

March 1992

NATIVES PLEASE! - by Vic Rudis, Starkville

There is one recent discovery I just have to share with the MNPS that will not wait for the quarterly newsletter. On Saturday, February 29, I visited my local county Co-operative to pick up a supply of seed-starting materials. I was in for a BIG surprise.

You see, when I travel to new places, I look in the phone book for nurseries--always with the hope of finding native species at reasonable prices. I usually rattle off a few native species I am looking for, and the manager says, "I never heard of it!" or stiffly, "Sorry, but we carry only what is popular in the trade." Others say, "Gee, that's a great plant, but I have been unable to find a source for it." Still others offer small plants with hefty price tags. When asked why it is so expensive, the manager says it is shipped in from the West Coast and demand is low.

This day my local nursery was different. I saw Florida maple, Florida anise, Wahoo, Styrax, Halesia, Cotinus obovatus, Chionanthus, Fothergilla, Gordonia, Franklinia, Carpinus caroliniana, Mayhaw, Parsley Hawthorn, Pinckneya, Persea, uncommon Oak sp., Rhus sp. and much much more. Herbaceous perennials included Aster, Hypericum, Helianthus, and the manager said more was on the way. And most were at prices typical of "ordinary" plants in the nursery trade. Nearly all had good root growth and were good-sized nursery grown specimens. And it was within a few miles of my residence. I was in heaven!

The place is the Oktibbeha County Co-op/Cloverleaf Garden Center (601-323-1742) located in Starkville (on Highway 12 just southwest of the new Walmart and Starkville Crossing Shopping Mall). John Davis is the new nursery manager.

There are similar nurseries and garden centers in Mississippi and adjacent States that cater to hobby gardeners and specialize in natives, but only a handful. I've been told that Robert Poore, the noted landscape architect, has a nursery in Flora, MS. Picayune, MS has the Crosby Arboretum. In Memphis, TN it is Trees by Touliatos, near the airport. Lichterman Nature Center, also in Memphis, periodically offers seedlings of woody species and a limited supply of perennials as an offshoot of its educational and scientific role. In Arkansas, see Larry Lowman of Ridgecrest Nursery in Wynne, AR. In Louisiana there are native nurseries in Covington (John Mayronne), Amite, and elsewhere.

Local retail mail-order nurseries for natives are available in Meridian (Flowerplace Plant Farm, Richard Lowery and Gail Barton) and Meadville (Homochitto Outdoors--seeds only, John Allen Smith). Woodlanders, in Aiken, SC, carries the widest selection of mail-order-sized plants. Check your December 1988 MNPS issue for addresses and phone numbers, or call directory assistance in the cities listed.

Crosby Arboretum, May 9 & 10. On May 9 and 10, we will visit Crosby Arboretum, one of the premier arboreta of the southeast, located at Picayune, Mississippi. The distinctive feature of Crosby Arboretum is its natural area concept. It displays fascinating plants as individuals, but more important, and frequently more interesting, is that visitors will view plants and their interactions as plant communities.

The arboretum has 10 designated natural areas that range in size from forty to 640 acres. It has two pitcher plant bogs, the larger of which includes a small pine savannah and at least two rare orchid species. The plants in these bogs should be in bloom at the time of our visit. It has a beech/magnolia forest, natural stands of Atlantic white cedar, a cypress/tupelo swamp, as well as upland longleaf pine forests. Bill Dodd, who is well-versed in gardens and arboreta of the world, first recommended that our society visit Crosby Arboretum. Others who have seen Crosby Arboretum have seconded Bill's recommendation. Our week-end at Crosby Arboretum should be an enjoyable and informative one.

This will be a joint meeting of The Alabama Wildflower Society and the Mississippi Native Plant Society and will include a plant sale. Visiting friends and discussing native plants with members of MNPS always makes for a stimulating exchange of information and an enjoyable time. Every AWS + MNPS member should bring at least one plant for the sale. One which is not as common in Mississippi as in Alabama would be especially appropriate.

We will meet on Saturday morning, May 9, from 8:00 to 9:00 at the Magnolia Steakhouse in downtown Picayune for coffee and cookies and registration. At 9:00 we will leave Picayune for nearby Crosby Arboretum and spend the day there. Bring picnic lunches for Saturday and Sunday. Chris Wells, Crosby Arboretum Botanist, will be our guide and will be in charge of the evening program.

The Saturday night banquet will be at Magnolia Steakhouse at 6:00. Price of the meal will be \$11.00 (which will also cover the morning refreshments). There will be a choice of stuffed flounder, baked chicken or shish kebab. Mark your choice on the reservation form at end of this newsletter and send it and your check to Dottie Elam, Treasurer (address on form).

On Sunday morning from 8:00 to 8:30 we will meet at Pinecote, the Crosby Arboretum's Native Plant Center, located at the intersection of I59 and Hwy. 43. There will be two options for Sunday. One will be to spend the morning with Chris Wells seeing more of Crosby Arboretum. The other option will be to join a group from the Mississippi Native Plant Society for a visit to Ragland Hills, an area of beech/magnolia forests noted for its native plants. Ragland Hills is located near Hattiesburg which is on the route home for most of us coming from Alabama.

Picayune is a small town with no single motel large enough to accommodate our group. Consequently, each of us will make his own reservations with one of the three motels listed below. The three motels and Magnolia Steakhouse are all within a mile or two of the intersection of Hwys. 43 and 11, and near Exit 4 of I 59. In making reservations, identify yourself as a member of AWS. Motels and their prices are:

Heritage Inn. Ph. 601-798-8874. Prices: Queen-size room= 1 bed-\$38.50; two people-2 beds=\$42.50; 2beds-4 people= \$45. Single room, 1 bed-1person =36.50; 1 bed-2 people=38.50. The above prices would have tax added but also a 5% discount.

