would like to see certain minor modifications. What shall we do?

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