
MISSISSIPPI NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY
JUNE 1988



SCHIZANDRA
Schizandra glabra

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The spring may have been unusually (and pleasantly) cool, but the summer of '88 has been a bear! Roadside and meadow natives are suffering from the drought like all the rest of us.

The date for the Summer Seminar, to be held again in Jackson, has been set for the hottest month possible (to take advantage of free air conditioning). Mark your calendar, and tell all the folks you know who are interested, for SATURDAY, AUGUST 20. We realize that August is "vacation month" for many, but that date is the best we could agree upon.

The meeting will again be at the Hinds Extension Service auditorium, besides Hinds General Hospital off Raymond Road in South Jackson. It is easy to find, without more explicit directions. It will begin at 1:30, and should last for a couple of hours or so. There may be a workshop afterwards, involving the setting out of a few plants at the proposed Wildflower Meadow at the Jackson Zoo. We haven't worked out the details yet, but should shortly.

Halla Jo Ellis, Wildflower Chairman for the Gardens Clubs of Mississippi and a past president of the MNPS, hopes to co-sponsor this seminar and also the "ground-breaking" for the Wildflower Meadow.

The speakers will include Landscape Architect Edward L. Blake, also Director of The Crosby Arboretum, presenting a two-projector slide show on the use of native plants in the garden and landscape design. Ed is a master of communication and his talk will be both practical and aesthetic.

Also on the agenda will be John Allen Smith, founder of Homochitto Outdoors, which is, among other things, the company behind the Mississippi Wildflower seeds and calendars seen recently. John Allen has some striking observations and ideas to share with us.

I have taken the liberty of putting myself on the program again, to present the how-to-grow talk prepared for last year, but not presented because the program got too long. I will try to touch on nuts and bolts, rather than mere varieties.

Ed, John Allen, Halla Jo, and I will be finalizing plans at the Native Plant Symposium at Cullowhee, North Carolina. I know of at least seven Mississippians who are already registered for that three-day meeting, and I suspect that there are others.

See you in August.

SIMPSON COUNTY FIELD TRIP

The threat of rain apparently reduced attendance for the second MNPS field trip on April 30 to Simpson County to a total of ten people. The weather was actually excellent for a field trip and a number of plants were seen in flowers including pipevine (Aristolochia tomentosa Sims), wild camellia (Stewartia malacodendron L.), spider milkweed (Asclepias viridis Walter), candyroot (Polygala nana (Michx.) DC.), dwarf sundew (Drosera brevifolia Pursh), sundrops (Oenothera fruticosa L.), rockrose (Helianthemum carolinianum (Walter) Michx.), fetterbush (Leucothoe axillaris (Lam.) D. Don), coral honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens L.), bigleaf snowbell (Styrax grandifolia Ait.), Solomons seal (Polygonatum biflorum (Walt.) Ell—some plants were four to five feet tall), red buckeye (Aesculus pavia L.), fringetree (Chionanthus virginicus L.), and wisteria (Wisteria frutescens (L.) Poir.).

Among the species seen at some stage of fruiting were two-winged silverbell (Halesia diptera Ellis), dwarf pawpaw (Asimina parviflora (Michx.) Dun.), and bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis L.).

Those who attended the trip in this area a few years ago may recall the very large southern magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora L.) near the Bush cabin on the Strong River. We saw it again and a few miles upstream a sweetbay (Magnolia virginiana L.) that measured approximately two feet in diameter. Several toothache-trees (Zanthoxylum clava-herculis L.) were found, one of which had flower buds low enough for easy viewing.

We visited a miniature, gravel-soiled seep on a highly disturbed site that supported small populations of dwarf sundew, candyroot, colic-root (Aletris sp.) and yellow-eyed grass (Xyris sp.) which together suggested a more southern or coastal setting.

Lunch was eaten on the hard, water-carved sand of the Catahoula Formation where a small stream enters the Strong River just upstream from the Chappell Bridge. The slightly elevated stage of the river prevented us from seeing the river-weed (Podostemum ceratophyllum Michx.) normally visible there.

For those travelling toward Jackson, a final stop was made in the Dabbs Creek bottom to see the uncommon needle-palm (Rhabidophyllum hystrix (Pursh) Wendell and Drude) found there by Will McDearman.—Robert Stewart

GRENADA FIELD TRIP

Attendees were Philip and Katharine Barbour, Robert Stewart, Stephen Stanfill, Travis Salley, Sr. Cathryn Kever, Jim Cummins, John Greer, Vic Rudis, and our guide Wayne Morris. We met at McDonald's at 8:30 May 21. By 8:50 we were off to the woods and would not get back until 5:00 PM.