Majestic Inn, 999 Cooper Rd., I59 Exit 6, Hwy 43, Picayune MS, Ph. 601-798-3857.
Prices: Single Room, 1 person= \$32.50; double room - 2 people= \$34.50.
Extra person over 6 years=\$4.00; Cable TV= \$2.00. Tax would be added
to the above prices.

Picayune Motel, at Exit 6 on I59, Picayune, MS. Tel. # 601-798-7508.
Prices: 1 person, 1 bed= \$28; 1 bed-2 people= \$30; 2 beds-2 people = \$32.
These prices include tax. A deposit of one-half the above prices is necessary
to hold rooms. In making reservations, ask for Cecil Whittaker.

For those arriving on May 8, meet at Pinecote for a slide show
(scheduled for 7:00 PM). If it rains we'll make other plans. Check
for messages at the Heritage Inn or Magnolia Steakhouse if it
rains.

Mississippi Native Plant Society Activities

REMINDER. Join us for fellowship and fun! For more information,
contact Vic Rudis at 601-324-0430 (evenings and weekends). Don't
forget the following meetings:

April 4 Sturgis, MS. Meet 8:45 AM Jackson's Grocery, Hwy 12.
Noxubee Crest and Tombigbee National Forest Natural Area.

April 23 Brookhaven, MS. Meet 9:00 AM Regional Library. 833-6600.

April 24-25 Meridian, MS. Flowerplace Plant Farm Tour. 482-5686.

May 8-10 Spring Meeting and Plant Sale. See this interim notice.

May 16 Sessums, MS. Meet 8:00 AM for fellowship and volunteer
work. 10:00 AM Public Tour. 80 acre Botanical Garden of the
South.

RESERVATIONS FOR BANQUET MEAL AT PICAYUNE ON MAY 9

To: Dottie Elam, 240 Ivy Lane, Auburn, AL 36830 Tel. # 887-5356

Dear Dottie: Enclosed is my check in amount of \$_____ for _____ banquet
dinners, each \$11.00, at Picayune on May 9. My choice(s) of meat for the
meal is (are) stuffed flounder_____, chicken_____, shish kebab_____.

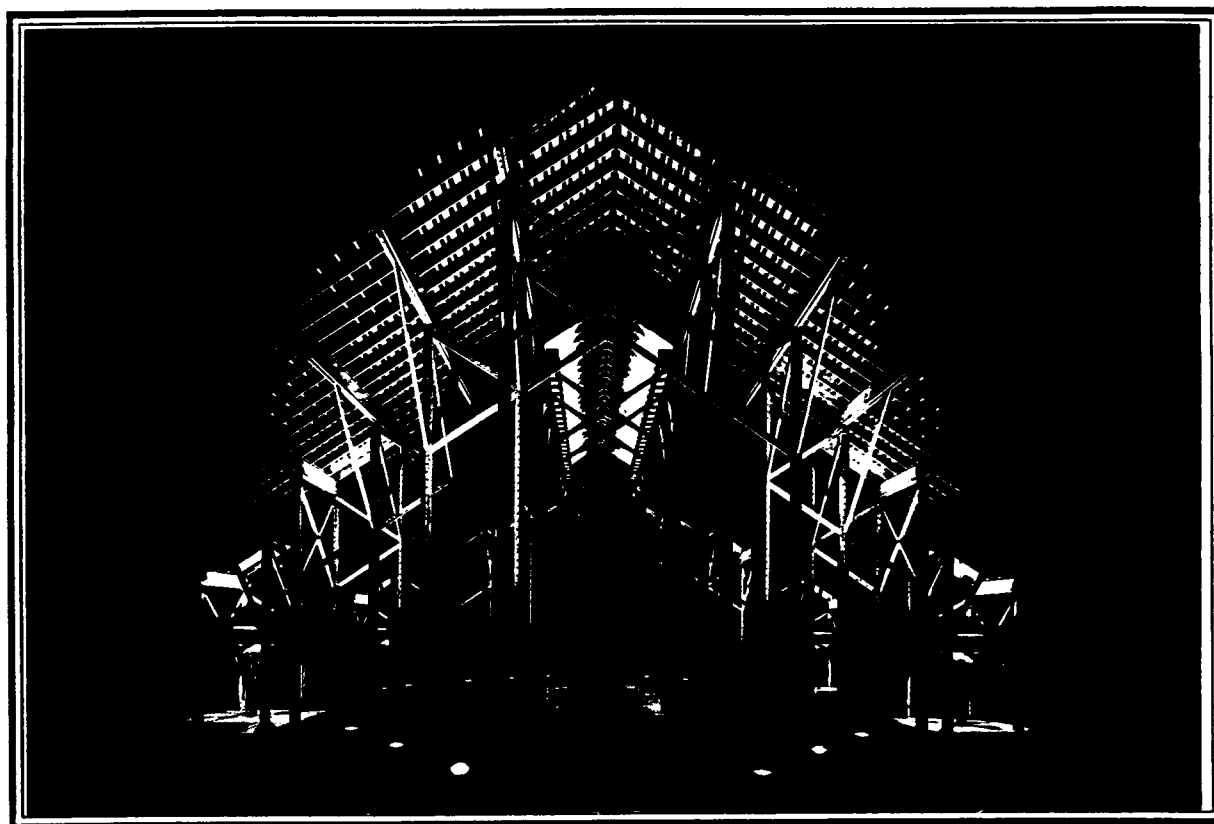
These reservations are for these people: _____

Signed _____

Tel. # _____

Address _____

PINECOTE at the Crosby Arboretum



MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
P.O. Box 2151
Starkville, MS 39759