Our first stop was an upland mesophytic forest, some of which was on bluffs south of Cane Creek. Plants in flower included jack-in-the-pulpit, oakleaf hydrangea, white baneberry and sweet cicely. While not in flower, other notables included horsetails (Equisetum hyemale and E. arvense [a rarity]), Allegheny spurge, yellow lady's slipper, scarlet woodbine (Schizandra glabra). Also present were white walnut, pawpaw, cucumber magnolia, wood nettle, several ferns including broad beech fern, maidenhair fern, Christmas fern, and sensitive fern, spicebush, honewort, and ginseng. Other short stops included Indian pink (Spigelia marilandica) and pipevine (Aristolochia tomentosa)- both in flower and quite impressive.

Lunch was at Grenada Lake. One of the bonuses of being on field trips is that we can compare propagation notes, collect seeds from colonies of abundant individuals, and learn about related naturalist activities. We enjoyed Philip Barbour's account of the pipevine butterfly and his collection of butterfly larvae. Travis Salley is particularly helpful with information on practical methods of propagation. On this occasion Travis also gave away more than a dozen plants that he grew from seed or thinned from those in his garden.

In the afternoon we saw white indigo (Baptisia leucantha) in flower in a roadside meadow along with several grasses, a viney form of milkweed, and water hemlock. Our last stop of the day was spent in a family woodlot (rich deciduous woods in the North Central Plateau). Notables in flower included some large specimens of bigleaf magnolia. Also present were snake-root, cinnamon fern, southern lady fern, turks-cap lily, lousewort, chestnut, witch hazel, Walter's violet, and hounds-tongue, among others. Of interest to me was that one of the family members came with us. He helped us visualize the history of the forest through his knowledge and first hand experience. We in turn helped him identify many of the plants he not noticed before.

While this field trip was one of the longest I have been on, it was well worth the time. The weather was good and Wayne Morris was an excellent guide. His knowledge of the area and plant species was nearly encyclopedic, yet he always had the patience to answer questions and consider other people's comments.— Vic Rudis

NOTE FROM SECRETARY-TREASURER

Our fourth issue of the newsletter this year will be a directory of members, with names, addresses, and telephone numbers. We may also include a list of nurseries (mail-order or local nurseries) that specialize in native seeds or plants. Let me hear from you by October 1 if you have had any experience with garden seed or nursery retailers that do a good job of supplying native species.

Vic Rudis, Secretary-Treasurer, MNPS

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FIELD TRIPS

The next scheduled field trip will be Saturday October 22. We will meet at the intersection of I-20 and MS15 at 9:00 AM. in Newton for our final trip of the year. A short business meeting is proposed midst the sandwiches at noon underneath the Chunky River Bridge. Botanically we should see some interesting areas in Lauderdale, Jasper, and Newton counties. SM

MID-SOUTH NATIVE PLANT MEETING

One of the aims of the organizers of the Cullowhee native plant conference is to produce regional offspring. In October, the first of those meeting will be held in Memphis. It is aimed at the non-professional and will concentrate on landscaping with native plants found in the alluvial and loessial soils of the region.

Date and place are October 28-29 for the conference followed by a field trip on Sunday, October 30. The meeting will be in the Student Union Ballroom at Memphis State University. If you would like like more information contact:

Larry Wilson
Mid-South Native Plant Society
Lichterman Nature Center
5992 Quince road
Memphis, TN 38119

Let's have a good turnout for this meeting. If it follows in the footsteps of the parent meeting, it will be well worth your time.—Sherrie Wiygul

NATIVE AND NATURALIZED PLANTS OF MISSISSIPPI-II

Prairie or gray-headed coneflower

Ratibida pinnata

This perennial member of the aster family is currently in bloom. You will recognize it by its cylindrical disk and hanging yellow ray flowers. The disk, which darkens to brown as the ray flowers fall, exudes an anise-like odor when bruised. Its narrow leaves are pinnately divided with 3-7, usually odd-numbered segments.

Because of its height (about 3 ft) and long blooming season (June-September), this plant would make a good choice for the back of a border or naturalizing. This coneflower flourishes in calcareous prairies, dry woods, and roadsides far north into Canada. It shares with other members of its family a forgiving nature, tolerating drought and neglect but not shade.

Seeds are carried in nutlets arranged on the disk. About a month after flowering, seed can be collected and held for planting the following season or immediately planted. As

is true of other wildflower seed, germination rates may be low, so be generous with the seed.

Prairie coneflower combines well with introduced Queen Anne's lace, Liatris elegans or L. squarrosa (blazing star or gay feather), and butterfly weed. It also makes a fine cut flower. It have not been able to find a commercial seed source for this species. If anyone knows of such a source, please let us known and we will list it in the next newsletter.—Sherrie Wiygul

EDITORS NOTE: I will try to gather enough seed to make a dozen or so packets. They will be available for the asking at the October field trip. SM